

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Modern Trends In Paganism Part One

by Linus A. Mathis III

It's quite clear from God's Word that He wants His family to live in harmony. This has always been His desire as can be seen from the following record:

Psalms 133:1

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!

The picture the Father paints in this Psalm is breath-taking! How wonderful for brethren to live harmoniously.

Verses 2 & 3

It is like the precious (costly) ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

The precious ointment spoken of is symbolic of the presence of God and His spirit. A man with God's presence in his life is a man who is at rest, a man who is blessed. Aaron was the brother of Moses and also the Lord's priest. His head was anointed with oil when he was ordained to serve God.

Consequently, putting oil upon a man's head always represented the blessings of God. Moreover, a precious ointment would serve to emphasize the value of this blessing and the importance of the individual upon whom it was placed. Perhaps you recall the woman who anointed the Lord's head from her alabaster box. Consider how highly she's regarded for this beautiful act of love and devotion.

Matthew 26:13

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

That's quite a testimony! Isn't it? Certainly the act of anointing one's head with a precious ointment is one of extraordinary importance. God chose this magnificent custom to figuratively represent the beauty of dwelling together in unity! Without question then, unity and its benefits should be sought after by all Christians. And we've hardly considered the dew of Hermon descending upon the mountains of Zion where the Lord commanded the blessing of life evermore! The beauty of that figure defies mortal description.

Consider also this passage:

I Corinthians 12:12-26

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is

Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many.

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

That there should be no schism (division) in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

No schism! NO division! That's God's desire. Here we see the analogy of the human body as it relates to the Body of Christ. There's an interdependence and interrelationship between all of our human body parts. Our physical bodies work harmoniously together to achieve singular goals beneficial to the entire body. There's never any "division" or "schism" between any of our physical members. The Body of Christ, which is spiritual, is designed by God to work in the same manner. That is, interdependent and interrelated, giving like efforts to meet like goals. However, there is division within the Body of Christ and plenty of it. For years, beginning primarily with the events following the counsel at Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15, the people of God have been divided. If you study the accounts found in the book of Acts you will find the rift to be doctrinal in nature having ethnic bias at the base. An arrogant attitude of

superiority held by those of Hebrew descent gave birth to doctrines for salvation not ordered by God. So devastating was this breach that the Church of God yet shudders in pain 2,000 years after the fact. Definitely NOT God's intent for His children! Furthermore, these fractures have produced doctrines too numerous and diverse to list. Doctrines contrary to God's range from the radical to the subtle. Either way, doctrines other than that which God has given are fruitless for worship and righteous living.

Matthew 15:9

But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

Consequently, if we wish to worship God it's imperative that we do so according to His doctrines and not man's. Of further note is the heart. All genuine worship MUST come from the heart. It's evident that we can do all the "right" things without our heart. Our hearts can be far from God even while we do the things His Word says we are to do. God wants our hearts and that certainly is a topic worthy of further study, which we may do at a later date, Lord willing. But for now, unity is our focus.

That which we have examined in brief is no secret to today's Churches. Nor is it a secret to the Devil. Historically, disagreements have been so harsh as to cause men to form groups or denominations. To be accepted by a denomination you must agree with all its creeds, dogmas and practices. Belief systems in some groups have been so contrary to others that hatred, resulting in loss of life has been, at times, the chief product. I offer the

Spanish Inquisition as example. Since Christians recoil (and rightfully so) at the thought of strife and hatred the concept of the "non-denominational" Christian was introduced. Rather ironic, isn't it? Even a cursory glance at God's Word teaches one God, one Church. Notwithstanding, these things exist. Sadly many "non-denominational" Churches have become, by definition, denominations.

Most today agree that a problem exists. In fact, much attention has been given to this problem of late. Recently, four major denominations have merged (if I may call it that). The goal? To unify in diversity. Put aside contention, agree to disagree and highlight the differences. As one put it, the diversity in Christian unity can be compared to an oil painting. If there's only one color and one shade of paint used, the picture is dull and uninteresting. But as soon as different colors and shades are used, the picture becomes alive and attractive. So it is with our oneness in Christ. Each of us has a unique personality and background. Sounds pretty good, eh? Except for . . . and a particular "expression" for following Jesus. Frankly our personalities, backgrounds and "expressions" are worthless as pertains to truth. Truth isn't fabricated by man, it's given by God. If we fabricate our own tenets for right believing, we make ourselves god and declare the Bible invalid. That's not a good thing to do!

Since unity refers to uniformity, harmony and agreement it stands to reason we can't just "do our own thing." A standard for unity must be observed. Furthermore, diversity means contrast, opposition, antitheses, deviation, dissension and

disagreement. Therefore, the concept of unity in diversity is a contradiction of terms. How can you be one in aim and be unlike in aim? How can we unite in the Gospel while simultaneously agreeing to disagree in doctrine? Is Christ divided? Is there another Gospel which ye have not received? Is there another spirit that interests you?

Mark 3:24,25

And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

You simply cannot have unity and be divided and you cannot be divided and stand.

At this point I think it prudent to assure you that I'm opposed to actively shunning your Christian brethren because they don't agree with you. We all know that no one is right 100 percent of the time. We all make mistakes and have the tendency to turn our errors into doctrines. But that's why God gave us the written Word and that must remain our standard. Today the most prominent Christian leaders are having "interface" meetings with what can only be termed as pagan leaders. Now I'm all for having my computer software interface but I draw the line at Buddha worshipping men in brightly colored bed sheets. And I certify you that it isn't the red and yellow sheets that bother me. I simply cannot justify having a spiritual brain storming session with someone who serves something other than the One True God. I'm in favor of freedom of religion and believe that all men are entitled to it. But, having the right to choose doesn't

guarantee that the choice will be correct. Freedom to choose and spiritual equality are two entirely different things.

This doctrine of unity in diversity is not new. It's an old doctrine which has been resurrected. Today we have men teaching that this is the best way thus this concept has become very popular. But popularity is no guarantee for truth any more than sincerity is. The problem with this doctrine is that it has made unity its chief aim. When unity is your aim, you will have it at any cost. In this case the cost is the truth of God's Word. This is an attempt by the Devil to further water down Christian principles in today's Churches. It's designed to loosen your grip on the Bible. I believe in being lovingly tolerant of all men. As we have opportunity we are to be good to all. It would be wrong to adopt an elitist attitude. That's certainly not God's Will. He would have all men to be saved and come unto the truth. If we don't lead men to the truth, who will? Christ died for sinners and we should live to set them free. But there are those who don't want to be set free and have no intention of ever coming unto a knowledge of the truth. I just can't help but be reminded of the following:

II Corinthians 6:14-18

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We are not to be partners with unbelievers, that doesn't mean that we are to be cruel to them or treat them poorly. Rather, we should witness the love of God to them and endeavor to lead them to salvation. But partnerships of any kind would be very unwise and could prove to be devastating. So why is Christendom falling prey to this doctrine?

We are told that the Creator of all is One God. He is the one goal towards which everything in nature yearns. Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are. Yet they all have one origin. Behold a beautiful garden full of flowers. What different colors and fragrances they all have. Likewise with human kind. We are made up of many races, black, yellow, red and brown yet we all come from the same Creator. We all desire to serve Him. Or do we? The above is the doctrine of unity in diversity and it comes from the Bhagavad-gita. How about that, and you thought Hare Krishna land was dead. Just another form of Transcendental Mysticism, sort of like our relationship to the tree,

mother earth and the cosmos. Sound funny? I'm not kidding, this is for real! It's simply the latest trend in paganism, that's all. It's what "they" call the One in the Many. Whooo baby! Is the Adversary slick, or what?

There is no new thing outside the will of God dear reader. This is just a new twist on an old theme, sort of like a re-mix. The One is manifested in and through the Many. It has no existence apart from the Many. The Many are also the One, even while they are separated as individuals. They are always part of the One and always united with the One. Confusing, isn't it? All things in the universe are One. They began as One and they will end as One. Are you in harmony with the universe? Or are you a fluke of the universe having no right to be here? Is the universe laughing behind your back? It should be, because this is a joke. Isn't it? Dangerous and not really very funny. But it is very real.

Nowadays (when you take the wrappers off) they call this Scientific Pantheism. It isn't scientific but it is a religion. As a religion it isn't any different from Transcendental Mysticism or any of the other eastern religions but it is more palatable to the "scientific mind." Pantheism is the belief that the universe is divine and nature is sacred. It fuses concerns for humans with concerns for nature. Sound familiar? It provides a solid basis for "environmental concerns." No faith other than common sense is required. No revelation other than a mind open to evidence and senses observations. No guru other than self. It has two major tenets. The cosmos is divine and the earth is sacred. This is paganism and is aptly

addressed by Romans as well as numerous other places in God's Holy Word. It's just more fancy talk by way of unity in diversity and is idolatry of the lowest sort.

This concept of unity in diversity is dangerous and deceitful. It's being received among Christians and is enjoying an alarming amount of popularity. It is revered by many as revival. But we know that before there can be revival there must be first a reformation, and that, according to God's Word.

The answer to this and the order for the Church today is love. Love is the real key to unity.

John 14:15

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

I John 5:3

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Love is the keeping of God's commandments. They are found in His Word. Love will lead us to walk in His ways and this will bring us to unity and not diversity.

I Corinthians 1:10

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

The only place we can find this mind and judgement is in His Word. Our opinions will never suffice no matter how varied they are. I heartily

endorse love for the believer and all men. As we have opportunity let's do good to all. I'm even willing to sacrifice my personal rights but NEVER, NEVER, NEVER His Word.

I Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Our unity is a spiritual one as is our love. His Word is our doctrine without which we would be lost. Walk in love and by the spirit and you will never be wrong.

MORE NEXT MONTH:

The Counselor's Corner

Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

Another Reason To Be Thankful

One of the greatest things we parents can do for our children is teach them to be thankful. With out question we all teach our little ones to say thank you even as we were taught. Thank you, please and may I are essential to common courtesy. Our culture requires that we be polite. To not respond to a kind act with a thank you would be considered rude and unseemly behavior for adults as well as children. A lack of gratitude on the part of the beneficiary is soon viewed as unacceptable and will most assuredly wear out the "welcome mat." However, what I'm talking about goes much deeper than a polite act or gracious behavior. I'm not talking about saying thank you

(although I'm in favor of it) I'm talking about *being* thankful. There's a world of difference between saying thank you and being thankful. As with saying you're sorry and actually being sorry. Your words may camouflage your heart.

As a child there were times I was made to say I was sorry when down deep inside I wasn't. How about you? Well, the same thing can be true for saying thank you and not really being thankful. Thankfulness is an attitude of heart. And attitudes make all the difference in the world. If you have a poor attitude it will eventually bleed into every area of your life. In like manner, a good attitude will reflect positively in every area of your life. Why? Because what's housed in the heart issues in the life.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

The heart is the "well-spring of life." Everything we are or will be comes out of the heart. The intangibles we allow to become a part of our inner-being (read heart) are most assuredly responsible for the concrete realities that frame our existence. This is why teaching your child to *be* thankful is so important. Thankfulness is one of those abstracts that so meaningfully make us what we are.

Thankfully, for us, we are able to put in the heart the concept of our choosing. But, YOU must put it in there! For example, if you want to take chocolate chip cookies out of your cookie jar you must first put them in it. You can't take chocolate chip cookies out of a jar filled with fig bars. Can you?

Matthew 12:35

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

A perspective fundamental to a good heart is thankfulness. Therefore, it's vital that we teach our children to be thankful. I stress teach for two reasons.

Number one: thankfulness can be taught.

Number two: ingratitude is taught.

The culture surrounding us is teaching us to take things for granted. This is eliminated in thanksgiving. Aren't we blessed to live in a nation which has recognized this truth almost since inception? Thanksgiving Day, distinctly godly, uniquely American. I'm thankful for it and the man who ordained it. Regardless of how history is rewritten.

"Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly implore His protection and favor - and whereas both houses of Congress have by their joint committee requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the

people of these states to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be...And great Lord and Ruler of nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions...To protect and guide all sovereigns and nations - to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us - and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best."

George Washington - October 3, 1789

Our Nation still celebrates Thanksgiving Day and that gives us yet another reason to be thankful. I'm thankful for the privilege of giving thanks to whom they are due. Aren't you? Teach your child the blessing of being thankful. The attitude of gratitude is still your child's best state of mind. Yours too!

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

-"The Counselor's Corner" also appears in Alaska Parenting Magazine in an edited version and under a different title"-
