

About...

We are in Christ

...how and why it was written

An urgent desire for a song about unity led me to write this song – and though I'd written a number of songs when I was younger, this was really the start of my song-writing. An easy topic to start with then?

I wish we were more bothered with unity – I wish we prayed for it more, sung about it more, lived it more. Our church is so divided by denominations and doctrines. Of course they matter. But not more than the love of Christ we share.

I don't know quite when I started caring so much about unity to be honest. I think it might have been when I was at CU at Uni and started coming across more Christians from different backgrounds. I found myself devastated when there were divisions or exclusions evident amongst Christians on campus when we were all there wanting to love the people there – but we were hampered because I don't think we were really known for how we loved each other.

When I worked for Watford New Hope Trust – a homelessness charity in Hertfordshire – I saw just how powerful unity can be, and the incredible things that can be achieved when churches work together. Seeing the impact and transformation brought about by unified love at a local level gave me the faith for Christians really impacting poverty, even on a world-wide scale. And my time at Christian Aid strengthened my understanding of, and value for the diversity of the church. I love the church and what it can achieve when it focuses on what's most important – when it loves.

...how, where and when it could be used

I have used this song a lot congregationally and found it to work well, particularly during communion, or in response to a sermon, or word, about unity.

...it's place on the journey to where world and worship meet

Part of the reason we haven't blown the world away by our love for them, is because we haven't been loving each other. Some people say it's harder to love the church than the lost. I'm not sure that's true. How can you make a distinction like that? We're all lost. We all need love.

We must love beyond our walls. But if we can't love within them first, I don't think we ever will – because the first outward-focussed step, is the one out of your own circumstances, to those standing next to you. As we care about the needs, sickness and injustice faced by others in our faith community, we will find we start to care wider and wider. Yes we must love our enemies, our most distant neighbours and our rivals. But that's for nothing if we can't love our brothers and sisters in Christ.

About...

We are in Christ

And one more spanner for the works... I'm not at all sure this means loving but not liking. Love is a higher form of affection than like, and I don't think we should be giving ourselves this kind of an opt out from true community. God is likeable as well as loveable, and everyone in our churches is made in his image, and being transformed more into his likeness. What's not to like? Certainly not everything.