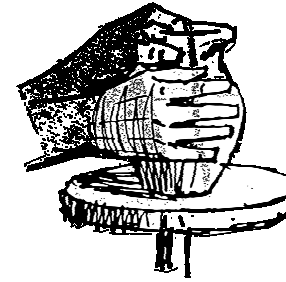


His Workmanship Westside

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus for good works.”*

—Ephesians 2:10



Vol. XXIII

March 9, 2014

No. 10

Isaiah 64:8

Fellowship of the Body, Part 2, The Nature of Fellowship from material by John McAr-

God did not want us to be alone, Gen 2:8, so He put Christians into fellowship with Himself by the blood of Jesus Christ. In fact, as we learned last week, one main reason we preach the gospel is so we can have fellowship.

“That which we have seen and heard [who is Jesus Christ, “the Word of life”] we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ,” 1 Jn 1:3. John said the point of preaching the gospel is to create fellowship. The word *koinonia*, or fellowship, means a mutual communication, participation, having something in common. In other Greek forms *koinonas* means a partner, and *koinoneō*, the verb, means to share. So *koinonia* is sharing partnership, togetherness, commonality, fellowship, mutuality, communion. Do believers have a common ground? Do we have a *koinonia* or a *koinonas*? Are we partners in something? Do we have something that we can share? Yes—because our fellowship is based on the same common salvation, the gospel. Who is this fellowship with? With God and His Son Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. The goal of proclaiming the gospel is oneness—oneness with Christ, a fellowship with God. *“In Him*

we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him,” Eph 1:7, 10. Oneness in Christ was God’s purpose before the foundation of the world, v.4. This unity with God is not an organization, not a hierarchy, not a structure, but a fellowship. The New Testament teaches us about fellowship in five areas: its basis (what fellowship is based on), which was last week’s article; its nature (its character, what it’s like); its danger (what interrupts it); its responsibilities (what maintains it); and its result (what happens when we are in fellowship). We address the nature of fellowship today.

2. The nature of fellowship. The basis of fellowship is salvation; the nature of fellowship is togetherness. Once a Christian is in fellowship with God, he comes together with other Christians. As soon as the church was created, it had fellowship. In the early church at Jerusalem we find a beautiful picture of togetherness. About 3,000 people were saved and baptized on the day of Pentecost—the first day of the church. These 3,000 “continued steadfastly in

the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,” Ax 2:42. This church had two main elements to its togetherness: they were all saved; and they were all sharing.

A. Signs of salvation. (1) First, they continued. These 3,000 new believers “continued steadfastly,” v. 42. People who continue are saved. *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed on Him, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are My disciples indeed,’”* Jn 8:31. To “continue steadfastly” is a sign of real salvation. They are faithful to remain in the apostles’ doctrine. *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us,”* 1 Jn 2:19. True believers continue! (2) They also grew. The genius of the early church in Jerusalem was that they were all saved, and as a result they all continued. The legitimacy of their salvation gave impetus to them so that the church grew and people were added daily, Ax 2:47. Later the religious leaders got so upset with them that they said, *“You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine,”* Ax 5:48. In other words, “You’ve literally *continued on p. 2*

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” —2 Corinthians 13:14

literally taken over the town with your teaching! “ Well, that’s what they were supposed to do—grow!

God wants Christians to “grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ,” Eph 4:15. We should no longer be children, believing every doctrine, being tricked, but we should be mature Christians, “speaking the truth in love . . . , 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,” Eph 4:14-16.

B. Signs of sharing. The early church exemplified sharing: “And all who believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold [“were selling,” continuing action] their possessions and goods, and divided [lit. “were parting”] them among all, as everyone had need,” Ax 2:44-45. They didn’t take all their money, dump it in a big church pot, and dole it back out so that everybody would be equal; that would be communism. But these Christians, out of their togetherness, were selling possessions when they saw others in need. There was tremendous sensitivity! In fact, Barnabas sold a piece on land to get the money to meet needs, Ax 4:36-37. They had a loving, sharing response to each other. They had all things in common. The result? There was a “gladness and singleness of heart,” Ax 2:46. The character/nature of the early church was that they cared for each other and hungered for fellowship and love. Simply stated, the key to unity in the church is fellowship; the key to fellowship in the church is love; and the key to love in the church is humility. What is the key to humility? “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing

be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,” Phil 2:1-4. Humility is when you honor others and sacrifice for them.

In one word, the nature (and goal) of fellowship is unity. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers,” Ax 2:42. We can only have fellowship by staying in the teaching of Christ. By prayer, the Lord’s Supper, and the apostles’ doctrine we come to fellowship with other believers. That is horizontal fellowship, which we experience with each other. As we saw last week, fellowship with the Godhead is a fact, a work of God. It is what God did; He made us partners with Himself. Our fellowship with God is an established partnership and a joyous communion. But we experience a warm, loving fellowship with other

The key to unity is fellowship; the key to fellowship is love; the key to love is humility.

believers by the fact of our oneness with God. Beginning at Pentecost, the Christians came together and established themselves in a fellowship. They shared everything. They shared their time, their possessions, their love. It was a giving and receiving partnership. “And the multitude of those that believe we’re of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common,” Ax 4:32. The results: “with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the

apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” 4:33-35. They had everything in common. This was a true fellowship where they shared in everything. Paul reported this same fellowship with the church in Philippi: he gave thanks “for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,” Phil 1:5; he said they were “partakers with me of grace,” v.7. “Now you Philippians know that at the beginning of the gospel when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only,” Phil 4:15. The early church was a giving, receiving fellowship. The church had a part in Paul’s evangelism financially, and this was “fellowship in the gospel.” In the Jerusalem church it was a sharing, a *koinoneto*, Ax 2:44-47. This fellowship had a great effect upon the world as many were brought to Christ. This was the oneness that Christ had prayed for in Jn 17; if the world could see this oneness and this love, it would be more readily convinced of the identity of Jesus Christ.

This fellowship is giving help to needy brethren. “For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem,” Rm 15:26. The wealthier church at Macedonia collected money to send to the poor Christians of Jerusalem. “It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things,” 15:27. In other words, since the gospel had come from Jerusalem, it was right for the Gentiles to send back to Jerusalem. It was mutual fellowship between the Greek churches and the Jerusalem church. They had spirit of mutual love and a sense of belonging together: “bearing with one another in love,

continued on p. 3



Let your faith be seen in 2014
 "I rejoice to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."
 —Colossians 2:5

Nature of Fellowship, from p. 2 [keeping] the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," Eph 4:2-3. Paul encouraged this unity, "I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me," Rm 1:11-12. He stated the principle in Gal 6:1-2, 6: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ... Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches." So a communion of money, food, homes, prayer, love, spiritual blessing, and teaching—all moving together in the common faith—characterized the church. It was even more intimate than friendship; it was sharing hopes, fears, comfort, and love. "Nevertheless God, Who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more," 2 Cor 7:6-7. Titus blessed Paul's heart just by going to him. Paul desired fellowship with his co-workers in the gospel: "Be diligent to come to me quickly... Do your utmost to come before winter," 2 Tim 4:9, 21. He fervently wanted fellowship with Timothy. He cherished that fellowship and longed for it. It was love, and Paul hungered for it. The early church had communion and fellowship that caused them to grow like Christ, and it truly reflected

Discipleship Here At Home

the words of Jesus when He established this fellowship. "A new command I give you that you love one another," Jn 13:34. A key point of the gospel was to create a love fellowship. "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart," 1 Pet 1:22. The church is intended by God to be a fellowship in love. The Thessalonians had that. "But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another," 1 Thes 4:9. They had a Spirit-filled, loving fellowship. The nature of fellowship is unity and oneness, and when we belong to Christ, we belong to each other. We not only need our fellow brothers and sisters to serve us with their spiritual gifts (service), but we also need them for fellowship. We must meet in fellowship in order to serve each other. We begin to get involved with each other and to share love around the word of God in the energy of the Holy Spirit. In true fellowship, we don't bite. We don't devour. We don't provoke. We don't envy. We don't lie to one another. We don't speak evil. We don't grumble one against another. What do we do? True love, true fellowship builds up. It encourages. Fellowship means we receive one another, we're kind to one another, we're merciful and tender-hearted to one another, we forebear and forgive one another, we serve one another, we practice hospitality to one another, we admonish one another, we instruct one another, we submit to one another, and we comfort one another. That's true fellowship. The early church was together, first of all, because they were saved; second, because they were sharing. True, honest, genuine fellowship is found only in Christ and when we take the responsibilities to grow, share, and continue steadfastly. **Next week, dangers to fellowship.**

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Letha Fink's husband **Ed**—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors
Mina Gonzalez—fell on ice on her way to Bible study Wed night;; mild concussion, whiplash
Noah Hadders's teacher, **Mrs. Bauers**—brain surgery last week
Megan Aki's friend **Christine Martella**—liver tumor surgery last week
Randy Reames's mother, **Una**, in her 80s—cancerous colon tumor removed recently
Sandra Perry's daughter, **April Dunn**—new baby, fifth child; Sandra's sister, **Sharon Rupinen**—upper GI tests; surgery expected
Judy Sartin's aunt **Vallie Ek**, age 87—uterine cancer, heart failure; hospice; pray she returns to Lord in her last days; also **Judy's** cousin's wife, **Lynne James**, breast cancer
Josh McDonald, a friend of **Kory Tope**, and daughter **Casey**—unwanted divorce
Caleb Howell's friend **Cage**—colon cancer
Mark Campbell—home from hospital for severe abdominal pain, bleeding

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; **Rocco Sangellino Jr**; **Addison Tope**; **Pat Wilkes**—asthma
Bill Dennis—heart issues
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome
Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house
Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;
Virginia, macular degeneration; high BP
Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes; kidney failure, may need dialysis
Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis
Judy Sartin's grandson **Tristen**—autism
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Traveling The **Campbells** are in FL till 3/14 for work and visiting family; the **Wilkeses** are in San Antonio with friends
Job concerns **Linda Szymanski** REJOICE: **Lorenzo Gonzalez** has accepted a job with Walgreen's corporate office in Chicago.
Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April—blood platelets low; **Christina Adams's** daughter **Kayla**, May; **Lauren Gonzalez**, August 31.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Home-Schooled Family Closer to Deportation, by Bob Allen

Uwe and Hannelore Romeike came to the United States in 2008 seeking political asylum. They fled their German homeland in the face of religious persecution for homeschooling their children (homeschooling is against the law in Germany). They wanted to live in a country where they could bring up their children in accordance with their beliefs in Christ.

The Romeikes were initially given asylum, but the Obama administration objected—claiming that German laws that outlaw homeschooling do not constitute persecution. “The goal in Germany is for an open, pluralistic society,” Eric Holder’s Justice Department wrote in a legal brief last year. “Teaching tolerance to children of all backgrounds helps to develop the ability to interact as a fully functioning citizen in Germany.”

Last Monday, the Supreme Court declined to hear the Romeike’s appeal, paving the way for the family of eight to be deported.

This is clear evidence America is being run by people who hate our founding principles—including our Supreme Court. I guess (by our current administration’s policies) if the Romeikes had come here illegally—and totally avoided any attempt to honor the system—they could have stayed forever and even been granted “amnesty.” If they were lazy bums, they could apply for every form of government assistance...free medical care... free education...food stamps. But because they actually work and contribute to the community—because they’ve accepted the high responsibility of educating their own children—we want to send them back to Germany, facing the threat that the State will take custody of (kidnap) their children.

This is one of those cases where I hope we find out exactly when the jackboots intend to come and remove them. What we need is for thousands or tens of thousands of Americans to come and surround the Romeike home and tell the Feds what they can do with their tyranny. Times come when we must stand and say “no more!”—Or we will be worthy of the chains that are bound upon us.

America, the ideal, is dead—cold and lifeless, like the FDR administration that refused 937 Jewish refugees fleeing from Germany on a ship in 1939. Between 1938-39 over 450,000 Jews sought visas in the United States, but only 85,000 of these were granted. Once the U.S. entered World War II, the State Department practiced stricter immigration policies out of fear that refugees could be blackmailed into working as agents for Germany. Immigration restrictions were still in effect in the U.S. after the war, but in 1948 Congress passed legislation to admit 400,000 displaced persons here. Nearly 80,000 of these, about 20%, were Jewish. The rest were Christians from Eastern Europe and the Baltics, many of whom had been forced laborers in Germany.



meets at

13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
720-295-4530

info@thechurchingolden.com

www.thechurchingolden.com

Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
---------------	---------

Sunday morning:

Adult Bible study, “Come out from among Them” Series, 2 Cor 6:17:

“Instrumental Music,” DeWayne Howell

Sermon:

“Calvinism’s TULIP: Unconditional Election and Limited Atonement,” part 3 of a series, Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon theme for March—**CONNECTION**

Sermon: “Connections,” Jim Reingrover

Poudre Valley (Loveland) evangelism: Kory

Tope is helping with the Loveland church today while the evangelist, Richard Thetford, is away preaching a gospel meeting.