

– Continued from page 1 –

*descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the **unity** of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:1-16).*

Unity is not just mentioned in this text; it is its theme. Paul began by explaining the foundation of unity is humility. Lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering and forbearance are necessary where unity is the goal (Ephesians 4:1-3). This contradicts the worldly notion of unity whereby everyone gets to keep doing what they want, saying what they want, and thinking what they want so long as everyone acts nicely to each other. Genuine unity is selfless. It requires each person’s preferences and opinions to dissolve that the truth of God may prevail.

Having established that the endeavor is for unity, which is **oneness**, the apostle continued by asserting there is but **one** body, **one** Spirit, **one** hope, **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, and **one** God (Ephesians 4:4-6). These are the central tenets of unity.

The body refers to the church (Ephesians 1:22-23) and since there is only one body, a multitude of denominations flagrantly contradicts inspired unity.

Hope, being fixed on unseen things (Romans 8:24), is set on heaven (Colossians 1:5). As there is only one hope, any doctrine purporting variegated eternal blessings must be false. Catholicism teaches some souls get to heaven via purgatory. Mormonism teaches some souls reach the “celestial kingdom” via proxy baptism for the dead. The Watchtower Society (AKA “Jehovah’s Witnesses”) teaches 144,000 go to heaven while the rest of the righteous dead enjoy Paradise on

– Continued on page 3 –

– Continued from page 2 –

earth. Premillennialism teaches the blessed get raptured while the rest experience Tribulation, some of whom will eventually get to heaven. Each of these examples presents more than one hope. Catholics, Mormons, JW’s, and premillennialists are not unified.

“*One faith*” speaks of objective faith, as in “*the faith... once for all delivered*” (Jude 3). It is what one ought to believe, not what one happens to believe, which is subjective. There is only one system of belief wherein believers can unite to please the Almighty, namely the gospel of Christ revealed in Scripture.

Although several baptisms are mentioned in the Bible (Hebrews 6:2), including the baptism of Moses, the baptism of John, the baptism of suffering, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of fire, and the baptism of Christ, only the latter is valid for salvation (Mark 16:16; Galatians 3:27; 1st Peter 3:21). Four are baptisms of the past and one is a baptism of the future meant to be avoided. Baptism in Christ’s name for the remission of sins is the only baptism of the present, the only one applicable now. Any belief system that relies on the other baptisms or which minimizes the importance of baptism is incorrect.

Interspersed throughout these seven ones is the presence of deity: the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Father (Ephesians 4:4-6). Any effort toward unity must repudiate the false spirits, false lords, and false gods of idolatry and mythology.

Toward the goal of unity, the Lord has blessed the church with various roles – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11) – to build up the saints in knowledge (Ephesians 4:13). Ignorance can never achieve unity. Those who are unaware of what Scripture teaches, who do not choose to study and reach sound conclusions, are never included in genuine unity.

This unity is intended to prevent being “*carried about with every wind of doctrine*” (Ephesians 4:14). True unity is explicitly **doctrinal**. True unity speaks the truth (Ephesians 4:15). Truth must be spoken in love, but love is the how of it while truth is the what. Unity is fixated on doctrinal truth. It excludes counterfeit bodies, it excludes false spirits, it excludes incorrect hopes, it excludes fake lords, it excludes erroneous faiths, it excludes former baptisms, and it excludes artificial gods. What can bring everyone together is the Christ in whom all must grow (Ephesians 4:16).

***"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"***

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

***"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"***

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Men's & Ladies' Studies @ 6:20 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

***"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"***

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

***"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"***

PROVERBS 25:11

"The deepest intimacy with Christ is reserved for those who stop negotiating the terms of surrender."

– Unknown

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 27

JULY 5TH, 2026

UNITY IS DOCTRINAL

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Much is said in religion about unity, with the general idea being that differences of belief and behavior should be accepted and approved. That, however, is the opposite of unity. The word "unity" literally means "oneness" in English, and it means the same in the Greek from which the word is translated. This word appears in the New Testament only twice, both instances occurring in the same chapter (Ephesians 4:3, 13). Although the theme is widespread, the word occurs only in this passage.

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.' (Now this, 'He ascended' — what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who — Continued on page 2 —

RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist