



“And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world...” (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week’s lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
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IDENTITY POLITICS

Numerous candidates now seek nomination for the office of U.S. President. Media outlets speculate about which candidate is most likely to capture the vote of the various demographic groups that make up America, groups that are described in terms of gender, age, economic status, race, religion, marital status, cultural heritage—the list goes on! Identity politics is nothing new. But as America becomes ever more diverse, targeted appeals seem increasingly the norm.

IDENTITY CHRISTIANITY

The world views people in terms of their differences. This week’s lesson acknowledges the importance of differing functions within the body of Christ (the church), but of much greater significance is what Christians have in common: salvation in Jesus. This is the basis of Christian unity; this is what forms and shapes the diversity of the church’s many members into a single unified body. The nature of our earthly demographic differences fades in importance once we realize where our primary identity lies.

1. What positive and negative values are there in appealing specifically to narrow demographic slices of voters in an election campaign?
2. What does Paul’s illustration of the human body say about divisiveness in the church of the twenty-first century?
3. How do we recognize when a church is “celebrating diversity” at the expense of “promoting unity” within the body of believers? How do we recognize the reverse?
4. Does Paul’s thoughts on a unified body that is composed of diverse members apply only to differing spiritual gifts for service, or does it apply to doctrinal beliefs as well? Explain.
5. How do you personally welcome into your church fellowship those who are culturally, ethnically, or racially different from you?

—Charles R. Boatman

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