

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Jesus' Kingdom is One

The highly-advertised religious campaign in our community has now come to a close. There is a little 3-letter word, recorded over 1700 times in the Bible, which your writer would like for us to consider. God used this little word in instructing the people under the Old Law, and He, Christ, and the Holy Spirit use it in today's instructions for us, written in the New Testament. This word is "**one**".

Several years ago, a visiting "man of God" was attending a local denominational service. He was not a member of the denomination which was hosting the service. He was asked to lead a prayer that evening, and this statement was included in his prayer: "We thank God for the many faiths that there are, so that we can choose the one we want to accept." In Ephesians 4:4-6, Paul, writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, says: "*There is **one** body, and **one** Spirit, even as ye are called in **one** hope of your calling; **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*". God is not changeable, nor has He rescinded His teaching on these **ones**! Are there many faiths in our community? Did many of these work together to bring the campaign here? Did many of these attend the campaign meetings? It is evident the answer to these 3 questions is "Yes." What is it which makes these groups differ from the "**one body**" of Ephesians 4:4, from the "**one faith**" of Ephesians 4:5, and from one another? The simple answer is: their doctrines. Each man-made religious group has a creed, a manual, a conference, a convention, or a body of men, to set forth the unique tenets of the group. Division comes not from God's Word, but from these man-made efforts to "clarify," "explain," and "update" God's Word!

Yes, the religious campaign is over. Those sponsoring it and attending it have returned to their respective groups, to continue teaching their respective doctrines. But, God's Word is unchangeable and has not changed! One of Jesus' prayers, recorded for us in John 17, makes clear His goal for His disciples. Space forbids printing all of His prayer, so please read it in the privacy of your home. Let's key in on a few verses: 6: "*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: ...and **they have kept thy word***"; 8: "*For I have given them **the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, ...***"; 12: "*While I was with them in the world, **I kept them in thy name...***" 14: "***I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them...***"; 17: "***Sanctify them through thy word: thy word is truth.***" Jesus prays for these: "*...Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be **one**, as we are*" (11), and for us: "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be **one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be **one** in us; ...*" (20,21). What will be the result when Jesus' followers obey His command to be **one**? Hear Him: "*that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*" (John 17:21b). Remember: "union" is not "unity"!