

- UNITY -

*"And (God) gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the Body of Christ."
(Ephesians 4:11-12)*



The Berean Lamp
For the Body of Christ.

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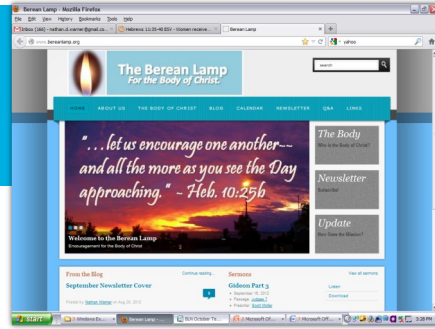
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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

Editor-in-Chief: Nathan Warner
Oversight Committee: Pastor Scott Moller, Deacon Bob Larsen, Nathan Warner
Editors: Natalie Madsen, Lynn Warner, Julie Moller





Unity of the Body

By Scott Moller

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”
(Ephesians 4:2 NIV)

You have probably heard the well known quote, “No man is an island,” by John Donne, a seventeenth-century English clergyman and writer. Donne was trying to convey the inter-connection and dependence that each person has with other people. Certainly, at birth, each one of us was dependent on others for our very survival. Beyond that, throughout our lives, each of us receives and gives assistance and care.

In Scripture, God teaches us that Believers are also to be interdependent with one another. One of the most familiar teachings by the Apostle Paul is that all Believers form one “body.” Paul states: *“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body”* (1 Corinthians 12:12a). Again Paul states: *“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it”* (1 Corinthians 12:26-27).

This analogy is very useful in helping us understand how Believers are to function together. It is obvious to us that the individual parts of our physical bodies are useless by themselves. Likewise, Paul wants Christians to understand that they are not separate from one another. Christians are really connected to one another, so much so, that when one suffers all suffer, and when one rejoices, all rejoice.

Sadly, many Christians do not act as if they are part of the “Body of Christ.” In fact, many Christians function as if they are completely independent of the Church. This harms both the Believer and the Church alike. The Church

is harmed because it has to function without all of its parts. This is much like a physical body that is missing an arm or leg. It still functions, but it is obviously incomplete and limited in its abilities. The individual Believer is harmed because the person is operating without his intended support and accountability structure. This weakens the Believer and limits his fruitfulness.

God established the Church as a body for our benefit and His glory. God knows that the life of a Christian in this world will be difficult and often discouraging. A properly functioning Church will be a place of sanctuary and encouragement for the believer. The Church also is to be a place of loving instruction and accountability to help keep us on the right track.

Most of all, God receives the glory when Believers operate in unity within the Church. The work of the Church is a group-effort by Spirit-filled Believers – not any one individual. God should always receive the credit for the work of the Church and not individuals. In addition, unity within the Church helps point people to Christ. Drawing people to Christ is the ultimate goal of the Church, which should be our focus. We should take great care to be Biblically unified within the Church for the glory of God.

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
(1 Corinthians 10:31)



World Body

"And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of

God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."
(Romans 1:28-32)



Spiritual Palsy

By Nathan Warner

“And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.”

(Acts 9:32-34 KJV)

Palsy - “Complete or partial muscle paralysis, often accompanied by loss of sensation and uncontrollable body movements or tremors.” (Free Online Dictionary)

Palsy is a broad medical term for conditions that prevent signals from the brain from being correctly interpreted by the members of the body. A person suffering from Palsy may, for example, desire to stand up, walk to the window, or pick up a cup, but their limbs cannot obey their will – they jerk and spaz in random directions. This physical condition illustrates when the body “rebels” against the will of the head and will not carry out its instructions. It is not whole or one in its desires and actions.

When the members of the body are in harmony, every command of the will is flawlessly carried out. We see this illustrated in the grace of a dancer, the poise of an acrobat, or the skill of an athlete. When there is perfect harmony in a body, it commands the attention of those around it. When there is disharmony or disunity in a body, we call it a disease or impairment, because it impairs the natural order that is designed to keep the members working together to carry out the head’s desire.

Spastic Members of a Body

So often, believers may feel they don’t have unity with one another. We may feel we have so little in common that it’s almost impossible to spend time with each other unless it is in

small-talk once a week at Church. Many times, in the awkward spaces when conversation is attempted, it may become obvious that we have little in common, and we may stick to our little circles of “like-minded” people. We may wonder how it is possible that so many different people should come together under one roof.

Our differences can sometimes create confusion and disorder. They can distract our coordination, our focus, and our surety. This in turn threatens the coordination and unity of the Body’s members, for *“the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body”* (1 Corinthians 12:14-20).

For example, if the feet command that all members should touch the ground as they do, the eyes, ears, hands may be dismayed. If the whole body tried to obey the feet, then it would be contorted on the ground in painful spasms. If the feet in turn are told by the hands that they should comb the hair or make coffee or change a light bulb, things might get kind of awkward.

This is what happens when members of the body are more focused on getting other members to follow them or be like them than accepting that God made the members for different tasks. In turn, the members may also be listening to influences outside the body. What if the heart is listening to someone else’s head tell it to take a break just as its body is preparing for a marathon? What if the feet want to go to the beach, but the ankles want to go to the chiropractor; and the calves want to get pumping on a racetrack, but the knees want to find an arm chair? The body would suffer

palsy, with every member seeking its own will, completely and totally uncoordinated.

When this happens in a body or group of people, the members are being influenced by their fleshly natures. For example, when a pastor puts the Word of God aside in order to draw a larger following at his church, he glories in himself at the Body's expense. It happens when members do not help other members, when needs are not met, when wealthy members refuse to associate with poor members, or when members only talk about cars, dresses, Monday mornings at work, and lampshades rather than the Word of God. When the flesh is the focus, everyone does what is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6b), and the body becomes sick.

Unity in the Flesh?

But as we see in the world, a form of unity can exist in the fleshly nature. Unity in the world is often created by appealing to as many different selfish bents as possible. "What are you going to do for me?" is always the cry, or "How is this going to benefit me?" By promoting the flesh, compromising and tolerating sin, wicked men try to create cohesive units of people mired in their own desires but animated for a common goal that will deliver them their fleshly desires. It works by directing their energies against the things that stand in the way of the fleshly desires being fulfilled. The world has always operated this way, but we have certainly seen how effective this is in the last few years, when appealing to the flesh draws all men to political parties, causes, organizations, and beliefs. We see that it is easy to gain supporters if you promise sinful men all the desires of their sinful hearts. "You want other people to pay for your lifestyle? Sure, we can give you that. You want free abortions? Vote for us, and we'll force the people standing against you to back down. You want to be able to extort legally? We can find a way to help you do that." By appealing to the lusts of the flesh, mankind draws all men under his banner, welcoming people onto the foundation of sin, not realizing that *"the wages of sin is*

death" (Romans 6:23a). Any unity that exists apart from God leads to death.

Unity in the Church

As we shall see, unity in the true Church is never created by unifying around the flesh, but the flesh still animates the members at times. This is often the case, because the flesh defines so much of our existence here. Perhaps it's personas, legacies, personalities, or careers. We all have tastes and preferences where our physical natures interact with the physical world. We have different experiences in our lives that shape our views about "how things work" out there in the world and in God's Kingdom. Our interests and work are vastly different. Some of us are practical and some dreamers. Sometimes we get caught up defining ourselves as the world defines and sees us: scientists, craftsmen, musicians, writers, doctors, etc. Sometimes we can be trapped in how the Church sees us: missionaries, pastors, organists, and seat-warmers. We get so caught up in our alter-egos that we lose sight of how God sees us.

We may have different backgrounds when it comes to how we view prophecy, free-will, predestination, baptism, and statements of faith. We may even show allegiance to certain teachings. All of these things can cause disunity and contention if stood upon, *"for it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, 'I follow Paul,' or 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Cephas,' or 'I follow Christ'"* (1 Corinthians 1:11-12). How can we have unity if we have such different inspirations? How do we live as one body if we are living separate lives – lives defined by the world and the flesh? What happens when we are so focused on these other signals that we are numb to the signals coming from the Head? Are we suffering spiritual palsy?

The Head of the Body

"We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the

whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

(Ephesians 4:15b-16)

The truth is, the things we allow to control us have so little to do with God. These worldly and fleshly affairs matter little from the perspective of an eternal, spiritual God. As such, they should not matter to us. He does not measure our worth by the Earthly things that we do – our success and accomplishments, our divergent interests, our disagreeing tastes, or our intellectual endeavors that so often consume our eyes. His gaze is on the motives of our heart and the deeds it carries out in the body. God values the things we often spend so little time sharing with one another. If this is what matters to Him, should it not be what matters to us too? God weighs what is eternal inside of us – what will last beyond the grave for all time. The sum of that weight leads either to Heaven or to Hell.

Whether we believe it or not, our eternal weight is bound up entirely in one thing and one thing only – Jesus Christ. He alone is Life. Anything other than Him leads to death. He tips the scale to Life for each of us who puts our faith in Him and obeys Him as Lord. In His eyes, we are not defined by the needs of the Body or the necessities we seek from the world – we are defined by the spirit that motivates us. Is it Jesus or the *"prince of this world"* (John 12:31)? If we are Believers, we are defined by Christ Jesus – who He is, His nature, what He did for us, and what He has promised He will do.

Our foundation is nothing other than the Word of God, which tells us He was born of a virgin, was crucified, was dead and buried, was resurrected, and now sits on the right hand of the Father being given all glory and power in Heaven and on Earth, and He will return for all those that trust in Him and rule the Earth. This is our identity, our foundation. Jesus is what we need to be tuned to – to sense the signals when they come commanding us to action that will glorify and serve our Heavenly Father

– action that leads to Life.

If we agree with the Scriptures as our authority, then there is no room for division where Jesus is concerned. *"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"* (1 Corinthians 1:13) Paul chose to focus on the one thing that could not be disagreed over – the one thing that was worth standing on and the only sure foundation: Jesus Christ: *"And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God"* (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). The foundation here is Jesus Christ by the power of God. This alone is the foundation that defines who we are. Only in Christ can we have unity, by being in the Word and in prayer, by seeking the conviction of His Holy Spirit in our lives, by repenting of our sins and putting to death our fleshly nature.

When we spend our time and our energy in life on the things of the world and the flesh, the harmony of God's Life in our lives is interrupted, because we are not living in the Spirit. The result is spastic, convulsive lives with each member busily activating themselves for their own desires. These desires, if not God's desires, lead only to death. *"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other"* (Galatians 5:17).

When we are focused on the workings of the world and the needs of the flesh, we are unstable in our ways and easily *"tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes"* (Ephesians 4:14b)... *"for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live"* (Romans 8:13). Here we see that it is not by appealing to the flesh that Unity exists in the Body of Christ. It is not

through tolerance and acceptance that the Body grows. *"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (James 4:4b).

Paul reminds us though that *"from now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer"* (2 Corinthians 5:16). In order to have unity in the Body, we must not regard anyone in a fleshly way. We must put aside the things that are not Christ. Any other allegiances or



By Lynn Warner

*"ABIDE in me, and I in you. As the BRANCH cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the VINE, neither can you, unless you ABIDE in me."
(John 15:4)*

impulses in the members threaten to interrupt the grace, poise, and skill of the Body's work. We should take care to examine ourselves and our motives if we are creating controversy, debate, or disagreement, which can unsettle and distract the other members of the Body from listening to the Head. We must ask the Holy Spirit to search the intents of our heart and convict us if we have stepped off our foundation in Jesus. There will always be differences between us on any number of things, and we can share these differences with one another if they are shared in love and not added to our Head. The only sure and eternal Foundation that will endure the quakes and storms of life, is Christ and Christ alone.

To have unity, one with another, we must lay *"aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God"* (Hebrews 12:1-2).

"As the blood of the body, though flowing from the heart, belongs equally to every member, so the influences of grace are the inheritance of every saint united to the Lamb; and herein there is a sweet communion between Christ and his Church, inasmuch as they both receive the same grace. Christ is the head upon which the oil is first poured; but the same oil runs to the very skirts of the garments, so that the meanest saint has an unction of the same costly moisture as that which fell upon the head. This is true communion when the sap of grace flows from the stem to the branch, and when it is perceived that the stem itself is sustained by the very nourishment which feeds the branch. As we day by day receive grace from Jesus, and more constantly recognize it as coming from him, we shall behold him in communion with us, and enjoy the felicity of communion with him."

(From *Morning and Evening* by Charles Spurgeon, from March 15)

What is Unity?

Unity of the Vine and the Branches

By Ginny Larsen

"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
(2 Timothy 2:1)

"And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."
(John 1:16)

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."
(John 15:4-5)

There are those who think they have unity outside of abiding in the true Vine, Who is Christ Himself. They have a form of "unity," but it is not the unity of the Spirit, which we have only as we are placed into Christ, as a branch that drinks and receives life from that Vine. People can create unity from many different common goals. They may have political goals or religious goals, and they may want to join together for a common cause, but in the Body of Christ, there is a unity that has been made by Jesus Christ. He was crucified for our sins, He rose again for our life, and only as we partake of Him through the Holy Spirit He has given is there unity that comes from abiding in Him.

We may disagree with one another on issues, and not all of us see eye-to-eye, but in Christ, there is a unity for those who are born of His Spirit, cleansed by His blood, and sharing in His Body. We are united under one Head: Jesus Christ Himself. We draw our life from the same Head, receive the same grace,

and all our giftings come from the same Spirit for the same purpose: His glory. Unity can only come as the truth of Christ is believed in our hearts. True unity can be realized only if we are founded on that truth, which unites us to our Head.

We abide in Jesus and His unity when we take in His Word and believe it and obey it. "Good feelings" do not cause unity with Him or one another. Overlooking sin and excusing it does not enable us to have unity nor is it agreeing with each other on a few issues while overlooking other important truths. Unity is the truth of Jesus Christ. Who He is, what He did, and our obedience of faith enables us to have unity first with Him, the Head, and then with the rest of the Body. As the Truth is shared, all receive the life that only comes from the True Vine flowing to the branches. As we abide in His Word, meditating on it and observing all that we learn of Him, trusting in Him, His life fills us and automatically will produce fruit in our lives. That fruit will all be characteristic of the Vine it comes from. We cannot have unity with those of a tree or vine other than Jesus. *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits"* (Matthew 7:15-20).

Coexist? Or Unity in Christ?

Today, there is a movement toward "unity" that unites around everything else but the truth of God's Word or Jesus Christ. It seeks to unite Christians with Muslims, Buddhists, cults, and every other religion, ideology, and philosophy. The purpose of this movement is to form a one world religion. The Bible calls this movement *"the great Harlot"* (Revelation 17). Bumper stickers now tell us to "coexist"

and show symbols for each religion. Yet, the one thing they know they cannot coexist with is the truth. This is why they must unite in wiping out truth. They think they can have unity and peace if they can wipe out the foundation of truth and build another foundation, but any other foundation besides the truth of Jesus Christ is no foundation at all but rather sinking sand for those who try to build on it.

In Christian churches everywhere, congregations are told the Word of God is not relevant for our day. We are told that to be relevant to the world, we now need to go outside of it. Mystical experiences, false signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and extra-Biblical revelations give a false sense that God is with them in this. We are told we need to "love one another" and not judge, but when you present truth, they will claim you are judging them. Yet, it is the truth itself that judges them - not any person - because truth exposes lies. They will not mention the Gospel, the blood of Jesus, sin and the human condition, or why we need salvation and what we need to be saved from. We quickly learn that truth itself must never be presented if we are to all coexist in the "unity" of "love and acceptance" without the Gospel. The unity that comes out of this becomes a united effort against God Himself and His Word.

The unity that comes in Christ cannot also unite itself with the world or false religion. It has to separate itself from the world and hold fast to the Vine, receiving nothing else but what comes from the Vine. If it does receive from the world, it cannot be united with the Vine itself, let alone the branches that are united to the Vine. *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be*

separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

We Are Of One Seed

The unity we have in Christ is a family unity. We are all of one seed (1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:9). Just as in our earthly families we have one father, who has given his seed, we are all of the same seed in Christ. We are of “imperishable” seed. It is eternal. It does not ever perish or become corrupted. It is everlasting and manifests itself in us by the nature it gives us. We are born of righteous seed and receive a nature that does not want to sin and cannot continue in sin. It is against our nature to do so even though we still have this nature of our flesh that we battle with. We feel it in ourselves, in our new nature, in that Spirit that dwells in us when we sin, and we grieve over our sin and hate it and turn back to our Abba, crying out to Him. We go to our Advocate to be cleansed, as we agree with Him in His hatred for that sin. As we grow in Christ, that new nature is formed in us more and more and becomes more evident. We see more and more our own helplessness in ourselves to be anything but abiding in the Vine. The more we all abide as a Body in that Vine, the more true unity in Him is manifest in us all together. We see what we are being made to be – a dwelling place for God! *“In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22).*

Unity Through Christ Alone

There is no unity in our flesh when it tries to “get along,” but as we acknowledge the inadequacy of our flesh and consider ourselves “crucified with Christ,” then we are alive unto God, and His nature of love comes forth in us (1 Corinthians 13). God cannot dwell with false religion, He cannot dwell with sin, He cannot dwell with anyone that is not of His own seed and righteousness. He cannot dwell

with human self-righteousness, because it is corruptible. Self-centered attempts at goodness cannot have communion with Him. Nothing will please God but faith (Hebrews 11:6). That faith has to be a uniting with Him in His death and resurrection through faith in His righteousness alone and in all He is and said He will do. It has to be a leaving behind of our own self-righteousness, our own ways, and what we hold onto as our life in this world. It is no longer “I” who live but *“Christ Who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).*

This is why we take communion in church – we are acknowledging the communion of the Body of Christ. We are acknowledging His death, atonement for sin, and His resurrection from death. We are acknowledging what He did for each of us and as a whole – we acknowledge that our righteousness does not come from ourselves but from Jesus and what He did. Our unity with Christ and one another comes from Jesus and what He did. We acknowledge His promise to bring all of that to fulfillment in Him when He returns to take us to be with Him. Now, we walk by faith, keeping that communion with Him, abiding in Him, and sharing communion with one another, established in His unity and none other.

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1). In this grace that flows from Christ, we are strengthened. We are strengthened in our own life as we are freed from our sin nature. We are strengthened each time that grace works in us to manifest the nature of Christ in us and put to death our flesh. We are growing from grace first received to more and more grace working in us as we abide in Him and His Word and as we let His life work in us. That grace then flows to the whole Body of Believers and brings more grace and life and fruit. The Unity of the Body of Christ grows stronger and healthier. From His fullness, then, we are all receiving grace upon grace.

Abba, may Your life-giving sap flow through us all daily and enable us to see all that we are being brought to as one Body in Christ and the ultimate unity we will know in Heaven!



*"Because I live, ye shall live
also." (John 14:19b)*

By Ginny Larsen



*"Yours is the day, yours
also the night; you have
established the heavenly
lights and the sun."
(Psalm 74:16)*

Sing A New Song

Words by Reginald Heber

Music by John Bacchus Dykes

"Only Thou art holy – there is none beside Thee"



Holy, Holy, Holy! 15

1. Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!
 2. Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly! All the saints a - dore Thee,
 3. Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly! Though the dark - ness hide Thee,
 4. Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song to Thee be raised;
 Cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;
 Though the eye of sin - ful man Thy glo - ry may not see,
 All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth and sky and sea;

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y!
 On - ly Thou art ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore Thee,
 Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly! there is none be - side Thee,
 Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y!

God - ev - er glo - rious - ev - er - more be praised,
 Who - wert, and art, and - ev - er - more shalt be,
 Per - fect in pow'r, in love, and pur - i - ty.
 God - ev - er glo - rious, ev - er praise to Thee. A - men.

Reginald Heber, 1826, alt. John Bacchus Dykes, 1861

Holy, Holy, Holy

By Maggie Moller

"And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah 6:3)

"Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come." (Revelation 4:8)

This hymn reminds me of the majesty and authority of God. When I sing or play this hymn, I cannot help myself from being filled with the awe of God's holiness and the joy that

He loves me although I am a sinner! I cannot wait until the day when I can sing with the angels in heaven praises to my King!

The Lyricist: Reginald Heber

Reginald Heber was born on April 21, 1783, in Cheshire, England. His father was a wealthy landowner and clergyman. Reginald attended Oxford University, where he gained a reputation as a poet. Throughout college, he received many awards in English and Latin. In 1807, he was ordained and took over the ministry at his father's parish, where he served as a country minister for sixteen years. During his ministry, Reginald wrote many hymns for use in his parish. "Holy, Holy, Holy" was written for Trinity Sunday.

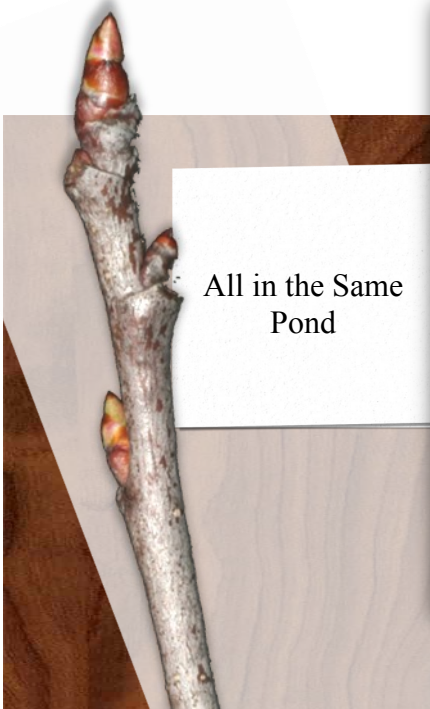
Reginald married Mary Baylie, and they had a son. Sadly, however, Mary died at a young age. After his first wife's death,

Reginald married Mary Allanson. Through this marriage, Reginald had two more sons, the eldest named after his father. In 1823, Reginald, somewhat reluctantly, became the Bishop of Calcutta in India. He served in India for three years until his death on April 3, 1826. He died due to a combination of poor health and the oppressive climate of India. Most of his hymns were not published until his death.


The Composer: John Bacchus Dykes

John Bacchus Dykes was born on March 10, 1823, in Kingston, England. He was the fifth child of William and Elizabeth Dykes. When he was twelve years old, he became the assistant organist at St. John's Church in Hull, England, where his grandfather was the minister. During this time, he learned to play the piano, organ, violin, and horn. In 1862, he was ordained the Vicar of St. Oswald's. Throughout his life, Dykes published many sermons and articles on religion; however, he is best known for composing over 300 hymns. He passed away on January 22, 1876.

Sources Consulted:
Cyberhymnal.com
Wikipedia




By Patty Buswell



*"Behold, how GOOD and pleasant it is when BROTHERS
dwell in UNITY!" (Psalm 133:1)*

By Lynn Warner



*"Finally, all of you, have
UNITY of mind, sympathy,
brotherly LOVE, a tender heart,
and a humble MIND."
(1 Peter 3:8)*

A Unity That Praises Him

By Natalie Madsen

“How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever....”
(Psalm 146:5-6 NASB)

Leonardo of Pisa was born in Italy during the late 1100s. His reputation as a gifted mathematician soared when he discovered an intricate numbering sequence that is still awing scientists to this day. While studying rabbits, Leonardo of Pisa found that the little creatures multiplied in number from one to thirteen in seven months – not randomly but in a distinct pattern. Leonardo, who was nicknamed Fibonacci, had unearthed the “Fibonacci number sequence.”

The Fibonacci sequence is a pattern of numbers that begins with the number 1. The next numbers are determined by adding the previous two together. Thus, the sequence goes as such: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, and on. Leonardo’s rabbits multiplied in this exact pattern.

Throughout the Middle Ages and down through the years, artists such as Leonardo de Vinci grabbed a hold of the Fibonacci sequence and used it in their art. Why? When two consequential numbers in the Fibonacci sequence are used for the length and width of a rectangle, that forms a shape that is equal, perfect, and beautiful to the human eye. A 5 x 8 rectangle, then, is called a Golden Rectangle. Using the same concept, a perfect Golden Spiral can be created by also using numbers in the Fibonacci sequence. On de Vinci’s painting of *The Last Supper*, the far wall behind the image of Christ is a Golden Rectangle.

The Fibonacci sequence is an example of the beauty and harmony in the Lord’s creation. Leonardo did not find the only occurrence of this perfect number sequence. On the contrary, this pattern is found throughout nature. The two spirals of seeds on a sunflower, for instance, both have consecutive Fibonacci num-

bers of seeds on each spiral – 34 and 55 seeds, for instance. Pinecones are formed in a perfect arrangement of seeds, as well, with consecutive Fibonacci numbers. Fruit and the family trees of some insects are also framed around the Fibonacci sequence. We find flowers whose number of petals aligns with the pattern, as well, and even leaves and their positions on plants’ stems have been said to have the same numerical pattern.

Leonardo of Pisa merely discovered a pattern that was already beautifully woven through God’s creation. The artists who used the pattern to make beautiful works of art with equal and beautiful shapes were merely copying what the Creator of the Universe had already designed. Each sequence of numbers found through nature is almost like a fingerprint of the Almighty – His Wisdom and Beauty is praised through the harmony and unity of His Creation.

Romans 1:20 says, *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”*

Through God’s creation, we see fingerprints of His designing Hands, and we see His Majesty in what He created. His creation and every pattern and harmony within testifies to His nature. The atheist may declare his entire life that he *knows* there is no God, but Scripture tells us he does know God exists...that he is “without excuse.” Creation cries out in praise of its Creator – the Creator who is wise and a God of order, harmony, and incredible unity. Any disorder we see around us – any cacophony, any disunity – proceeds from sin’s effect upon nature, the Earth, and man. In nature, we see death and decay, disease, and animals hunting and feasting on each other’s life to survive. The Earth rends itself with quakes, weather rises to fell forests, and the ocean swells to swallow coasts. Among men, there is deception, betrayal, and violence. Everywhere we see sin’s stain on the beautiful order of God’s perfect creation that is the foundation of our existence. For those who follow God, they must seek His order, harmony, and unity in the

chaos of the world that surrounds them. First Corinthians 14:33 says, *"For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."* Here, Paul is saying that the Church is God's representation on Earth; therefore, it cannot be a place of division and disunity if it is truly His. The Lord desires for the Body of Christ to have unity and order. How can we grow in Him and in the likeness of Him if we live in disharmony and disorder?

In the first chapter of 1 Corinthians (vs. 10-13), Paul wrote, *"Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there may be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' and 'I of Cephas,' and 'I of Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"* We must be careful not to fall into the trap of disharmony. We have a solid truth: the Lord cannot be divided. We, fallible human beings, can and often do quarrel over differences in opinion and harbor grudges or judgment. But if we are to follow *Christ's* example, and if we are to seek after walking in His likeness, we must obey His call for the Body of Believers to be in unity with each other.

In John 17:20-24, Jesus prayed, *"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for*

You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

If we are to walk in unity with Christ, we, the Body of Christ, cannot have strife among us. The Lord God, our God of unity and order, created each person of the Body of Christ as carefully as He fashioned each of our own human bodies: *"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each of them, in the body, just as He desired"* (1 Corinthians 12:14-18).

Our human nature – our tendency to live in disagreement or in division from each other – fights against the call to live in unity, as our Lord commands. We cannot obey both – we must either reside in strife with our brothers, or we must walk in unity with the Body of Believers as we follow Christ. But thanks be to God that He does not change! That our fickleness of character does not change the fact that He is forever the same! Our God, a God of Wisdom and Truth, who cannot change, is a God of unity, holiness, and perfection. Oh, may we delight in walking after *HIS* unity! Even though sin may stain His Creation, His Majesty still was, is, and will be to come! As every bit of our world is knit together with His intricate Love and Design, how more so should His precious creation of man be striving to glorify Him while walking in His example.

"But You, O LORD, abide forever, and Your name to all generations....Of old you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.

Even they will perish, but You endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them and they will be changed.

But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end.

*The children of Your servants will continue,
and their descendants will be established be-
fore You.”*
(Psalm 102:12, 25-28)

Information on Leonardo of Pisa from [http://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fibonacci](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fibonacci) and [http://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fibonacci_number](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fibonacci_number)

Whose Interests Are We Seeking?

By Lynn Warner

*“For I have no one else of kindred spirit
who will genuinely be concerned for your wel-
fare. For they all seek after their own inter-
ests, not those of Christ Jesus.”*
(Philippians 2:20-21)

Paul and Timothy were truly united in Christ. They had “kindred spirits.” The word “kindred” means “of the same nature” or “of the same attributes (affections, dispositions, etc).” Paul wanted to send Timothy to learn the condition of the Philippians, because he was of the same nature. What nature is that?

The Bible presents the nature of Jesus. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul reminds them about Jesus’ nature: *“Being found in appear-
ance as a man, He humbled Himself by becom-
ing obedient to the point of death, even death
on a cross”* (Philippians 2:8). We are to have the same kindred inner nature to humble our-
selves in obedience, as Jesus declared in Mat-
thew 10:38: *“And he who does not take his
cross and follow after Me is not worthy of
Me.”* If Christians are taking up their crosses
and following Jesus, they are united.

We are to be kindred spirits, living and walking by the Holy Spirit, as Paul describes in Galatians 5:25: *“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”* Paul states, *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh”* (Galatians 5:16). In fact, the flesh must be crucified, as we read in verse 24: *“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”* Paul wanted Timothy to be with the Saints at Philippi, because his goal was that they only conduct themselves *“in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents”* (Philippians 1:27b-28a).

Surrendering to God means living in obedi-

“Stone Age” Definitions From the B.C. (Before Computer) Generation By Jane Titrud

Floppy Disk - a serious back condi-
tion

Zip Drive - a speedy ride some-
where because you’re late

Screen Saver - a decoration at-
tached to a patio screen to keep
people from walking through it.

Hacker - someone with a smoker’s
cough

Software Package - a gift of cozy
clothes

ence, taking up your cross, following Jesus, and living by the Spirit. This will bring unity with others who are also surrendering. When we make unity the focus, instead of surrender, we have the wrong focus. True Godly unity is the result of being in Christ – kindred spirits who are genuinely concerned for the welfare of others, not seeking our own interests but seeking the interests of Christ. Whose interests are we seeking?

Sometimes we may see the appearance of unity. All of us may seem loving and kind, but when we are tested in situations, the spirit that inspires us is revealed. Our interests may be for ourselves, not for others’ “welfare” in the interests of Jesus Christ. Initially, we may show a form of kindness and love, but inwardly, we may want authority over others. Our love is to be without hypocrisy. Paul warned of people *“holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power”* (2 Timothy 3:5a).

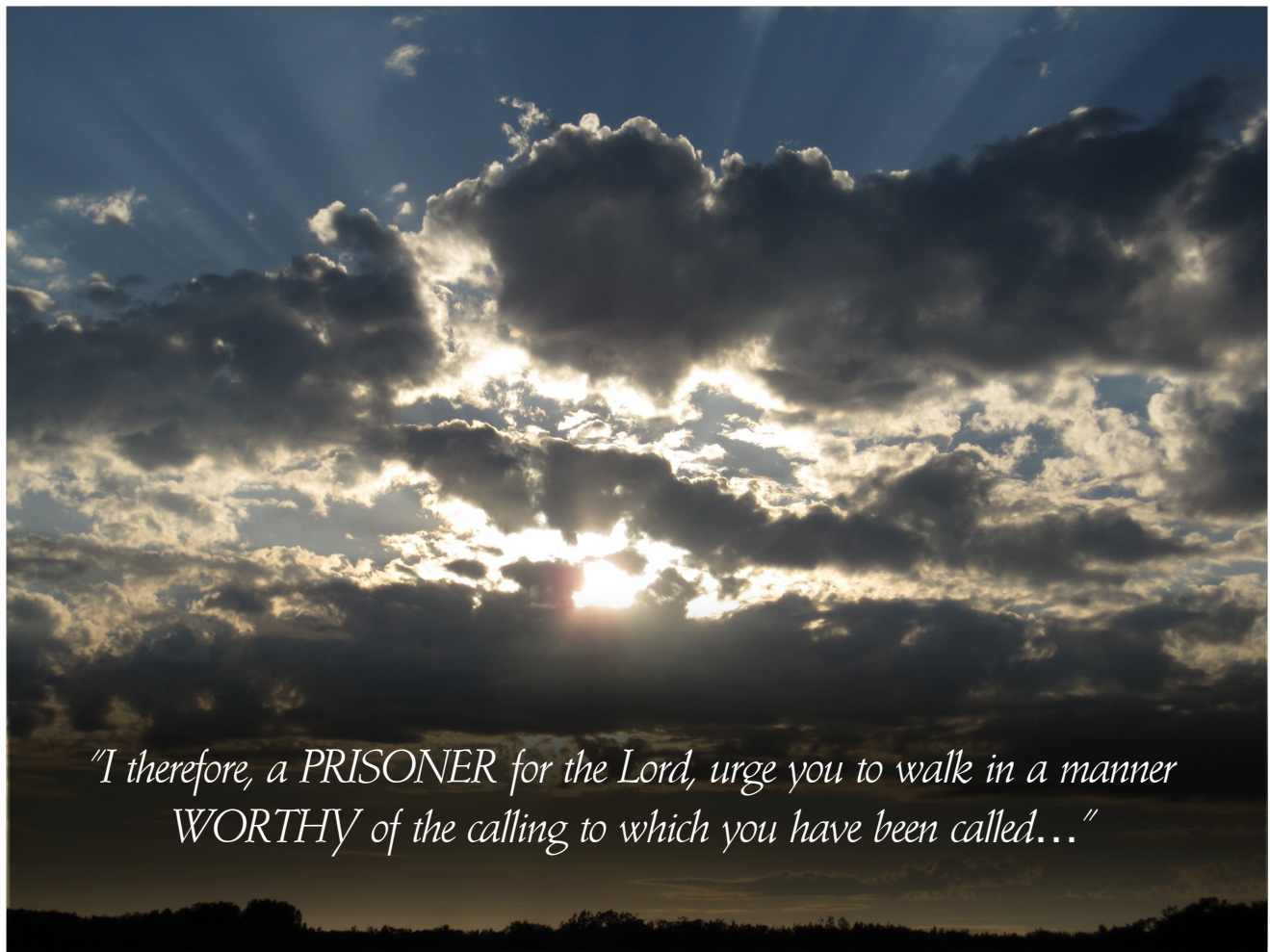
Other times the appearance of unity may generate a sense of confusion. James 3:16 KJV reminds us that *“where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”* My Bible notes that strife is “self-seeking.” So, we can ask God to help us discern what in us is self-seeking and repent. No doubt we can all relate to experiences that didn’t “feel right,” but we can’t seem to put those experiences into words. We may sense “love” and think we all have the same “beliefs.” We may see “good works.” But recall Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:23 where He will declare to those who prophesied, cast out demons, and performed many miracles in His name, *“I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.”* God knows what spirit we are worshipping in; are we worshipping in spirit and truth? Are we kindred spirits?

Though God wants unity, loyalty to His will sometimes brings separation and division with those outside His will. Jesus came to bring reconciliation and peace with God for those who believe and obey Him. He knew what was in man – sin, which is lawlessness, enmity, and hatred of God. Recall that the spiritual leaders of His time on earth wanted to kill

Him! If we are genuinely concerned for the welfare of others, and not like the Pharisees, we uphold the truth and glory of God, as did Jesus, rather than suppress it. We must be encouraged to overcome sin and uphold the truth like the Brethren in Revelation 12:11: *“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”*

In conclusion, we are to be kindred spirits, with the same inner nature as Jesus. His nature was faithfulness and loyalty to God and His glory, which He expressed through obedience to God, even obedience “to the point of death, even death on a cross.” When we submit our will with its passions and desires to God, taking up our cross and following Jesus in obedience, we are living and walking by the Spirit, and the Spirit brings “unity of the Spirit.” We cannot make or produce unity – God does! May we be kindred spirits, genuinely concerned for each other’s welfare and seeking after the interests of Christ, not simply our own interests.





*"I therefore, a PRISONER for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner
WORTHY of the calling to which you have been called..."*

By Natalie Madsen

*"...with all humility and
gentleness, with
PATIENCE,
BEARING with one an-
other in love, eager to
maintain the UNITY of
the Spirit in the bond of
PEACE."
(Ephesians 4:1-3)*

May/June Newsletter Theme—The Holy Spirit
Submission Deadline: May 5
Publish Date: May 12

Theme: The Holy Spirit, "But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them" (Isaiah 63:10), Jesus conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18&20), baptized with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11), "whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12:32), Convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8), the Helper (John 14:16), the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17), etc...

Further Out—July/August: Grace