

## ONE BODY – MANY MEMBERS

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, February 5, 2006 ~Board Installation & Communion



### 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would 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 would 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 the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 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 members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Today’s worship services in this beautiful Sanctuary of ours is a splendid example of how fantastic Christian life can be when people step forward to proudly do their part to make their Church the best it could possibly be. Talented women and men have responded to the call to accept leadership positions within the Church and today they are confirming their commitment to provide harmonious and quality leadership for 2006. In addition, those who made the high quality Audio Video installation possible are here to dedicate their gifts to God’s service. These are only the most obvious signs of dedication, but by far not the only ones. If you look around you, you will be amazed to see how many people are serving quietly, without being noticed. Since early this morning, they arrived to set the communion table, to provide for fellowship in Sponsler hall, to decorate with flowers, to usher us in and to provide printed materials and so many other essential services. Worship becomes a joy when many people, seen and unseen, perform functions of devotion, dedication and love. Why are we doing all this? The Apostle Paul says that this is really God’s doing and purpose. The loving heart of God is beating warmly in and through God’s people. Here are no inferiors or superiors. Through people like you and me, God’s love becomes a visible reality in our midst. That is the focus of today’s scripture: Paul says: “But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.”

The Super Bowl dramatizes the same principal. Not everyone on the team is a quarterback or running back. Such a team would lose — badly. The Steelers and the Seahawks better take note! Some will remember the three losing attempts of the Denver

Broncos in the late 80s when they were criticized for having only a star quarterback, John Elway, and not much more. There are many examples where even less-than perfect players becomes stars when backed by players with Pro Bowl credentials!

Some think that it is easy to build and have a family! It is not! When the comedian Yaakov Smirnoff first came to the United States from Russia, he unprepared for the incredible variety of instant products available in American Supermarkets. He says, "On my first shopping trip, I saw powdered milk -- you just add water, and you get milk. Then I saw powdered orange juice -- you just add water, and you get orange juice. **Then I saw baby powder, and I thought to my self, "What a country!"**

A Church-family can be much like a human family where it sometimes goes like this: "I'm really worried," said one teenager to another. "Dad slaves away at his job so I'll never want for anything and so I can go to college. Mom spends every day washing and ironing and cleaning up after me, and she takes care of me when I'm sick." "So what are you worried about?" **"I'm afraid they might try to escape!"**

The Bible tells us who we are. There is a reason why we love to call Our members, friends and visitors a Church-family. We were called out of darkness into God's marvelous light! I Peter 2 verse 10 makes it clear: "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." That is who we are. We are God's people. In the Bible, Abraham's people always knew who they were in spite of their existence as wanderers--not simply because Abraham was their father, but because they felt a real connection with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That gave them their identity. It still does today wherever the children of Abraham may roam. We also claim our Spiritual Heritage. The God of Jesus Christ is also our God. That is who we are. We are God's people. God's family, God's children!

What is so important about being part of a family? The answer is obvious! It is from the family that we learn our basic values. The family gives us our basic support when we go out into the world. The family lets us know we that are loved.

Jesus taught that God is like a loving parent. That is the link that makes everything fall into place. It is within the family of God that we also receive our values. It is within the family of God that we draw our support when we venture out into the world. God's family is the designated place where we can turn to for love. **"Once we were no people, but now we are God's people."** That is who we are. Look around you; see the family members who are here to be loved and to show their love to you and me. We are **one** in the Spirit. We are Gods people. Why, we belong to the best family in town!

God is a parent whose love knows NO limits! A good way to explain is in the touching story of the little girl who commented on the ugly scarred hands of her mother. As only kids can do, she said, "Mom you have the ugliest hands I have ever seen." It was then that her father told her. "Sweetheart, when you were a baby, your cradle caught fire and it was Mom who stormed in to pull you out and saved your life." Without missing a beat, the child said. "O Mom, you have the most beautiful hands I ever saw!"

That is the story behind the table, prepared for us today! The table tells us of love that will not let us go. Pierced hands, a body broken, precious bloodshed. This message will never change!

**I bought you with a price! You are mine!**

**AMEN**