Focus on Faith

The annual "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" begins at 4 p.m. on Sunday, January 23 at the Slovak Cathedral on Woodbine, north of Major Mackenzie, sponsored by the Unionville and Markham Ministerial.

Guest speaker for the occasion is Dr. William Huras, retired Lutheran bishop. A time of fellowship with refreshments will follow the service.

Praying for unity could lead to thinking that the Christian church is divided. The existence of more than 100 different denominations in Canada can be confusing.

It is important to recognize, however, that there is unity with respect to basic beliefs. For example, all Christians hold to: i) the uniqueness and divine authority of the Bible; ii) the Tri-unity of God; iii) the deity, virgin birth, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus; iv) the depravity of man; and v) salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of the Saviour on the cross.

The Christian church is like a symphony orchestra composed of a wide variety of musical instruments but all playing from the same score.

There are advantages in differentiation. The diversity of churches has brought great vitality and strength to Christianity and multiplied the Christian witness. Since God created us all distinctively different, it only stands to reason that "one size does not fit all." The wide selection of denominations provides a place for everyone to belong. There is freedom for people to attend a church where theirs and their family's needs will be met.

Various denominations have formed around ethnic origins, revival movements, particular doctrinal tenets, and even our differing temperaments.

There is something wholesome about people worshipping God according to the dictates of their own conscience rather than being forced into one ecclesiastical mould.

People from all across the denominational spectrum gathering together to pray is an excellent demonstration of the true unity of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. All are welcome to participate.

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
32 Main St. N. Markham - 294-0351
SUNDAY SERVICE - 10:00 A.M.

"I Only Changed a Few Million People"

This was Mao's reply to Richard Nixon when Nixon commented to Mao that he had changed the entire country of China. It seems that when Mao looked at his impact on a percentage basis, he did not consider himself an overwhelmingly successful agent for change. If Mao considered himself ineffective even with access to powerful resources, like political power, abundant funding, and sophisticated communications machinery, why would individuals like ourselves ever dream that we could be effective? For instance, how could St. Andrew's ever be successful in offering our experience to those in the community, welcoming people who visit, and opening our minds and hearts to the participation of newcomers?

Well, the tools we have are basic, and more powerful than any elaborate manipulation machinery that money can concoct. We have love, to nurture each other. We have courage, to be open and honest in relationships. We have creativity, to stretch to be bigger than ourselves. These tools are the gift of God, as is the opportunity to use them to shape the world of God's intent, a world of peace, and justice, and freedom for all.

John Storr

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MARKHAM MISSIONARY CHURCH
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
Sunday, January 23, 2000
9:30 a.m. - Family Christian Education Hour
10:55 a.m. - Pastor Thurton speaking
6:30 p.m. - No evening service in lieu of ...
The *Toronto Spiritual Life Convention*
(January 23 - 26, 2000)
at the Peoples Church - Sheppard Ave. E.
Speaker: *Charles Price, Capernwray, England*
Sun. 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed. - 7:30 p.m.
Please call church for information regarding other programs available to you and your family.
5438 Major MacKenzie Dr. E.
Markham (905) 294-5081

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH
20 Union St., Unionville - 477-1731
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Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
Worship - 10:30 a.m.

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11:00 a.m. "Spiritual Warfare Part 2"
Pastor Mark Lowrie
6:30 p.m. Prayer Fellowship
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All Faiths Welcome

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