

We have learned that **the body of Christ** was formed of believers on Pentecost by the Holy Spirit. There is One Body, Christ its Head. He has given each member his place and gifted him for that place. It is indwelt by the Holy Spirit as a whole and each individual is indwelt by the Holy Spirit as well. Though all the members are different it is One Body. No member is to despise his or her own position or function in the Body. No member is to despise the position or function of any other in the Body. No member is to be proud of his or her own position or function in the Body. No member is to envy or covet the position or function of any other in the Body. None is unnecessary. Each is placed there by God.

Even the ones that may seem more feeble are indeed necessary. With our human bodies we clothe the parts we deem less comely or that need special protection. With us our clothes sometimes are given more emphasis than appropriate for a simple, becoming covering. Style and attractiveness become objectives. So, within a congregation of believers, there may be a misuse of the spiritual gift God has given one, showing off one's blessing as if he had deserved it, or acquired and developed it himself. This kind of thing was happening in Corinth and still is apt to happen today amongst God's people.

Just as God has wonderfully formed and tempered each of our human bodies together so He has the Assembly. For instance, our insides are fearfully and wonderfully fashioned and perform marvelous functions for the health, support and building up of our bodies. But aren't we happy they are covered up by our skin! :-) So God has covered many essential members of the Assembly so they operate in relative obscurity. We often aren't even aware of their work until something happens and they malfunction. And as our human bodies are covered with skin and underlying fat layers which smooth out the knobs of our bones and joints so God has given more abundant spiritual honor to parts that otherwise would lack in outward spiritual comeliness. We perhaps aren't even aware He has done this because we are taken by the "more abundant honor" He has given one we admire spiritually. But those so granted more abundant honor need to guard against pride and abuse of their gift. For instance, one granted a gift to teach clearly and knowledgeably must beware that he not use this gift to form and maintain a following. A dynamic evangelistic preacher must avoid falling into the trap of seeking to attract numbers to hear him. But don't we bless God for gifting us so many ways.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do [it] with thy might;

In this is the key to discovering one's gift(s). With the

gift God seems to give the special ability to discern when it is needed. We have all thought sometimes "what an opportunity" or "what a awful situation," "Why doesn't someone do something...?" Well, when you see that situation or opportunity no one else seems to see, pray for grace and wisdom to deal with it, for you probably are the one equipped and selected by the Lord to handle it. Who me, we ask incredulously? Then, why me-e-ee? we whine in despair. But take heart, God will help us succeed beyond all expectation, as we depend upon Him.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Then Paul reminds us again there is to be **NO SCHISM in the body**. As we have seen in previous chapters, the Corinthians were thriving upon schism. They not only were forming parties within the local assembly they were very adept at personally acting completely independently of one another, not only in spiritual things but in personal affairs. They were going to court against one another, stumbling weaker consciences, not sharing their food, and in every way imaginable engaging in self indulgent behavior, even to the point of flagrant immorality. **NO SCHISM!!!** "But [that] the members should have the same care one for another." Love was to permeate and prevail.

Then WHY!?... HOW!?... **What are all these denominations** we see in the Christian world today!? And, not to be out done, divisions among those who seek to walk in the original truth of the One Body given so clearly here, and in Paul's other epistles. **WE HAVE FAILED!** God established one Body, and gave the truth of it for believers to hold and carry out. It's in the **BOOK!!!** We believers, all believers, must own our failure to faithfully do so. Satan has been busy down through the ages. Any resemblance to what the Lord originally envisioned could almost be said to be purely coincidental. But it's not coincidental because God is faithful to His promises. And the enemy finds his work more effective if he supports false copies of the true rather than to attempt to completely destroy that which God established. Besides God won't let him. I've noticed that instead of taking away truth the enemy often simply adds to it, corrupting the testimony to it. This is because it is much easier to point out disobedience to a written truth than it is to expose something that has been added to it.

Beware. Be alert. Where ever he finds it, Satan still is actively seeking to destroy or compromise any testimony to the accomplished work of Christ. He died to form His Body, the Assembly, out of His blood bought saints. God has revealed His purpose that there be **ONE BODY, CHRIST!** Hold to it tenaciously, jealously, and practice it lovingly, in holiness, grace and truth. Self has

no place here. Christ is all! And His Body, beloved! And counterfeits hated. Babylon the Great (Revelation 17) epitomizes the false “church” that Satan is busy forming to deceive the unwary.

What can a believer do today to obey this wonderful truth? Live it out! Walk in it! Be in it **separated** from all that has compromised it and corrupted it. Separated from all that dishonors **Christ the Head** and replaces His holy Name with a name of a division or denomination.

Revelation 3:8b ...for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name

First, **honor** Him personally. Then **walk** with others that

2 Timothy 2:22 “call upon the Lord out of a **pure [undivided] heart.**”

That is, return to the true ground of the Assembly He originally established in the New Testament, and walk there. This is not impossible, despite what others say. It

is not a popular path. But He gives more grace! Nor one that is easy. But it is Right! It is Good! It is Love. It is faithfulness to Him. And He has promised to be with us personally. And He has promised to be in our midst if we are gathered **unto His Name!**

So today the local assembly, and the assemblies around the world with which it fellowships, comprises what might be called a microcosm of the body of Christ. They are not just [another] sect or denomination. It is pulled back outside all that which man has added over the years. They simply attempt to follow the truth as contained in the scriptures. What else is there to do until He come? What better thing to do until He come? Where else has He called us to be?

By Ron Canner, September 17, 2003