Becoming One

Lionel van der Merwe, Ryan Kingsley 23 September 2020



'I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.' John 17:20-21

Church splits, division in leadership and tearing apart of relationships. Tragically, the precious Bride of Jesus Christ has been assailed by this demonic plan since inception; a strategy conceived in human pride and flesh. Wow, this could be a bleak first paragraph, except we have exciting news that stands against the tide.

Two Become One

It is with great joy that we bring a very different report from South Africa in this season. As two Gauteng Four12 churches, City on a Hill and Zao Church, we have been hearing God speak about the need for two to become one, and the impact and fruitfulness in Gauteng that will result as we seek to partner in the closest way possible.

Within Four12 we speak about partnership a lot. By this we mean churches and leaders humbly submitting themselves to one another to receive encouragement, correction and even rebuke as we join Jesus in building the most valuable institution on the planet: His Church. Jesus prayed for more than unity, the word He used was 'one'. That as He and the Father are one, we as His family and Body on earth would be one (John 17:20-21). It is possibly the greatest miracle that we could pray for and the best witness to being true disciples. He doesn't want us to even think of our churches and the mini-kingdoms that we want to own or govern. It is always His church, a vehicle of His Kingdom, and He alone is King.

So, with many prophetic confirmations, apostolic perspective, much personal prayer and very honest chats as eldership teams, we are convinced that God is joining these two local churches to become one. One eldership and deacon team and one body of saints, but meeting and reaching different locations in the city.

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Two Great Purposes

As with marriage, we see two great purposes in this union:

Mutual Inspiration

Firstly, that we would inspire each other to more. That we will rub off on, speak into and sharpen within each other the character of Jesus, and develop the community He dreams of and that He died to bring to us now. 'The kingdom is at hand,' He said, and the church is its epicentre in this world. When a couple gets married, you can believe and have the same values, yet also look at your spouse and say, 'Wow, I want to love like that and I want to worship as you do. I want that kind of open heart to the broken. I see more of Jesus in you in a certain area and I'm provoked to more!' May we be brought to greater maturity and reflect Christ's image more clearly together.

Fruit

Secondly, as with a marriage union, we are trusting for fruit. That is real gospel impact. More salvations, more churches planted, more leaders raised and released and more people trained and equipped as we become a fuller, better-resourced base of operations.

Are we all called to make this kind of thing happen? No, but the real question is, are we listening for His plans and ready to transition when He speaks, with the desire that He receives more glory? May we all be open to the leading of our Lord and to Him bringing us into deeper partnership.