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Dear Friends,

As I write this, it is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Reflecting upon Christian Unity/disunity, it seems to me that the actual reality is that the Church is already *one*. If we are a Christian, we are part of the body of Christ as indeed are all other Christians whether we like it or not. The problem with Christian Unity is that we don't see ourselves as one – actually, we are in **denial** and what this then means is that we don't *act* as one.

The scriptural image for the *one holy catholic and apostolic Church* is the human body. For the feet to consider themselves as independent from the arms is ridiculous and doesn't affect the reality. And for the feet to tread on the hands or for the hands to hit the feet makes one want to cry. And I'm sure that this *disorder* in the Body of Christ makes God weep.

Let us pray that our eyes may be opened to see the reality of the oneness of the Church and that our actions may be consistent and coherent; not necessarily the same, but complementary rather than opposed, together rather than in competition.

The issue which I've left open is the question of how we define *a Christian* or the same question in a different form: where is the boundary between the Church and the world? However, having noted this, if we just changed our perception from thinking of our church as *a church* to thinking of it as **a part of the one Church**, and from thinking of our mission as *the mission of our church* to thinking of it as **a part of the mission of the one Church** this would transform our view of *other parts of the one Church* and this alone would, I suggest, have a major impact on our effectiveness. The result of our seeing the reality of the one Church can only be more *effective mission*.

One area of mission where the churches in Bromley are acting as one is Bromley Town Chaplaincy – where I have recently taken over from Ian Payne as Town Chaplain.

Chaplaincy is all about interacting with people at their place of work for their well-being.

There are a number of chaplains (both lay and ordained) who tend to spend half a day a week or fortnight visiting a Bromley organisation. These currently include businesses (primarily shops), the Civic Centre and the Police.

The health and success of the employer is directly affected by the health and well-being of their work-force. Many of the problems which really affect us are not so much the issue in question, but that we have lost our perspective – our sense of proportion. This is why other people's problems seem much easier to solve than our own and why just talking about, or

through, an issue can often resolve the issue, or certainly make it more manageable. As chaplains, we can often help people simply by listening to them and being sympathetic. Some issues though are more serious and may need professional help. In these circumstances, the discussion with the chaplain may provide the support the individual needs in order to seek such help.

Chaplains are not overtly evangelistic, although they are overtly Christian. This means that if employees wish to talk about life and death issues or other spiritual matters they can (and do), but they also know that if they wish to talk to the chaplain about a work issue or a personal or relationship matter, the chaplain will not be “pushing religion down their throats” but be understanding and supportive.

The basic requirement to be a chaplain is to be interested in people and to be a good listener. Much of chaplaincy consists of simply being friends and passing the time of day. However, one must also have an eye to the constraints of the particular business/organisation one is in. For example, you don’t as a chaplain go to the check-out desk when there is a big queue, or a sandwich bar at lunch-time, or try and talk to the accounts department when they are dealing with the month-end.

A chaplain is very privileged in the access they have to people all across the organisation and it is important that this privilege is not abused. We as chaplains are the Church visibly in the workplace. The Church is already in the workplace through the Christians already working there (and one of the objectives of the Chaplaincy is to help churches support their members in their work), but the chaplain is there as a recognised Christian presence on behalf of the churches in Bromley and for the benefit of all employees, whether Christian or not.

If becoming involved in chaplaincy is something which you feel attracted to, please do discuss it with your church leader or please feel free to contact me (email: townchaplain@btinternet.com or telephone: 020 8460 4679). At the moment we are focussing on building-up the team of chaplains, but if you don’t feel personally called to this work we should still be grateful if you would pray for the Chaplaincy and in particular at this time for individuals to feel the call to become chaplains.

The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest. (Matthew 9.37-38).

I look forward to meeting many of you this year in the course of my work in Bromley as Town Chaplain or in my capacity as the Minister of Trinity URC.

Best Wishes,

David Morgan (Bromley Town Chaplain)

**We make a living by what we get;
we make a life by what we give.**

Winston Churchill