

TERM PAPER
THIS IS THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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When I was a child our church completed an expansion program. We enlarged the Sanctuary and added new classrooms. Our church was growing. The year was 1957. As a Young boy I had no idea how important that year would be. It was the birth of a new Denomination. The United Church of Christ was born on June 25, 1957. It combined four Groups or streams into one body, granting each group and each congregation autonomy.

The four groups are: (1) The Congregational Church of England with ties to the Puritans Of New England, (2) The Christian Church of the American Frontier, (3) The Evangelical Synod of North America, and (4) The Reformed Church in the United States. The Congregational and Christian denominations stressed freedom of religious Expression and local autonomy. They united on June 17, 1931. The Evangelicals and Reformers were of German and Swiss heritage and leaned strongly to the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. They united on June 26, 1934. In the middle 1930's Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed Church leaders began private talks about union

When German Evangelical Church pastor Martin Niemoeller was jailed in Nazi Germany For preaching the Christian gospel from his Berlin pulpit on Christmas Eve 1938, United States Catholics and Protestants, including Congregationaal Christian and Evangelical And Reformed leaders sent a message to the German people. This act marked a subtle

*The 4 groups are
you say below had
already combined
into 2 groups by
1957.*

*did you want
a "period" here?*

Shift in church policy from Evangelizing to a concern for the needs of human society.

Many people outside of the UCC and some within the church have a Misconception of who we are. Some believe we are an anything goes church. Nothing Could be farther from the truth. We are a faith based church founded on five historic Commitments: (1) We are a united and uniting church. Although we are on different Planes on our spiritual journey we come together as one to proclaim Christ as savior, (2) We are a multi-cultural, multi-racial church. The heritage of our people is what makes Us strong. Rev. Bartholomew said it best when he said instead of a melting pot we are More like a stew pot with each food standing out in its own right. We should never “morph” various cultures into one, but embrace each culture and celebrate our diversity, (3) To be accessible to all. This means more than just ramps and safety bars. It means that Our hearts must be open and accessible to all as well, (4) We are an open and affirming Church. We may not agree with the lifestyle or actions of our brothers and sisters, but as John 3:16b says, “ Whosoever believes in me shall never perish.” If someone declares Christ as their savior we as Christians, bound by covenant, must accept them into our Family. It is our ^{yes} duty based on love. God so loved the world. And (5) We are a peace with justice church. President Richard Nixon has been criticized many times and sometimes rightfully so, but in a speech he Made a statement that stuck with me. He said, “Peace is not just the absence of conflict.” Until the hatred in the world stops the winners will persecute the losers and the losers will Plot their revenge.

I liken our church to a lava lamp, remember those? We are constantly in flux,

Ever changing, ever evolving, yet still held in by the glass bulb, the scriptures and

Our faith that God gave his son for our sins. It is hard for us to get our message out when

The press and the media distort what we say or stereotype us. Because of our diversity we Really can't be pigeonholed. We, like all Christians, are in a fishbowl. Everything we do Is magnified. When we slip up or even if it is perceived we are wrong the unchurched say "I don't want to be associated with them. They preach one thing and do the other. We are All human and we all sin. How can we as a church let the world know what wonderful Things God is doing through us? Our church is in the forefront of so many historic events That I really believe the UCC is poised to do great things in the near future. Yes we have Problems, all families have disagreements, but that doesn't mean we can't come together In Christian love. We as a church will always agree to disagree. God gave us two ears And one mouth for a reason. The only way we can learn is to listen to our fellow Christians and to God.

What does the future hold for the UCC? With congregations leaving the church and Giving down, especially to our missions and the youth having trouble identifying With us, is there a future? Our answer is in Romans 8:26-30. "We know that all things Work together for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son In order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he Predestined he also called; and those whom he justified he also glorified. If that is not God speaking to the UCC I don't know what else can be said. Our covenant as a church Is to embrace our neighbor, whoever he or she may be, in Christian love, not to judge, not Even to understand, but to accept that person as they are, "warts and all." We have a lot Of work to do, but if we use the talents God gave us and continually seek to do his will The future is bright for the UCC. May we all truly some day be one.

Well written - Thanks for your participation