

# **The Legacy of Paul**

## **1 Corinthians: Church Unity**

# Agenda

- **Map 1<sup>st</sup> Century Corinth**
- **Corinth**
- **Audience**
- **Why Write the Letter?**
- **Major Theme: Unity**
- **Modern Day Corinth**
- **United Methodist Church Issues**
- **Resources**
- **For Further Study**



# 1<sup>st</sup> Century Corinth

# Corinth

**Greece of today was 2 Roman Provinces in Paul's Time:**

- 1. Province of Macedonia, Capital was Thessalonica**
- 2. Province of Achaia, Capital was Corinth**
  - Settled by Freed Slaves in 44 BCE**
  - Had ports on each side of 9 mile strip of land called the Isthmus of Corinth**
    - Adriatic Sea to the West**
    - Aegean Sea to the East**



# Corinth Isthmus

# Corinth Cont.

- **Urban, large, prosperous and diverse**
- **Proud to be known for being open to new ideas**
- **Famous for lavish lifestyles & conspicuous consumption**
  - **“to act like a Corinthian” became Roman slang for sexual promiscuity**



CENTRAL  
CORINTH

LECHAION ROAD

PERIBOLOS  
of APOLLO

TEMPLE OF APOLLO

BASILICA

FOUNTAIN  
of PEIRENE

NW SHOPS

PROPYLAEA

AGORA

BEMA

SHOPS

CENTRAL  
SOUTH STOA

ROAD to CENCHREAE

## City Plan of Corinth for the Time of Paul

Source: *Interpreter's Dictionary*



# Ancient Corinth



# Audience

- **Mostly Gentile**
- **Some Prominent Members:**
  - **Prisca & Aquila**
  - **Achaicus, Fortuatus & Stephanas**
  - **Crispus & Gaius**
  - **Phoebe**
  - **Erastus**
- **Most were of lower social standing and lesser means**
- **Small groups in various areas of Corinth; would come together on occasion**

# Why Write the Letter?

- **Written in 54 CE from Ephesus**
- **At least the second letter to this church:**
  - **A previous letter is mentioned in 5:9**
- **Answers a letter seeking guidance on disputed matters**
- **Response to word of mouth reports about disorder and immorality in the community**

# **Major Theme: Unity**

- **Divisions in Corinthian Church:**
  - **Allegiance to prominent leaders 1:12**
  - **Immorality 5:1, 2**
  - **Going to Law Before the Heathen 6:1-11**
  - **Marriage 7:1-40**
  - **Meats offered to Idols 8:1-13**
  - **Conduct of Women in the Church 11:1-16**
  - **The Lord's Table 11:17-34**
  - **Spiritual Gifts 12:1-14:40**
  - **The Resurrection 15:1-58**

# Major Theme: Unity Cont.

- Paul pleads with Corinthians
  - *Parakaleo*: Greek “to call alongside”
    - Active work to call someone back on track
  - *Divisions* comes from *Schisma*: Greek “to separate, to rip, to tear to split”

# Unity Cont.

- **Corinthians were:**
  - **Prideful**
  - **Spiritually arrogant**
  - **Thought they alone had the “truth”**
- **Paul said:**

**“Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” 3:18-19**

# **Major Theme: Unity Cont.**

- **God created diversity:**

**“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” 12:4-7**



# Modern Day Corinth



**Corinth Canal Dug 1893**



# Church Unity Today

- How does the church of today address issues of unity?
- What divides us today?
- What tools do we have to help us?

# UMC

## [UMC Book of Discipline on Homosexuality](#)

- **Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church:** The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.

# UMC Cont.

## [UMC Book of Discipline on Homosexuality](#)

**304.3:** The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

**341.6:** Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.

# UMC Cont.

## [UMC Book of Discipline on Homosexuality](#)

**613:** The [conference council on finance and administration] shall have authority and responsibility to .... ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The UMC "not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends

# UMC Cont.

- [UMC Book of Discipline on Homosexuality](#)
- **Group of 80 UM Clergy call for amicable split:**
  - They believe there are more divisions in addition to homosexuality such as inerrancy of the Bible

<http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/amicable-breakup-of-umc-needed-pastor-group-says>

- **Adam Hamilton & Mike Slaughter call for unity with local conferences determining their own stance on homosexuality**

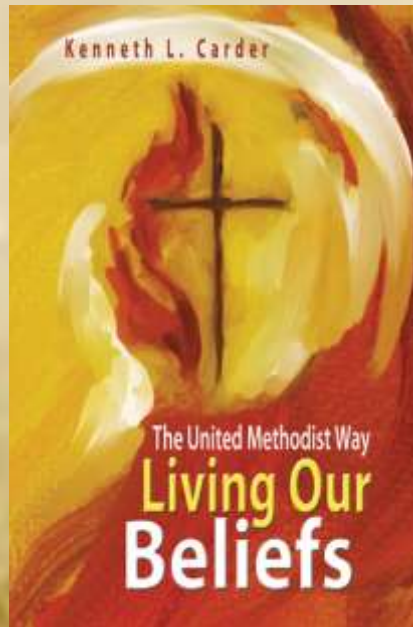
<https://awayforward.net/#/home>

# Resources

- The Harper Collins Study Bible, Harold W. Attridge, General Editor 1989
- Paul: Messenger of Grace, Kenneth Schenck
- Introducing the New Testament, Mark Allan Powell
- Pathways to Pure Power: Learning the Depth of Love's Power, Jack w. Hayford with Gary Curtis
- <https://gbgmumc.org/umw/corinthians/cityarch.htm>
- [United Methodist Church on homosexuality](#)

# For Further Study

- Living Our Beliefs, the United Methodist Way,  
Kenneth L. Cardner



# **PowerPoint**

## **By Stacey Atkins**

This Presentation is the  
Intellectual Property of Stacey Atkins  
[www.SomethingDifferentMinistries.org](http://www.SomethingDifferentMinistries.org)  
Copyright 2014