

# A Spiritual Map for Unity



How to  
Break Through  
Impasses  
in the Church

Paul J. Bucknell

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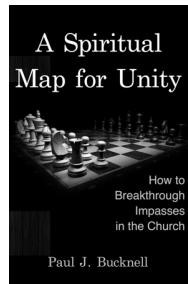
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## How to Break Through Impasses in the Church

Paul J. Bucknell

# Book Information

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# A Tribute

Praise to the Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ—who so valiantly secured unity for us with Him and others by His sacrificial and unjust death on the cross.

# Thanks

I greatly appreciate our good Lord who has allowed me to live in harmony with His people in various countries and across denominations. Whether it be part of a church planting team in Taiwan or a group of ministers praying regularly together here in Pittsburgh.

I am grateful to my daughter, Allison Bucknell, allowing me to interrupt her busy copy editing schedule to review this piece!

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# A Spiritual Map for Unity



## Preface

The need for unity and peace among God's people has long been a concern, but it recently leapt to the forefront of my mind while I was preparing to teach two classes on church history. I knew there was a way to secure God's way of peace, and yet, as it is for so many others, the solution remained elusive.

Something later happened that reshuffled my thoughts and brought great confidence in my hope for the promise of peace in the church. On the morning of a trip to another state, the Lord brought a challenging thought to me during my devotional time. Often, such thoughts are connected to a particular passage that I am reflecting upon that morning, but it was not so that morning. Out of the blue,

the thought of two opposing sides swam through my mind. I saw a chess game with the black pieces opposing the white.

I don't recall thinking of a particular need or situation at the time, but I soon understood that this chessboard represented a church in heated conflict, whose people desperately needed God's peace, which brings reconciliation and helps the church move forward.

I increasingly thought of the church that I was on my way to visit as I drove, having known of some of the heart-wrenching difficulties it was experiencing. I have often prayed for this church and its leaders over the years. So, it was quite natural for me to apply the process of reconciliation in a church to the church that I was visiting. In reflection of what I have learned about the peacemaking process from what started off as a vision of a chessboard, it is clear this hopeful message from the Lord applies to all His people and churches.

**“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is  
For brothers to dwell together in  
unity!” (Psalm 133:1)**

# A Strategy

The Lord directed my mind during my morning devotions to think of a chess game. I love chess, so the image immediately communicated something to me, but I had never thought of using a game of chess to illustrate the two sides of a church faction. Each side, of course, has its strategy, grasping for the best overall plan to gain the upper hand to oppose and conquer the opposing side.

One of the most basic requirements for success in a chess game requires one to master the movement and capabilities of each given piece, both one's own and the enemy's. Besides each piece having a calculated value to help measure the relative importance of each, the player must also carefully calculate the value of the various pieces in their given situation.

On the surface, I could mechanically understand the simple picture of the chessboard with its two sides and pieces strategically lined up against one another. It was a visible picture of the different parties in a church—though sometimes there are more than two sides. Each side, persuaded of the need to win, wants the other side to lose. I could see the glaring worldliness in such an approach. The world aggressively pursues one's own will and way over its opponent. This picture should never, however, be true of God's church—never.

“I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me” (John 17:23).

# A Deeper View

Suddenly, another scene, though related to the first, supplanted the picture of the chessboard. It was as though I had risen up and hovered above the chessboard where I could observe the same board and players but with a very different perspective.

The same chessboard looked totally different when my thoughts zoomed out, reminding me of the other dimensions of the game.



The chess game that I initially saw was only a small part of the real game that goes on in real life—what we see with our eyes. These other-dimensional aspects ended up having more influence and control than the pieces on the board.

The other-dimensional scenes revealed figures standing behind the visible players. Each piece represented a person, but the real battle was how God or the evil one related to that person. Like a kite that is linked to the hand by a string, so surely the physical is related to the spiritual. Angels, demons, and the Spirit of God were actively present, reminding us not to preclude an easy solution to any church problem (Eph 4:3). Such situations stand in dire need of persistent prayer (Eph 6:10-20). We are not opposing people but the powers at hand.

**“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12-13).**

Although, an in-depth understanding of the actual conflict is foundational to resolving the problem, it is insufficient on its own to bring reconciliation. Again, this is where sight—the physical side of things—falls short of supplying answers. People can see the chessboard with its pieces along with the merciless moves being taken. Faith’s insights, however, grant us the ability to observe crucial truth facts that our eyes cannot see.

The various forces behind each side purposely make it difficult to find a solution. When we have a complete picture, however, we can then begin to restore hope for an otherwise hopeless situation and even discover steps that will lead to the desired unity.

# The Call for Unity

Christian unity stands like a tall tower, always reminding God's people of the possibility of peace—no matter how difficult and confusing the circumstances look. The world uses manipulation to gain what they desire. There can be compromise only if they can see how they might benefit from doing so. This method of cooperation is only a veneer of unity—it is not genuine even if exercised among His people.

God's people, however—assuming all are believers—are by God's decree one body. The higher principle, namely, the will of God, rules. If the opposing sides, like in the story of King Hezekiah (Isaiah 6:1-8), could see God's glorious presence, God's glorious throne scene would compel the two or three sides to put aside all their differences and together fix their eyes on the Lord. Opposition, divisions, factions, etc., all dissipate when God's presence presides. Divisions can only exist when God is not fully revealed and understood. The unity of God's people, even if they appear opposed to each other, comes from God's purpose, which stems from who He is and what He wills (Eph 4:4).

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all (Eph 4:4-6).

Confusion arises among God's people only when they are mesmerized by Satan's temptations and adopt the world's ways of prideful control and manipulation (Matt 16:13). A genuine resolution comes only when all sides see and accept God's way as best.

There are a set of assumptions that must be accepted to secure peace—all of which God's people, for the most part, readily accept:

- God is one.
- God's will is one.
- God is good.
- God's will is always good.
- God's way is always best.

Here are some more basic assumptions for Christian leaders:

- Each Christian has the Holy Spirit.
- Each Christian, though possibly tainted with evil, has some good motives.
- Each side has some good and holy intentions.

The lack of mutual trust gives room for the evil one to sow seeds of discord, which in turn produce rude and selfish words, thoughts, and actions. On the basis of the above truths derived from multiple scripture passages, we need to love and trust the insights and hopes of others especially if they are on a "different side." Note the faith required in God's Word to reach the level where:

- Each side can forgive and trust each other.

- Each side can understand and submit to God's statement of unity.

More than this, each side can be excited about God's way of reconciliation because it requires the contributions of all to bring about God's wonderful plan.

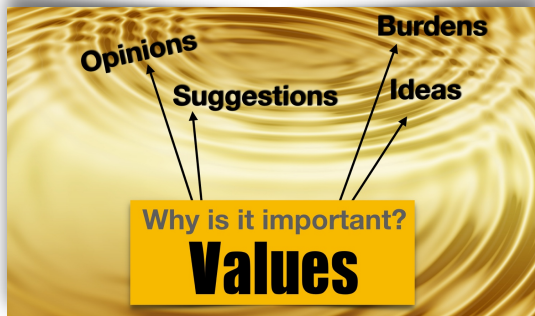
At a certain point, those on both sides will become aware of their animosity, distrust, and misjudgment. Instead of priding themselves over the cleverness of their own ideas, they must recognize by faith that their plans need contributions from the other sides if they want to realize God's full and complete good plan, which includes the witness of how those plans were achieved in the first place.

God lays a firm foundation first by providing faith in His good ways. Since each believer's deepest desires that are born from the Holy Spirit are good and holy (Eph 5:22-24), we can believe that God's resolution kindly enfolds each person's contribution. Yes, we know there were vendettas, gripes, grabs for power, etc., but this is the world's way. God has entrusted part of His purpose with each person, and so God's will must somehow include them. Up front, we respect the holiness of God's ways in all His people and seek the God-given opinions that the leaders feel compelled to protect and promote.



# Moving Upwards into Trust

Once others know we consider their ideas as important and that we are willing to learn from and even defend their ideas as valuable, trust will be restored. This trust is based on a common understanding that God's will incorporates each person/group's concern. This development of trust must happen on both sides, but it typically starts with one individual or group. As the other side notices the genuine concern, they then are able also to trust the other side, hopefully leading to the point where everyone realizes they all are on the Lord's side—no longer do they seek their own way but God's will, whatever that might be.



Understanding the value of each person's ideas and plans enables the exchange of one's mistrust for trust and hatred for love. We no longer question a person or their ideas but seek to understand their values behind such ideas and seek out the reason they place such a value on the contribution that they formerly so strongly defended. We are no

longer aligning the ideas, suggestions, and plans with the various sides but seeking God's greater vision and trying to discern how the different pieces fit together into God's master plan.

Everyone must increasingly acknowledge and act on the fact that God's will is best. Since the Holy Spirit leads all, we ought to respect all. Because there is disagreement on the "sight" level, that is, we disagree with the plans as we see them, we go forward on the "faith" level, recognizing that God has brought us together to do something greater yet, which encompasses all the leaders' values—even if they opposed our plan just days or hours before. Former opponents are now teammates who desire to hear each person's contribution to resolve the enigma of God's will.

I remember, more than once, navigating windy roads in awful situations mixed with fog. I couldn't see far in front of me as I drove. My GPS, however, reliably showed which way the road was to wind in front of me. As I followed the GPS map, I could safely navigate through the valley surrounded by dense clouds. The truth of God works like a GPS leading us to safe steps that lead us to peace. We cannot rely only on what we can see but should also depend on other information from the Lord that will timely and safely lead us.

# Handling Disagreements

Remember, not everyone is equal but yet all are recognized as important and Spirit-led; thus, we should carefully listen to their ideas and suggestions. A difference of opinion reveals that God's grand plan is not yet fully understood. Don't get misled into thinking everyone needs to agree to everyone's suggestions. After all, some points are opposed to each other. While still respecting the individual, we must investigate the original suggestion to understand why their proposal is so important to them. It is here at the value stage that we can find agreement and somehow incorporate what they think is important and something we can understand and properly integrate. Again, we might differ from others on how to handle a particular problematic situation that they present, but we can always value their concern and make sure it is appropriately treated.

Here are some basic underlying Biblical understandings that instruct us on the need to work as one body under Christ's headship. Again, these are items that Christians usually accept but have a hard time applying. Once God's people grasp the vision of one side under God's leadership, they can get excited about working with each other.

- We need each other to go forward.
- There is no advance without each other.

- Our best contributions are made more relevant and helpful by contributions from others.<sup>1</sup>
- God's higher purpose fulfills all our essential concerns.
- As God's people join together in God's presence, the Lord magnifies His Name among His people (Matt 18:20).

Instead of doubt and suspicion, which leads to pride, blocked prayer, and bitterness, we must build up our trust, which in turn leads to love and prayer in the Spirit of unity. The unity is equal to or more importance than the plan. The unity makes the plan because God makes the unity. Nothing can hold God's people back when they pray as one! "These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer" (Acts 1:14).

Instead of focusing on the success of our idea, we must zero in on God's greater goal, which always includes love for each other. As we begin to value each other, trust develops, and from that trust, harmony flows and fosters full reconciliation through apology and mutual forgiveness.

At the sight level (i.e., chess game), we might have clear disagreements and self-justified antipathy towards each other. Satan uses those arguments to cause all sorts of sinful responses to further muck up relationships with God and others. At the faith level, however, we can step up to our spiritual game board, which is directed by the Holy

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<sup>1</sup> This is commonly seen in the way we reference other books and experiences from others. But if these leaders are part of our leadership team, then we are mandated to treasure their values as a way the Holy Spirit leads us.

Spirit and the love of Christ, and look at the same people in an entirely different light—unique and treasured—even though a moment ago we accused them of evil.



# Reconciliation

Since we typically begin with mistrust, bitterness, and questioning of the values of others, it is hard to focus on God's plan. We are busy promoting our key ideas, but they are only one part of God's complete plan—not the complete plan.



We start **not** by asking anyone to give up anything, but by faith we rebuild our understanding of the situation from Biblical truths and God's empowering grace, which allows us to value each person's contribution. After all, each involved Christian is God's special messenger with a unique background, opinion, personality, and suggestion carrying another part of God's message. From people's words and actions, sometimes we can begin to see their values and applaud the good. We respond by positively admitting their good

point or, if we honestly can't understand why they believe their position is so essential, ask:

“Why is your idea so important to you?”

“When did you begin to think of that important aspect?”

In this way, people know we are listening. Their point is important. We are considering it as essential rather than some simple point to be quickly dismissed.

As we start valuing each other, mutual trust develops, and God's people become more open to the convicting power of the Spirit of God. The Spirit prompts the involved individuals to admit their wrong conclusions and how they have wrongfully advanced their cause. Even if our comments might have been truthful, they were not loving (Eph 4:15). Apologies will come, so make time for them. Conscious recognition of our wrongs combined with apologies lead us beyond wrongdoings and into full forgiveness and restoration at the cross, obtaining as a reward a conscious unity bound by the Spirit.

Be attentive to those who have not yet apologized. Take time to hear their hurts and their voices. It is possible that they do not yet feel that they and their opinions are treasured. Perhaps they sense they are still being shunned or misunderstood. Follow the Spirit's peaceable ways (James 3:17). Believe God's ways are better even though more time is required.

We advance the Spirit's presence and work by honestly affirming each other's important place in the team to know and carry out God's goodwill. Misunderstandings and sins have established barriers that

hold back the pouring out of God's Spirit, but it is still God's intention to redeem past arguments and bring God's people into full unity. We will know He is ruling when joy fills our hearts and our words are filled with His love, everyone looking forward together for His good will.



# Securing Success

Our goal is to fully realign ourselves to God's way because we believe His way is supremely good. We are not threatened by having our considerations forgotten, knowing God's better way will somehow incorporate it—if not now, then later. We allow no criticism of person or plan, for they, like puzzle pieces, must not be rejected. Each plays a vital role in God's purpose. We might want to discard a puzzle piece that we think is unimportant, but we must value God's overall purpose and seek to place pieces where they fit. Undoubtedly, there might be a few pieces from other puzzles that do not fit into the one before us, but only when fully assembled can we tell, and even then, it remains an important piece though it belongs to another puzzle.

Remember that we do not need to agree on specific ideas and suggestions for unity. Hopefully, the team will come to that, but even without agreement on the sight level, we must live by faith, often reminding ourselves and reaffirming our unity in seeking God's will. This is why it is often helpful to stop and pray in the middle of a planning meeting. Prayer helps us remix our commitment to together seek God's purpose, allowing us to gain further insight as the Spirit teaches and ferret out any wrong spirit that still lingers.

Faith in God's solution must remain at the forefront. Like a spiritual discipline, we need to—individually and as a group—train ourselves

to look beyond what we see and feel to esteem the value of each person and their opinions.

Typically, each party has promoted one's particular concerns, so any threat alarms them. For this reason, we must, early on, openly state our commitment to treat everyone's input as essential. This fair approach, in turn, lessens the tension and allows the Spirit of God to begin forging (i.e., preserve, Eph 4:3) unity. By openly stating the rules not to criticize others—even though there are differences of opinion—we can avoid many undesirable distractions. If people get engaged in criticism and argument, quietly dismiss and point out the rules of conversation and remind them that we must base our approach on God's way of incorporating many members' opinions.

Restate your confidence that we all need to work together on fulfilling God's plan as it will solve our concerns. We are not anti-criticism, but it must be in the context of attempting to see the value in another's opinion—in order for criticism to operate properly, you must believe their opinion counts rather than quickly dismissing it. We must trust God to reveal these various insights and concerns because the Holy Spirit values the individuals and wants to advance a given idea.

For example, if I disagree with a certain proposal, I can still value the person and should desire to know why that brother believes his proposal is important. I work on the premise that what he says is important to the overall discussion. Criticism early on dismisses people's thoughts without giving proper recognition to the person and their thoughts. When I don't understand, I dig deeper and ask

him why this proposal is important and how it became so important to him. In this way, we are honest, loving and learning.

Again, Christians generally agree that God's purpose is good and that His grand plan often incorporate the ideas from several individuals. It does not mean that we instantly know what God's plan is. If we did, then we would agree and observe how it incorporates our best thoughts, for it is, in many cases, the Spirit of God who has brought these ideas and concerns to our attention.

Unity comes from a shared understanding of God's work that embraces each member's contribution in Acts 15 style—an accurate picture of conducting decision making in the Body of Christ. In this way, it is easy for the sides to work together to gain a maximum output of God's grace. As we see the importance of each person's contribution, the hostility and suspicions are quickly replaced with a listening ear and loving heart. From a theological perspective, the presence of light along with the truth of God displaces seeds of darkness, which the evil one uses to implement his subtle devices.

The quicker we state and instill our common vision in God's truth, the quicker we will see the goodness of God's will and the necessity and joy of working together—even though we might not have a clue on how to practically carry it out. Biblically, we know the way to approach each other and are convinced of this fact, so we must start there. If we have a good foundation, we can trust God to lead us in time. In reality, when we focus on our unity and the value of each other and how God reconciled us, it will frame a joyful theme for future meetings. This approach will only work if the team members

agree to live by the truths that are so clearly stated in the Scriptures. Then again, most of God's people accept them but inconsistently respond to them.

## Exercise: Puzzle Pieces

Buy a puzzle with enough pieces for each person to have one or two pieces (a big kid's puzzle is best). Give one or two puzzle pieces to each person. Start the puzzle with a few pieces in the center. Explain the necessity that each person join their piece(s) to the one puzzle before it can be considered complete. Explain the importance of each piece and how no one likes an incomplete puzzle! As each person surrenders his/her idea to God's higher purpose, we all can get a clearer picture of God's good will (i.e., the completed puzzle).

As an extension to the puzzle exercise, one can ask each person to write down on the back of the puzzle briefly (or on a paper with it) what they feel is so important about the issue they are solving and also why it is so important. Spend time allowing each person to share their perspective. Thank them for sharing. Followup by thankfully praying for each person's contribution and delighting in God's master plan—even if there still remains an unclear path forward.



# The Problems

Some might wonder how this simple process can be expected to produce significant positive changes in a conflict-filled situation. There are several reasons for this. Remember, when we operate by using our sight (e.g., the sides of the chessboard), we only see the opposing sides and are reminded of past wounds and differences. When performing at this level, the evil one can readily enter the scene, causing further disruption so that even though all have good intentions to resolve the problem, they instead encounter a significant setback.

By restating our recognition of certain biblical truths, we step into a scene of unity in the presence of God and become more aware of our shared commitment to God's plans and ways. The spiritual truths with which we refresh our minds enable us to notice various biblical principles that were previously set aside (e.g., speaking rude words instead of kind ones). God's teachings on how we conduct our conversation must be deemed vital.

When only looking on the two-dimensional level (by sight), our focus becomes warped, causing the situation to worsen as the evil one increases pain and trouble. For example, instead of focusing on God's good will, we engage in actively promoting our solution, refusing to be open to God's more encompassing plan. Instead of focusing on other

people's valuable contributions, we pridefully dismiss the input of others.

But, when we live by faith in obedience to God's Word, our situations can improve quickly. Our change of mind is like putting a car in 'R' (reverse gear). We suddenly move in the opposite direction. If we are disappointed by past failures, try remaining fixed on the rules of polite conversation. By staying fixed on God's higher purposes, we can move forward at a surprising speed.

There are spiritual truths that, by faith, we can accommodate and implement quite quickly. It is just like when the sun comes out on a frigid cloudy day. Everything is suddenly affected by the sun's bright and warm rays. Even ice on the sidewalk melts.

Our job is not only to resolve this issue but to live in harmony, valuing God's plan more than our own. Our brothers and sisters in Christ, though they differ from us in opinions, remain an essential part of the decision-making process.



## A Spiritual Map for Unity

### Questions and Answers

- Shouldn't we use church discipline and get rid of the false believers? They prove their godless spirit by their fruits as Jesus states in Matthew 7.

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? (Matt 7:15-16 NASB)

Although I agree on the importance of church discipline, this question seems bathed in a spirit of judgment rather than love. Church discipline comes from a heart of love rather than showing how one is right in his persuasion. Once hurt, it is easy to see the wrongs of others and even exaggerate them while we ignore our own wrongs.

Yes, during these church battles, many wrongs have been made, but the background of church discipline is in the way it keeps a church pure and holy (Matt 18:15-19). Factions among leaders, however, present a different situation from a person or small group who choose to live contrary to God's Word. Church conflicts typically center on differences of decision-making processes, getting offtrack by ungodly responses.

In Jesus' instruction on church discipline (Matt 18:15-19), note the personal care that accompanied confrontation at the beginning and intermediate stages. Later, it was several people getting testimony about a certain act. In this situation, people in the church still respect the leaders as leaders. People are concerned about the facts and the truth. Everyone is concerned with measuring themselves against God's Word—not with proving that their idea is better than another.

I suggest that we ought to assume everyone is, to some degree, at fault, so any "church discipline" at this stage will look like one side aggressively assaulting the other, so we must equally come to confess our own sin and care about each other simply because Jesus so tells us. The only hope for identifying the real issues is not to start pointing out the sins of others—since trust has all but disappeared—but begin by rebuilding trust and implanting the vision for unity based on scriptural truths. Confess your own sins! Only then will brothers and sisters see the harm they have done, confess it, and move forward.

- **How should we handle serious disagreement among church leaders and members?**

First, prayerfully seek God's leadership. Our church leaders have done this by asking each person/leader to take turns praying in a circle. In the end, we can pause and see if God has resolved the issue by convicting a person or whether one person has received special insight from the Lord to share with others.

Another suggestion is to review the various opposing ideas and suggestions. Look behind each suggestion and identify its value. See if those values are being resolved. If people don't think their idea is

being fairly heard, then it probably reveals that at least one or two issues are not being attentively heard. Don't feel as though there is an immediate solution, but when God's people together pray for those values—which no doubt are God's values—then God respects that harmony.

Also note any existing disharmony among the members. Perhaps God is asking for us to join His team before He can fully work. This is why what I have taught helps us see the failures of playing like the world (a chess game) rather than moving into God's sphere and living under His rule.

- **What if someone's idea is unbiblical?**

God's leaders must preserve fidelity to God's Word. All leaders should be committed to the scriptures or they would not be leaders, but perhaps there is a point of tension on interpretation, such as whether it is appropriate for a church to get a mortgage or borrow money from one of its members, or the correctness of seeking a female pastor. Again, treasure each person's thought as well as prayerfully note what that person values. If it is different from God's Word, then it should be obvious to all. The Word of God should be clearly studied and stated, not to disdain the one but to kindly rebuke him. There are many sources from which people get their ideas and it is helpful to check their sources. All of our opinions and ideas must stand subject to the scrutiny of God's holy Word.

If there is a problem at the interpretational side of things, then it is more difficult but not impossible to resolve. Perhaps, do a joint Bible Study on Acts 15, carefully noting how the Spirit led them. If

someone's proposal is unbiblical (rather than being unwise), we should still kindly address the person. Remember, it is not what we say but what the Head of the church, Jesus Christ, has said.

- **Are we just pretending unity?**

At times, we can understand why some people consider this process mentioned above as an act of pretension. We 'fake' unity. But that is the world's way, not God's. God has us "preserve" unity (Eph 4:3). We are not pretending unity. The unity is real, yet we are not somehow affected by it. We could have \$100,000 in the bank, but, because we don't believe it, we disregard it and instead claim that we can't pay our bills.

Unity is an essential foundational truth that ought to shape our lives and attitudes. This is what we mean by "living by faith" rather than by "sight." Faith in our given unity is real; what we see deceives us. Perhaps a few questions would be helpful to those who think this is an act of pretense:

- Do you believe the Bible is truth?
- What is the unity that the Lord Jesus speaks of in John 17?
- How do disagreements and sides form?

We are but one body with one head, even though at times it looks like we have various opposing sides. It is not fake or pretense to agree to the truth of one body and then adapt our approach and attitudes to match it. This life by faith the very way Christians are saved and live out their salvation (Phil 1:6).



## A Spiritual Map for Unity

### Study Questions

Our attitudes often shape our opinion. Although we see unbiblical responses from ourselves and others regarding some disagreement, it is important to realize that they only come about because of darkness arising from our unbelief. The study questions below will help a Christian better identify what he or she does believe regarding this topic of unity. The questions and projects below assume one is involved in some kind of divisive issue within the church.

1. What is your particular position?
2. What is the opposing side's position?
3. Why do you feel so strongly of your position?
4. Why do the others feel so strongly of their position?
5. Do you sense you are working together or against the others? What words and attitudes of yours reflect your answer?

6. Do you think the others understand your position? Explain.
7. Would you say that you want God's will/decision even if it went opposite to your position?
8. Do you think that God speaks to different leaders to help shape good decisions? Why?
9. Would you consider that all of you making that decision together are on God's team or that you are on separate teams?
10. How do you love others that have different views from you?
11. Have you ever been on a team where you excitedly worked together for a common purpose? Describe as possible.
12. Would you consider the church as a team? What biblical support do you have for that?
13. Have you in any way disregarded, disdained, or despairingly worked with any 'team' members? Explain.
14. Unity requires each person to confess any sins and apologize. Confess your sins to as many people as necessary.

15. Seek God's forgiveness for any sin, especially where you have looked down on the contributions of others. Recommit your willingness to follow Jesus' headship.
  
16. How much do you pray for this issue and those in it? What are you asking and seeking?



# Author Information

Rev. Paul J. Bucknell teaches Christian leadership seminars around the world and has authored more than twenty-five books on topics including Christian life, discipleship, godly living, biblical studies, call to ministry, marriage, parenting, and anxiety. His blend of knowledge from different fields along with his deep care for training God's people provide many new insights into this book. Paul and his wife, Linda, live in the USA and have eight children and five grandchildren. He is the founder and president of Biblical Foundations for Freedom, a web-based ministry that releases God's powerful, life-changing truths worldwide.

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# Book Description

## *A Spiritual Map for Unity*

### How to Break Through Impasses in the Church

#### Synopsis

Church conflicts need to be resolved quickly. When an impasse occurs, it is important to highlight two basic teachings of scripture: (1) God's greater plan, and (2) the importance of each person's insight. As trust recovers, God's people must confess their sins and move forward to make decisions that please the Lord.

#### Keywords

impasse, fight, peace, unity, differences, church, conflict, bitter, how, make peace, reconcile, chess, breakthrough





