



*NHCO Vision 2021*

# THE ONE GENERATION

Jan 16-17

Pastor Mike Palompo

WEEK THREE

## **Study Notes and Questions for Discussion and Personal Reflection.**

*After hearing the message, by faith, summarize what God said to you* \_\_\_\_\_

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Quick, ask the people next to you, “What is our Church’s one-word vision for 2021?” If they said “ONE” then give them... an air five. And tell them, “I love you and there’s nothing you can do about it.” Welcome to Week 3 of our original series to kick off the New Year.

Week 1 we learned that Jesus’ vision for His Church is that we become ONE. Because the more unified in love we become the more we will experience His Presence and power.

Week 2 we learned that we can only become ONE when we are united with THE ONE, Jesus, who makes us ONE with the Father.

This is Week 3 where we will learn that because Jesus makes us ONE with the Father, we can now become with one another--THE ONE GENERATION.

*Summarize what you are learning in our ONE Series after 3 weeks* \_\_\_\_\_

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So what do Jews call anyone who is NOT Jewish? Right. A Gentile. It’s such a BINARY way of looking at people. You’re either a Jew or you’re one of “them.” So crazy that they have a word that basically means, “You’re not one of us.” But when you think about it, EVERY culture has a word like that. In Tagalog we say, “dayuhan.” Japanese say “gaijin(g).” Chinese say “guilo.” Africans say “mizungoo.” Of course, what do we all say here in Hawaii? HAOLE. We all have a word that distinguishes us guys from you guys. And if you think this is just about countries,

think again. In the Philippines, Tagalogs and Ilocanos don't like each other. Japanese and Okinawans don't like each other. Samoans versus Tongans. We each identify with our own tribe, and we're quick to identify those who are not one of us. And each tribe has a "vision" for the way WE think, talk, speak, dress, and live which is different from the way YOU guys are. And what happens when we have different visions? There it is again. DI-VISION. DIVISION.

*Growing up what did you learn from your culture about how the way you view other cultures?*

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But now Jesus has changed all that. We no longer see our nation, our ethnicity, our culture, our tribe as the most important thing. Let's read this together. Ready go:

For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies" (Ephesians 2:14 GNT).

*How does Jesus, our King, change the way we see other cultures?*

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Remember from last week the sacrifice of Jesus gives us new life in the Spirit where we are now seated next to Jesus who is seated at the right hand of the Father. From our NEW vantage point in the Heavenly Realms, we see ourselves and everything else in a totally different light. Now, because we are carriers of the Holy Spirit, we are included in the Trinity, made ONE with God. We have been brought to life by faith in Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit, now God has become our Father.

*If God is MY Father, and God is YOUR Father, that makes us what?*

*How does realizing we are family change the way we see each other?*

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The New Living Translation says we have become ONE PEOPLE, but the original Greek just says ONE. Jews and Gentiles have become ONE. We have become ONE. GONE is the generation of hatred and war. Because of Jesus, we have become THE ONE GENERATION. There's an ancient Hebrew word that captures exactly the kind of oneness God envisions for us: **אֶחָד (ECHAD)**. To say it properly in Hebrew, you need to sound like you're clearing your throat. ECHAD. Try it, it's fun! **ECHAD means ONE**. Among the IVRI, the Hebrews, they have a saying: Shema Yisrael, Adonai eloheinu, Adonai ECHAD. Veahavta et Adonai eloheikha bekol levakha, uvekol nafshekha, uvekol meodekhah. It means:

**"Listen up and obey, O Israel, the LORD is our God. The LORD is ONE. And you shall love the LORD with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength"** (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; cf.

Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). This is their most important and cherished commandment, the favorite verse of the IVRI. Just so you know, Jesus was IVRI, so it was HIS favorite too. Of all the gods worshiped in the world, this revelation tells us there is actually only ONE God. And this ONE God is the Lord our God. But the word ECHAD has a deeper meaning: "Perfect unity in diversity." Our God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--3 distinct persons. DIVERSE. But they are perfectly UNITED. Wonderfully diverse, but perfectly united in love. Perfect unity in diversity. So when we come to Jesus, we may be really different from each other, but we stand united. Amen? Everyone in the Ephesian Church united around this supernatural vision. They all agreed, "This is the Way." So with your best Mandalorian impression, turn to the person next to you and say, "This is the Way." Whenever someone says that, you're supposed to repeat it back to them. It's what Mandalorians do.

*What does "echad" mean? How does it describe God's plan for all your relationships?\_\_\_\_\_*

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How many of us know, **UNITY does not mean UNIFORMITY.** We don't need to look or even think exactly alike. We have different ethnicities, different nationalities, different backgrounds. And as we will discover later, different gifts and different roles to play in the body of Christ. But we are no longer to be at odds with each other. We have become one--The ONE GENERATION. This is the way. This was NOT easy for the Church at Ephesus--not easy AT ALL. Remember this is a Church made up of mostly Jews, Greeks, and Romans. As Paul is writing this, the heavy hand of Caesar, the god-king, and his Empire are oppressing and crushing any who would oppose it. Paul himself is a prisoner of Rome as he's writing this letter! Romans see themselves as the conquerors of the world--conquerors of the Jews and Greeks. And they terrorize people by public torture, flogging, and crucifixion. And now God is calling Jewish and Greek believers to love their Roman conquerors like family. And less than two centuries ago, the Greeks marched into the Temple in Jerusalem, set up a statue of Zeus, and sacrificed a pig on the Ark of the Covenant. I cannot imagine anything more offensive to a Jew than to see this abomination of desolation take place in the House of God. All this is still fresh in the hearts and minds of these believers. Make no mistake Jews hate Greeks and Romans. Romans hate Jews and Greeks. Greeks hate Romans and Jews. They are each other's mortal enemies.

*Describe the relationship between Jews, Greeks, and Romans BEFORE meeting Jesus.\_\_\_\_\_*

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But now because of Jesus, the walls that separated them, made them enemies, have been torn down! Hallelujah! They have experienced the love and forgiveness of Jesus, now they love and forgive each other. Their hatred for each other has melted away. They're sitting together in the same Church worshiping the same God, no longer hating each other, no longer enemies. These Jews love their Greek and Roman brothers and sisters, and vice versa. Now they say to each other, "I love you and there's nothing you can do about it."

*Describe the relationship between Jews, Greeks, and Romans AFTER meeting Jesus.* \_\_\_\_\_

Oh, they're still very different from each other in many ways, but because of Jesus they have learned to extend grace to each other and have become ECHAD, perfect unity in diversity. So when you come to Church, don't look around and say, "No mo nuff Filipinos in hea." Or, "No mo nuff Japani." Don't come to Church looking for people who look like you. Instead, look for people who look more like Jesus. There's a NEW BREED of Humanity that exists today--made possible by the finished work of Jesus Christ.

*How did you decide what Church to attend? What was your criteria? What SHOULD be your criteria? Explain.* \_\_\_\_\_

Today there is something that divides the Church in Hawaii even more powerfully than racism. The Church is divided on politics, between Democrats and Republicans. We have people in our Church that remember the golden days of the Democrat Party in Hawaii, and they are loyal to the Democrat Party, maybe forever. When I tried to make politics one of the things to discuss in Church, part of our discipleship, I came across pretty passionate about my own political convictions. Others were very passionate about theirs. I was trying to start a conversation in the Church, get us talking around the dinner table about the relevant issues of our day. But politics became a wedge issue in our Church, and sadly, people left. I did not ask them to leave. I wanted them to stay and have a conversation, but they felt they could not stay. What happens when the Church has wedge issues? You get a wedge. Am I going to stop talking about political issues in the Church? Absolutely not. The Holy Spirit is in charge of the pulpit, not me or you. How many of us know that abortion is not a political issue? It's a moral issue. If the Church cannot take a stand against murder, something is seriously wrong. Marriage between a man and woman is not a political issue. It's a moral issue.

*Should the Church avoid raising controversial issues from the pulpit for fear that people might leave? Explain.* \_\_\_\_\_

*What would happen if we avoided controversial subject matter like abortion and gay marriage?* \_\_\_\_\_

So how do we have fruitful, meaningful conversations between Christians even though we might be super passionate about what we believe? Once upon a time the Jews, Greeks, and Romans were so passionate about their beliefs, they were at war with one another and they

killed each other. But they overcame their differences so they could co-exist and live in peace and harmony. How? Here it is, we must always remember that our relationship with Jesus makes us ONE and that NOTHING--not politics or party, not ethnicity or tribe--is more important than that. Nothing is more important than our love for God and our love for each other. Absolutely nothing. Full stop. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200. We should be able to discuss ANYTHING, even if we passionately disagree, and still remain ONE in Christ, ONE Church. Amen? And the reason is, even if we passionately disagree, "I love you and there's nothing you can do about it." And I hope you feel the same way about me.

*How did the Jews, Greeks, and Romans in the Ephesian Church overcome their differences? How do we?* \_\_\_\_\_  
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*How do we have fruitful, meaningful conversations about controversial issues? Any suggestions?* \_\_\_\_\_  
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So at NHCO we will learn how to have fruitful, meaningful conversations--without getting a wedgy. If I am wrong about my beliefs, I need you to set me straight. And vice versa. But if we split apart, how will we grow?

*Do you feel you have all the answers to every issue, and therefore, you have no need to listen to the viewpoints of others?* \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Have you ever benefited from hearing another point of view after believing you were absolutely right? If so, describe the encounter.* \_\_\_\_\_  
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The Lord is speaking to us, Church. Do you think it a coincidence that this Monday, January 18, is MLK Day? Let's not forget that Martin Luther King was a pastor. He was Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. His civil rights movement, which was deeply political, originated in the Church. Dr. King preached it from the pulpit before He preached it in Washington DC. He dreamed of a nation where people would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. He was inspired by the same vision we see here in Ephesians: Jews are co-equal with Gentiles in the eyes of God. Blacks are co-equal with Whites. Women are co-equal with Men. We're not the same as each other, but because of Jesus we can be ONE. This week meditate on what inspired Rev. King to sacrifice his life for civil rights.

*Why did Martin Luther King lead the civil rights movement in America? Where did he get his values from?* \_\_\_\_\_  
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The Church of Jesus Christ is an amazing, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, diverse fellowship made ONE by the love, grace, and forgiveness of Christ on the Cross. When we are united with Jesus, we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and included in the Trinity. And if God is MY Father, and God is YOUR Father, then that makes us what? Brothers and sisters. No more wedgies. This is the way. Tell the person next to you, "I love you and there's nothing you can do about it." Before we go, let's respond to God in prayer. Father in Heaven, thank You for Jesus. Jesus, thank You for dying for me and raising my spirit to new life! I believe in You and will follow You and cross over with You into the Promised Land of God's Presence. Thank You for filling me with the Holy Spirit and binding me to the Trinity. I repent of all my selfishness. I repent from any unforgiveness I have against anyone. I repent from wedge issues, anything that divides me from my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of their ethnicity, race, or politics. I declare that nothing is more important to me than being ONE with You, Father, and ONE with my brothers and sisters in Christ. And I stand UNITED with Christ and UNITED with the family of God. In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. God bless you all. See you next week as our ONE original series continues. ALOOO-HA!

*In conclusion, would you write out your own prayer response to the Father? What has He revealed to you about your life? How will you respond?* \_\_\_\_\_  
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