

April 2021



Jim and Robyn Cicchese

Paul's Appeal to Unity

"I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment." 1 Cor. 1:10

For 45 years, Teens For Christ has done the work of ministry in that "zone of agreement" that we obtain when we agree to disagree about some questions of the faith, and yet participate together for the Kingdom of God.

I wish we could say that Christians always fulfil Paul's appeal in the above verse, but that has never actually been the case, from the earliest days of Christianity until now. And it will not be the case until we are ultimately unified by Christ Himself, in person. Nevertheless, the ideal of perfect unity is a dream that provides a goal toward which we can strive.

But never in my lifetime have I seen the potential for permanent disunity that I see now.

I have seen churches, denominations and groups of believers divide over things that were sometimes critical, sometimes trivial. In my lifetime, questions like speaking in tongues, losing one's salvation and baptism have been divisive. But there was still a window, even within that division, to participate in ministries like TFC, which major on the basic issues of salvation and leave divisive questions to be settled by each local church.

When we look at unity in the body of Christ, the question can be phrased this way: Is it better to be in a smaller group where everyone is "right," or to be in a larger group where some are "wrong?" I believe the answer depends on how significant the doctrine may be. For questions like salvation by grace through faith, perhaps it is better to not have fellowship with those who do not align with Scripture. For questions like the color of the carpet in the sanctuary, perhaps we can have fellowship with those who are "wrong." Unfortunately, most questions fall somewhere in between and require a great deal of judgment about how much fellowship to have.

But what about when the question is whether to wear a mask or not?

From the start of the Covid crisis, my greatest concern for the Kingdom of God was "How are we going to reunify when this is all over?" And worse, maybe it will never be over, and we will have to try to find unity in division.

I have heard words on both sides that will be difficult to take back. I have heard phrases like these: "Christians don't wear masks." Or the opposite: "If you had the love of God in you, you would wear a mask to protect others, so you must not truly love people." I cannot imagine how those kinds of phrases can be taken back. Even if the vaccine returns things to full normal in the USA, it is hard to see how there will not be permanent scars on the Body of Christ.

I do not pretend to have all the answers. Forgiveness and understanding come hard. But we must find them – I cannot believe that God intended for His church to be divided over a mask. What will future unity look like? I don't know. But I can ask you to do this:

Pray for Teens For Christ as we continue to try to unify believers of varying viewpoints into a single, effective body. Masks are another thing to put into the pot of "doctrines that tend to divide."

Pray for yourself – spend time thinking about what you need to do in order to move toward the unity I know God desires.

It will be the greatest challenge of the decade for the church – maybe the greatest challenge of the century. It is hard to see how unity will happen afterward – and even harder if the virus persists and there really is no "afterward."

But God's ideal still stands as the verse above requires – we have no choice but to try to find that unity.

Jim Cicchese

"Forgiveness and understanding come hard. But we must find them."

What's Happening.....This Month at TFC



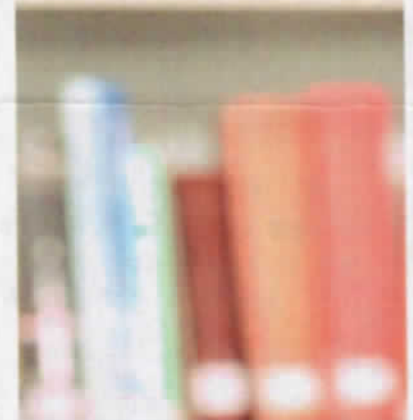
Mortgage Burning Party

Join us for an afternoon of fun, food, fellowship, and a short ceremony to celebrate the burning of the mortgage!

Where: TFC Ministry Center (538 Old Hwy 35 S, Hudson, WI 54016)

When: Sunday, May 16th, 2021 from 2pm-4pm with a short ceremony at 2:30pm

Who: Anyone and everyone! :)



2021 Golf Tournament



We are looking forward to hosting our 20th annual Charity Golf Tournament on July 13th, 2021 at Kilkarney Hills Golf Course in River Falls, WI!

This year the funds raised by the tournament will go toward our next major project: replacing our aging Chevrolet 15 passenger van. **We just received a \$10,000 matching gift toward that goal, so send your gift now and it will be doubled!**

This tournament not only serves as a fundraiser for TFC, but it also provides a fun opportunity for golfers of all skills to get together and enjoy the greens (along with a delicious meal and plenty of prizes!).

For more information contact Jim Cicchese at 715-338-1290 or register now at teens4christ.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

———— APRIL ————
Nationals.....21-25

LOOKING AHEAD...
———— MAY ————
ACBM Graduation.....15th
Mortgage Party.....16th

TFC Summer Events

We have a lot going on this summer, and we would love for you to be a part of it! Some of our summer events and trips include:

- POW Trip: June 5th-10th
- Serve Trip: July 5th-10th
- Golf Tournament: July 13th
- Guy's Fishing Retreat: July 23rd-25th
- TFC Summer Camp: August 9th-14th

We will also be running some weeks of VBS at various churches throughout the summer. You can find out more or register for any of these events on our website at www.teens4christ.com!



CONTACT US!

Teens For Christ
P.O. Box 920
Hudson, WI 54016
(715) 386-2549

staff@teens4christ.com

Visit us online at
www.teens4christ.com