

The Amish Voice



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PART 11—What Is The Church

Part A: Local and Universal Part B: One Body With Many Parts

When does a person become a member of the Church? When does a person become a member of the body of Christ? The answer to this is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13--

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. 1 Corinthians 12:13

This verse teaches that the very moment you and I were born again, God baptized [plunged, immersed] us into the body of Christ and made us a part of His Church.

This verse teaches us that the **baptism of the Spirit** is experienced by all who believe, at the moment of salvation (see Rom 8:9). In that baptism, believers, regardless of their background (**whether Jews or Greeks**) or (**slave or free**), are identified with Christ (**baptized... into one body**) and are indwelt by the Spirit.

That there is a difference between the UNIVERSAL CHURCH and the LOCAL CHURCH.

1. The UNIVERSAL CHURCH includes ALL BELIEVERS in the entire world. It does not matter where they live—they could live in China, Switzerland, Germany, United States, etc. They might be white or dark skinned and they might speak Dutch, Spanish, or Hungarian. They are people who have placed their

trust in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross, for salvation.

2. The LOCAL CHURCH is made up of those same believers who faithfully assemble together in a certain area, such as...

- The Church at Corinth (1 Cor 1:2)
- The Church at Philippi (Phil 1:1)
- The Church at Thessalonica (1 Thes 1:1)
- Can you think of others?

In Acts 16:27-34, we can read the story of how the Apostle Paul and Silas were thrown into prison for preaching the gospel. And at midnight, the Bible says, there was an earthquake that shook so hard that their chains fell off, the doors of the prison swung wide open, and Paul and Silas got up and started walking out.

When the prison guard figured out what was happening, he got his sword out and was about to fall on it to commit suicide, but Paul cried out, *“do thy self no harm: for we are all here.”*

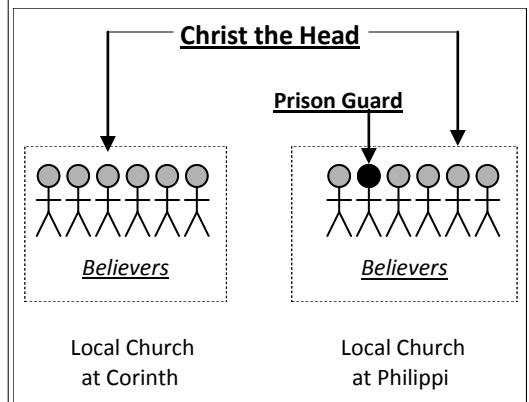


Next, the Bible tells us that the prison guard came trembling, fell down before Paul and Silas, and asked *“what must I do to be saved”*. *“And they*

said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”.

As we read down through verse 34, it is very obvious that the prison guard became a believer by placing his faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. And dear friend, it was at that very moment that he became a member of the UNIVERSAL CHURCH. He was also a member of the LOCAL CHURCH which was at Philippi because this is where he lived and this was where he met together with other believers. He was not a member of the church at Corinth. He was a member of the church at Philippi.

This is illustrated on the chart



The Universal Church Made Up Of All True Believers

Every believer belongs to the universal body of Christ. It is also important for the believer to belong to the local body of

Christ (the local church). In Acts 2:41-42 we read about people who believed in Christ the day the Church first began.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:41-42)

A true church, a true body of believers, does not just hear and listen to the Word. They are not just present to join the crowd and see what is going on. They do not sit with wandering minds and closed hearts. A true church receives the Word of God; they...

- welcome it
- believe it
- take it in
- practice it
- experience it
- hold on to it
- hunger for it
- share it

These people believed God's Word ("gladly received it") and were baptized and then they continued to do these four things—see Acts 2:42):

1. THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE.

This means they continued in the *teaching* (doctrine) of the apostles. The believers would gather together often to be *taught* by the Apostles.

Just a Thought. We too, can be born again and rooted and grounded in the *very same message*. God has given us the very same doctrines and instructions to root and ground us. We can have a true and powerful experience and maturity in the Lord. We can grow and be as closely connected to the Lord Jesus, as the early believers were. In fact, we come short if we do not, for we have the very same doctrine, teachings, and instructions that they had.

2. THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN FELLOWSHIP.

The word *fellowship* means "a sharing in common." Believers gather together often because they **SHARE MANY THINGS IN COMMON**. They share a common **LIFE** and they share a common **LORD**.

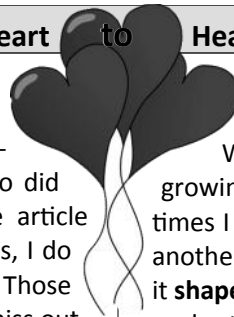
The following verses in Ephesians 4 tells us that there are seven things that **ALL BELIEVERS** share in common.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are 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. (Eph 4:4-6)

3. THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN BREAKING OF BREAD.

These believers gathered together often to remember the Lord's death by observing communion.

Heart to Heart with Joe Keim



I would like to thank each one of you who contacted us, letting us know that you disagreed on the foot washing article in our last Amish Voice. After going back and re-reading the article, I realized right away that those who did contact us, had every right to set me straight. The article sounded as if I disagreed with foot washing. The truth is, I do believe that foot washing is a very important ministry; Those in the body of Christ who do not practice foot washing, miss out on a great blessing.

I would also like to thank each one of you who were willing to give me a second chance. With God's help, I will do my best to (always) stay on track. However, if I miss it, please don't hesitate to let me know right away. My only request: when you disagree with an article in the Amish Voice, please use God's Word to defend your reasoning. Our traditions and cultural ways, will burn up some day (Col 2:22), but not so with God's Word (1st Peter 1:23-25).

We ALL have ONE standard in which WE MUST compare our ideas and beliefs with and that is God's Word. It is our only and final authority. If it is not mentioned in the Bible, let's be careful we don't speak for God—some day, we will all give account to Him.

In Proverbs 27:17, the Bible says: *Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

Whenever I read this scripture, I am reminded of my growing up years. You see, my dad was a blacksmith and many times I watched as well as participated in shaping one **iron** with another **iron**. When **iron** is rubbed against another piece of **iron** it **shapes** and **sharpens** it. In the very same way, people can help each other improve by their discussions, criticisms, suggestions, and ideas.

I don't know about you, but I desire more than anything else to be involved in the lives of people who hunger and thirst for a greater understanding of our Creator and Savior. Without a doubt, you are like me—you don't want to miss out on anything. And for that reason, I need good friends in my life who will criticize me when I am wrong and support me when I am right. Will you be that friend?

Please look for a follow-up article on foot washing on page 6-7. It is my hope and prayer that this will be more of what the first one should have been.

Thank you for hanging in there with me. Let's grow together and become more like God today, then we were yesterday.

W H O This publishing work is registered as a charitable organization in the USA and is supported through freewill offerings. We welcome your articles, testimonies and questions. We reserve the right to edit or decline any material and are not responsible for the return of any articles. Mission to Amish People and its subsidiaries are operated under the authority of a 15 member board.

W E A R E Since our beginning in 2000, many people have written to us, asking to be added to our mailing list while others have sent us names of their friends and family members. We think it is important for us to tell you that the cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.45 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country, who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come along side of us, by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit as well as highly appreciated. In order to continue receiving the Amish Voice, please keep us informed of any changes to your address.

4. THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN PRAYERS.

These believers gathered together to pray. They met often for "prayer meetings." Through prayer they were brought into the most intimate fellowship and presence of God. They could get no closer to God than when they were *drawing nigh* to God through prayer.

The people described in Acts 2:41-42 became part of the LOCAL CHURCH THAT WAS IN JERUSALEM.

PART B

(One Body With Many Parts)

So, what is the purpose of the church? Paul gave an excellent illustration to the believers in Corinth. The church is



God's hands,
mouth, and



feet in this



world—the body of Christ. We are to be doing the things that Jesus Christ would do if He were here physically on the earth. The church is to be "Christian," "Christ-like" and Christ-following.

The church is said to be a body, a body of many parts or members. It is compared to the human body throughout the whole passage of 1 Cor 12.

1. The human body is a picture of Christ and of His church (1 Cor 12:12-13)

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. (1 Cor 12:12-13)

The picture describes the human body as one person, one being, one life; yet it has many members or parts to it. However, despite its many parts, the body is still one whole.

"So also is Christ." Christ is One Person, One Being, One Life; yet He too has many members or parts to His body. However, despite the many parts to His body, His body is still one organic whole.

God has to see us "*in Christ*," "*in the body of Christ*" in order to accept and approve us. Picture the scene: there is the body of Christ—*out there*. When God looks at the body of Christ, He sees us *in Christ*; then God accepts and approves us—no matter who we are. We may be Jew or Gentile, a slave or a free man—it does not matter. If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes us and baptizes us into the body of Christ. God sees and accepts, counts and credits us as *in Christ*, as *in the body of Christ*.

Every individual believer around the world, no matter who or where he is, is a member of the body of Christ. And the individual believer is critical to the health of the whole body. The individual believer is desperately needed to make the body of Christ healthy.

"And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified [made right] by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace [acceptance] with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

2. Some who are less gifted feel they are unimportant to the body (v.14-20).

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. (1 Cor 12:14-20)

A. Some members in the Corinthian church were experiencing what so many believers experience, a sense of being...

- less gifted
- less capable
- insignificant
- less able
- less worthy
- unimportant

- inadequate
- ungifted

B. Each member is necessary. The foot may not be as gifted as the hand in handling things, but the foot is still part of the body. The ear may not be able to envision things like the eye can, but the ear is still part of the body.

C. Each member is set "in the body" as God wills. The eye sees because God gave it the ability to see. The ear hears because God gave it the ability to hear.

The same is true in the church. Note the words in verse 18: "*every one of them*"—every member has been set in the church by God and gifted by God. God has not just set the more important members in the church. God has set "every one" of us in the church, and He has gifted us for a necessary function.

The following is an illustration that brings even more light to our study...

Imagine if the Carpenter's tools got together and held a meeting: Brother Hammer takes charge, but several suggest he leave the meeting because he is too noisy.



Mr. Hammer replies, "If I have to leave this shop, than Mr. Screw must go also. You have to turn him around again and again to get him to accomplish anything."

Brother Screw speaks up. "If you wish, I'll leave. But Mr. Plane must leave, too. All his work is on the surface. His efforts have no depth."

To this, Brother Plane responds, "Brother Rule will also have to withdraw, for he is always measuring folks as though he were the only one who is right."

Brother Rule then complains about Brother Sandpaper: "He ought to leave, too, because he's so rough and always rubbing people the wrong way."

In the midst of all this discussion, in walks the Carpenter of Nazareth. He has arrived to start his day's work. Putting on his apron, he goes to the bench to make a wooden stand from which to proclaim the gospel.

And during the course of time, he uses Brothers Hammer, Screw, Plane, Rule, Sandpaper, and all the other tools.

After the day's work, when the wooden stand is finished, Brother Saw arises and remarks, "Brethren, I observe that all of us are workers together with the Lord."

3. Some more gifted feel they are more important to the body (v.21-23).

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. (1 Cor 12:21-23)



Every member is important and significant and must be considered. Too often, there are some who feel they are more important than others in the church. They feel their gifts and contributions are more significant than that of others.

The thrust of this point is that such feelings and thoughts are inaccurate, totally inaccurate. Even the lowest and least gifted member (who is using his/her gift) is as important to the function of the church as the minister or the most gifted person.

"The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you."

"The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you."

All are important to God. The weaker members (less gifted) are actually more necessary. The word "feeble" means sick, sickly. It shows that in appearance, the lesser members may seem unimportant, but they are not; they are essential. In fact, they are actually more necessary.

The average man in church who serves as a personal worker, although he is never



seen by the crowds, is much more essential to decisions for Christ than the evangelist who is in the center of the scene. The dear saint who has become a *prayer warrior* is much more essential to the strength of the church than the most eloquent preacher.

"But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26).

4. God has put both the presentable and un-presentable into one body (v.24-26).

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. (1 Cor 12:24-26)

1.

God has put both the presentable and un-presentable into one body. The presentable parts of our body have no need for clothing; therefore, we do not clothe them (for example, the face and the hands). God has done the same thing in the church. God has tempered the body together.

The word "tempered" means to mix, combine, and blend together. God has arranged the church as it is: the gifted and less gifted mixed, combined, and blended together. And He has done it in such a manner that more honor really belongs to those who are less gifted.

All are important, but the more honorable are not necessarily those who stand before the church. Sometimes the more honorable are those who are never seen, those who go about their ministry for the Lord, using their gifts and functioning with-

in the church as God has ordained.

2.

God has tempered or blended the members together to create a natural care for one another. Note the words "same care." The very same care should be shown to one member as is shown to another member.

There should be no favoritism or partiality shown to anyone. When a member of the human body suffers, the whole body suffers. When one member (for example, the feet in a race) is honored, the whole body rejoices with the feet. So it is to be in the church.

The church is one body; therefore, it is to suffer and rejoice together. The body is to walk through the experience of life together—suffering and rejoicing with every member, looking after and caring for every member.

As we finish out this wonderful study on the church, I would like to conclude with Romans 15:1, where the apostle Paul wrote:

*"We then that are strong ought to **BEAR** the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1)*

In a strong church, the strong bear the weaknesses of the weak. The *weak* believers are described in Romans 14.

They are:

- those who judge, grumble, complain, murmur, and criticize (Rom 14:2-3, 10, 13).
- those who still trust in a legalistic behavior, a do and don't behavior (Rom 14:1, 14-15).
- those who disobey God's Word and go against the clear commands of God (Rom 14:10-12, 16-23).

The word "*bear*" does not mean to bear in the sense of putting up with and forbearing with an attitude of begrudging. It means to *bear the weak along*, to support them, to carry them along as a father or mother would carry a child—in love and tenderness, understanding and care.

The greatest portion of this study was taken from the Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary

Amish Statistics: Population Trends 2007-2008 (One Year Highlights)

Population. In the one-year period from 2007 to 2008, the Amish of North America show an overall estimated population growth of 6 percent, increasing from 218,000 in 2007 to 231,000 in 2008. (Figures include adults and children.) If this rate of growth remains constant, the Amish population will double in only 12 years, by 2020. The rate of growth from 1992 to 2008 was 4 percent. Using that rate (4 percent) the Amish population will double in 18 years, by 2026.

States. Amish communities appear in 27 states and the Canadian province of Ontario. In 2008 an Amish settlement was established in the state of Arkansas (Washington County) when three families moved there to obtain work. Arkansas previously had a settlement from 1993 to 2001.



Settlements. Sixteen new settlements (geographical communities) were established over the past year—an increase from 394 in 2007 to 410 in 2008. New settlements are typically small with a few families in one district (congregation). Older settlements such as that in the Holmes County, Ohio, area may include over 200 districts. Larger settlements may have sev-

eral different subgroups (affiliations), whereas smaller settlements typically have just one subgroup.

Districts. The number of local districts (congregations of 20 to 35 families) grew from 1,612 to 1,710, an increase of 98 (6 percent) in the past year.

Growth States. The following statewide increases were above the national average of 6 percent: Kansas (20 percent), Tennessee (18 percent), Missouri (16 percent), and New York (17 percent). Several states (Maine, Virginia, Nebraska) showed large percentage increases but the increases were based on very small initial populations. States with the largest estimated population increase were (in order) Pennsylvania, Indiana, New York, Ohio, and Missouri.

Static States. Although Wisconsin was a high growth state in recent years, in the past year its number of church districts (115) remained the same. Delaware's one settlement also showed no growth.

Reasons for Growth. The primary forces driving the growth are sizeable nuclear families (five or more children on average) and an average retention rate (Amish children who join the church as young adults) of 85 percent or more. A few outsiders occasionally join the Amish, but the bulk of the growth is from within their own community.

Notes:

1. Population figures (which include adults and children) are estimates calculated by using a conservative average of 135 people per church district. The number of people per district varies by region, com-

munity, affiliation, and age of the district; therefore, the actual number of people in a specific district may be higher or lower than the average used in these tables. Population estimates are rounded to the nearest 1,000.

2. The data includes all Amish groups (Old Order and New Order) that use horse-and- buggy transportation, but excludes car-driving groups such as the Beachy Amish and Amish Mennonites.

3. Stephen Scott, Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, gathered and compiled the data.

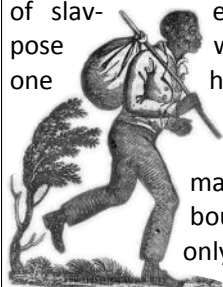
Sources: Raber's *Almanac*, settlement reports provided by correspondents in various Amish publications, annual migration reports published in *The Diary*, regional settlement directories, and informants in various settlements.

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Who Is Your Master?

Many years ago a well-to-do Christian paid a very high price for a particular slave. Actually, the man hated the practice of slavery, and his sole purpose was to set at liberty the one he had purchased. When the two met for the first time, the wealthy man said, "It is true, I bought you, but I did it only to free you from the



terrible bondage you have known." Then he handed the other man some papers that guaranteed freedom.

The slave looked at him in sheer amazement. "Am I truly free? Am I my own? May I go where I wish?" "Yes," said the Christian, "that's why I bought you, so you could be loosed from those chains forever." Overwhelmed by these words, the slave fell at his feet and said with heartfelt devotion, "Then my greatest joy and free-

dom will be to stay with you and serve you gladly for the rest of my life."

We are all slaves to someone or something. Who is your master? What kind of master do you serve? Remember: the believer's slavery to Jesus Christ is no cringing, cowardly, or shameful subjection. It is a position of honor—the honor that bestows upon a man the privileges and responsibilities of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Amazing Facts In The Bible



Question: Can people in heaven look down and see us? And know what is going on?

First argument

When called from heaven to the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about His departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem—(Luke 9:31). They seemed fully aware of life on earth, and what God was about to do.

Also consider this: Christ referred to rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents—(Luke 15:7). Similarly, he said, *"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"* (Luke 15:10). It doesn't speak of rejoicing by the angels but in the presence of angels. Surely this includes saints in heaven, who would be overjoyed by human conversions, especially of those they knew and loved on earth. To rejoice, they must be aware of what is happening on earth—not generally, but specifically.

~ Author Unknown

Second argument

Scripture is silent on the awareness of the Christian upon death. Second Corinthians 5:1-3 tells us about being clothed with our heavenly habitation, which will release us from the burdens of humanity. Verse 8 provides us with a particularly heavenly perspective: *"To be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord."*

Luke 16 speaks of the rich man asking someone to go to his family to warn them about their impending doom. However, his request is based upon his lifetime recollection of his family's lack of spiritual life and not necessarily on his observing earthly events after he died.

Likewise, 1 Samuel 28 describes a rare and unusual occurrence where someone from the dead came back to respond to one yet living. God allowed Samuel to communicate with Saul, though Saul was wrong to seek the help of a medium to begin with. Scripture forbids that practice (Deut. 18:10-12). Samuel's responses do not describe current conditions; they are based on a message he apparently received from God that Saul and Israel would go down in defeat (1 Sam. 28:15? 19).

Some teach that our deceased Christian loved ones can see us from heaven. They frequently cite from Hebrews 12:1, which says: *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses..."* Some understand the *"cloud of witnesses"* as being people looking down on us from heaven. That is not the correct

interpretation. Hebrews chapter 11 records many people whom God commended for their faith. It is these people who are the "cloud of witnesses." They are "witnesses" not in that they are watching us, but rather in that they have set an example for us. They are witnesses for Christ, and God, and truth. Hebrews 12:1 continues, *"...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before "* Because of the faith and diligence of Christians who went before us, we should be inspired to follow their example.

The Bible does not specifically say whether people can look down on us who are still on the earth. It is highly likely that they cannot. Why? First, they would sometimes see things that would cause them grief such as witnessing us sinning. Since there is no grief, tears, or unhappiness in heaven, watching the sinning world would be grievous to them. Second, people in heaven are so preoccupied with worshipping God and enjoying the glories of heaven that they truly have no interest in what is happening here on earth. The very fact that they are free from sin and in God's presence is enough for them to be happy. While it is possible that God allows people in heaven to look down upon their loved ones, the Bible gives us no reason to believe this actually occurs.

~ John MacArthur

What Does God Say About Foot Washing?

(Cont' on Page 7)

It is my hope that you have already read *"Heart to Heart with Joe Keim"* on page two. If you haven't, you might want to do so before reading this article on foot washing.

In the March 2007 edition of the Amish Voice, we published a small article on the front page that covered foot washing and quite a number of our readers were offended to the point that they requested to be taken off the mailing list.

As stated in *"Heart to Heart"* of this edi-

tion, I had no intention of coming across as if I disagreed with foot washing. And might I add, after reading some of your letters and researching and studying foot washing, I realized more than ever before how important a ministry foot washing is to the church.

I would like to ask your forgiveness for teaching on a subject that I didn't understand as well as I should have.

As I read your letters and studied the scriptures, I couldn't help but envision a

day when the *Body of Christ*, those who are born again, will come together and wash each others feet.

I am not talking about people within their own group or culture, coming together to wash each other's feet; I am talking about God's people from various kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, who have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb, coming together to wash each other's feet. This thought is obviously somewhat frightening and yet moving.

The Bible makes it clear that "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation", will someday sit together and sing a new song.

And they sung a new song... for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

(Rev 5:9)

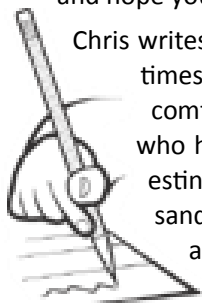
Can you imagine what would happen in our world today, if we as believers would do that now? If we did do that, we could very well see the following take place:

1. The Body of Christ would gain immense power and strength to overcome the spiritual battles that are going on in our world today
2. It is very possible that more than a million lost souls would want to be born again and go to heaven with us
3. Our churches would be so populated that most would be overflowing into fields and back yards

But the sad truth is, God's people are often too busy, bickering and quarreling among themselves. They, more than about any other group, are continually putting up walls and treating each other like unbelievers.

When are the "born again" believers going to lay their difference of opinions aside and get back to God's Word? The truth is, not until we lay our pride down, humble ourselves, and come together and wash each others feet.

And with that in mind, here is an article on foot washing that was written by a man named Chris Church. I learned a lot from it and hope you will be blessed by it too.



Chris writes: **FOOTWASHING** [in Bible times] was an act necessary for comfort and cleanliness for any who had traveled the dusty Palestinian roads with feet shod in sandals. In the Old Testament, a host provided guests with water for washing their own feet in...

Gen 24:31-33 And he said, Come in... And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave

straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat...

Judges 19:21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.

In Luke 7:44, Jesus complained that Simon had not provided water for His feet...

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Foot washing was regarded as so lowly a task that it could not be required of a Hebrew slave.

In this context the statement of John the Baptist that he was unworthy to untie the shoe (to wash the feet) of the One coming after him, indicates great humility.

[John the Baptist]...There cometh One mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. (Mark 1:7)

As a sign of exceptional love, a disciple might wash a master's feet...

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. (John 13:13-15)

The initiative of the woman who was a "sinner" in washing Jesus' feet (Luke 7:37-50) was more than expected hospitality. Hers was an act of great love which evidenced the forgiveness of her sins (7:47).

Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:4-5) has an ethical sense.

The ethical sense is emphasized in John 13:14-15 where Jesus presented Himself as the example of humble, loving service.

John 13:14-15 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.



Compare Luke 22:27

Luke 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

The command to do for each other what Christ had done for them ought not to be confined simply to washing feet. What Jesus did for the disciples was to lay down His life for them.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Thus the ethical urgency calls for giving our lives in extravagant acts of selfless service. Foot washing is one expression of this.

Washing the feet of other Christians was a qualification for service as a "widow" in the early church (1 Tim. 5:10). Foot washing is here representative of humble acts of service.

1 Timothy 5:10 Well reported of for good works; if she [widow] have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Martin Luther criticized ecclesiastical authorities who washed feet as an act of humility and then demanded greater humility in return.

The Anabaptists practiced foot washing as a symbol of washing in the blood of Christ and to impress the example of Christ's deep humiliation. Foot washing was commonly practiced by Baptists in early America. Today the regular practice is confined to smaller Baptist bodies, Amish, Mennonites, Brethren, and some others.



A source of RPM Books,
Dr. Robert W. Kellemen

Here I Stand!

(Martin Luther's Story)

Part 1 of 3
(to be cont')

Martin Luther's Main Message: In ourselves, we stand naked before the All-Holy God; in Christ, we stand clothed in righteousness before our All-Compassionate God.

Romans 1:17: *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

Presentation Introduction: Purpose

The presentation you are about to witness is a dramatization of major points in the life of Martin Luther. It will vividly portray the differences that he had with the Catholic Church of his day regarding the way of salvation. The intent is not to offend, but to instruct. The purpose is to enlighten the heirs of the Protestant Reformation to the nature of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Reformation Sunday

People know this Sunday by at least three names: Halloween, All Saints Day, and Reformation Sunday. They call it "Reformation Sunday" because on October 31, 1517, a thirty-three year old man dressed as a monk strolled to the door of the Castle Church in the small town of Wittenberg, Germany not to cry out, "Trick or Treat," but to nail to that door a parchment listing his deeply held theological convictions. Convictions that on that Halloween would scare Satan to death. Convictions that on that Halloween—the eve of All Saints Day—would tell all sinners to exchange their filthy clothes for the spotless garments of Christ. Convictions that would erupt into and inspire the Protestant Reformation.

I am that man. My name is Martin Luther. And this is my story. No. This is Christ's story. The story of how He died and rose again to change a sinner like me into a saint like Him. The story of how He showed me that there was nothing I could do to earn God's favor, no price I could pay to buy God's forgiveness, no works I could perform to merit God's acceptance.

This morning may a costumed character on Halloween Sunday teach us the true significance of All Saints Day: that all saints are made saints by faith in Christ, not by faith in self. The truth that we can dress ourselves up, we can fool others, but we can't fool God. He always sees what's on the inside. And without Christ, our insides are scarier than any Halloween costume. Without Christ, our insides are filthy rags. Through faith in Christ, we gain not a new costume, but a new heart. Through faith in Christ, we do not have to knock on the

door of God's heavenly home wondering whether we'll receive a trick or a treat. God's door is wide open, as are His arms, welcoming for all eternity all those who place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin. God's treat is eternal life through faith in His eternal Son.

Introduction: Luther's Lightning and Longing—Luther's Story/Christ's Story

On a sultry day in July 1505, I trudged over a parched road on the outskirts of the Saxon village of Stotterheim. Wearing the dress of a university law student, I approached the village as the sky became overcast. Suddenly a shower erupted, then a crashing storm. A bolt of lightning displaced the gloom and knocked me to the ground. Struggling to rise, I cried in terror, "Saint Anne help me and I will become a monk!"

Calling upon a saint, I later repudiated the cult of the saints. Vowing to become a monk, I later renounced monasticism. A loyal son of the Church, I later shattered the structure of medieval Catholicism. A devoted servant of the Pope, I later identified the Popes with Antichrist.

I. Here I Stand: Naked before All-Holy God

Living as you do almost five centuries later, you may marvel at my fear of death prompted by that thunderstorm. However, you must recall that the Church of my day had largely forgotten the mercy of God. We pictured God as our angry Judge and Christ as our relentless Prosecutor. We stood in constant dread of a furious Deity. We stood before a holy God naked and afraid.

A. Standing before God Naked and Afraid

Toward God, I was at once attracted and

repelled. I knew that only in harmony with the Ultimate could I find peace. But how could a pygmy stand before Divine Majesty? How could a sinner face Divine Holiness? Before God the high and holy, I was stupefied.

I knew in my conscience that God designed me to live face-to-face in a peaceful relationship with Him. However, I also knew, due to my sin and God's holiness, that I lived in separation from Him. My awareness of my distance from God terrified me.

I longed to know how I could find a gracious God. I longed for rest for my troubled soul. More than life itself, I wanted to be sure that I was acceptable to God. However, I was convinced that God was incensed with me. Angry with me. I was sure that He hated me.

The thunderstorm I experienced in Stotterheim was nothing compared to the thunderstorm I was experiencing in my soul. My conscience was terrified. My spirit despaired. I was unable to satisfy God at any point. What could I do?

B. Standing before God with Filthy Rags and Ashamed

I did exactly what the Church taught me to do. I latched onto every help that the Church had to offer: the monastery, works, sacraments, pilgrimages, indulgences—everything. It was only years later that I discovered that all my works of righteousness left me standing before God ashamed of my filthy rags.

Walk with me down the foolish road of works. Walk first with me into the monastery where I tried on the garment of the filthy rags of good works.

Continued on next page

1. The Filthy Rags of Works:

I entered the monastery to find peace with God, to earn peace with God. I knew that I could never appear before the tribunal of a terrible God with an impure heart; so I must become holy. What better place to practice good works unto holiness than in the monastery? Here lived heroic athletes rigorously training to take heaven by storm.

One of the privileges of monastic life was that it freed me from all distractions, allowing me to strive to save my soul through works of chastity, charity, sobriety, poverty, love, obedience, fastings, vigils, and mortification of the flesh. Whatever good works a man might do to save himself, I was resolved to perform.

I was a good monk and I kept the rules of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, it was I! All my brothers in the monastery who knew me testify to this. If I had kept on any longer, I would have killed myself with vigils, prayers, fasting, and other disciplines.

For instance, when I was a monk, I was

unwilling to omit any of my required prayers. However, when I was busy with public lecturing and writing, I often accumulated my appointed prayers for a whole week, or even two, or three. Then I would take a Saturday off, or shut myself in for as long as three days without food and drink, until I had said the prescribed prayers. This made my head split, and consequently I could not close my eyes for five nights. I lay sick unto death, and went out of my senses. I thought I could save my soul by punishing my body.

Though driven there for soul rest, the monastic life of good works failed to ease my guilt. Bowed down by sorrow, I tortured myself with the multitude of my thoughts. I would say to myself, "Look! You are still envious, impatient, passionate! It profits you nothing, O wretched man, to have entered this sacred order."

I clearly recognized the futility of my good works when I said my first Mass. I wrote my father about my ordeal.

Here I experienced another thunderstorm, this one in my spirit. I stood before the altar and began to recite the introductory portion of the Mass. Then I came to the

words, "We offer unto Thee, the living, the true, the eternal God." At that very moment, the terror of the Holy struck me like lightning. At these words I was utterly terror-stricken. I thought to myself, "With what tongue shall I address such Majesty, seeing that all men ought to tremble in the presence of even an earthly prince. Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the Divine Majesty? And shall I, a miserable little pygmy, say, 'I want this, I ask for that?' For I am dust and ashes and full of sin and I am speaking to the living, eternal, and the true God."

In short, as a monk I experienced the horrors, the shame, and the futility of trying to earn peace with God through good works.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Romans 10:12-13 *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever (your name) shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

(Continued from back cover)

Focusing on the Family

6. Give your children alternatives. "Either work this out or you both will have the privilege of an extra chore." If you can't determine who is at fault in an incident,



and both seem to be guilty (which is the case many times), there's nothing quite like a good healthy chore to help children get hold of their emo-

tions and find a way to settle their disagreement. We used to have a box that had slips of paper with extra "nasty" chores ... washing windows, cleaning bathtubs and bathrooms, mopping the kitchen, etc. (We found out many years later that our children raided the chore box and removed the nastiest ones!)

7. Don't expect your children to be conflict-free. They are different, and they will disagree and compete with one another. Competition, disagreement, conflict, and

division have been around since the beginning of time. Remember: Conflict provides training and teaching opportunities.

8. When appropriate, let natural consequences occur. Moms, this is especially directed to you. You may have to put your heart on the shelf and let the children argue for awhile. Don't rush in and rescue your children from conflict. Sometimes children are just using conflict to get your attention. Sometimes, just letting them argue and work things out is the best thing. You will wear yourself out if you become a relational referee, trying to resolve every dispute fairly.

9. Pray that you'll catch them when they do wrong. Whenever our children repeatedly had money or clothing or objects that disappeared and never showed up, we realized one of the children was stealing from the others. Barbara and I began praying that we would catch the one doing it. Not long after praying, we found hard evidence of the thief and took appro-

priate action. Our prayers were answered in different ways over the years. On one occasion, we knew one of our children had stolen a brother's 1942D penny. We knew who did it, and so we began to pray out loud over the child as we put the child to bed at night. "God, you know this child has done this. I pray that you'll help us catch him." The conviction of God's spirit came on that child and soon the "prodigal" penny was found.

10. Ignore most of it. This is a challenge because conflicts between children can be so disappointing. Practice ignoring non-life threatening conflict for a week. Our two boys used to wrestle so that the light in the kitchen which is right below their room used to bounce. We were afraid that those two guys would grow up to be enemies. Instead they are incredible friends. So my encouragement to you is to realize that your children will outgrow it.



The Greatest Commandment



Jesus said, in *John 13:34* *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

Jesus' love for his disciples was unconditional. God's love for us is unconditional.

Romans 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

God loved us before we ever did anything to make us lovable. That is what we are also called to do. God has never asked us to be or do anything He is not.

I knew a lady several years ago that, when raising her children, would withdraw love from them as punishment. When they displeased her, she would say, "I don't love you." This was how she controlled them. This is called conditional love. I love you only if you obey me. Those children eventually grew up and the emotional problems they had made their life almost impossible.

We all know good parents that can love their children even while disciplining them. In fact, when a child is disciplined, the need to reassure the child that he or she is loved is highest. That is what I mean by unconditional love. God is always good. You cannot be better at something than God is. He can discipline us and love us at the same time.

God made us all with a need to feel loved. Even when we sin, still He loves us. The children of Israel, when walking through the desert, grumbled many times and were disciplined for it. Yet, still they were not sent back to slavery in Egypt. God loves us even when we are acting in a way that no one else would love us. He calls sin for what it is. And He calls us as His people to do the same. The Great commandment is to love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:36-38 *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.*

I have already said it, but I will say it again; God loves you. The love of God is unconditional. No need to get your life right first and then seek His love. That just won't work. Repentance is necessary after, but it needs to be real or it won't do what it should.

So when you feel down and out, thank God that He loves you just as you are.

One proof that you are loved is in what Jesus said in *John 3:16*: *For God loved the world (your name) so much that he gave his only begotten son that (if)*



whosoever (you) would believe on his name, (you) would not perish, but have everlasting life.

For the authorized text, please see your Bible. Even if you were the only person on earth to ever need a savior, He still would have loved you enough to do it for you alone. And all that before you even did one good thing to prove yourself. The reason is to bring His love to people all over the world. Remember, we are to love not the world, but the people in it.

You can love the drug addict, the drunk, the Amish, and the ex-Amish along with just about anybody else who comes in contact with you. God has never asked us to do what He hasn't done first Himself. In fact, you can even love people who mistreat you. But, you really need to feel loved first. We are made that way, every one of us. We can't really love others until we feel loved. That's not us by our old nature, but God has put that love into us. So we have to have a new nature. He has given all believers the power to love others for Him.

When I express love in His name, that's His power at work in me. One way to chase away the unloved feeling is to thank God for His love even before I feel it. Trust God's Word; it's there even if you don't feel it. Because it is real, it will come to where you feel it, if you exercise it. Take heart, we CAN get there. Remember, I'm praying for you.

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The Power Of The Invisible

Things are not unreal just because they are unseen. The wind cannot be seen, but it is real. We see the trees bend before it and sails filled with it, and we hear its sound, but the wind itself is invisible.



Jesus said to Nicodemus, *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)*

The Holy Spirit cannot be seen, but we see the effect of His indwelling in the hearts of

God's people. Surely it takes something real and powerful to produce these effects in a human life.

The Apostle Paul write: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)*

⇒⇒⇒ **(Rom 5:1 Says)** *Therefore being JUSTIFIED by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

The word JUSTIFIED means: to be made right in God's sight — When a person believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man or woman's faith and counts it as righteousness [perfection]. The man is not righteous, but God considers and credits the man's faith as righteousness.

⇒⇒⇒ **(Romans 4:7 says)** *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*



We are still here, but we don't know how much longer it will be before He returns. We

try to live life to its fullest, and serve God in the best way we know how. So many of us have big plans for down the road; maybe plans for this year, or next year. Some of us might be saying we want to do this, or do that before it's too late. For instance, my goal is to become a wife as the years go by. In the end, I want to be able to say, "Mission accomplished!" I would be thankful if that happened, but I wouldn't want to focus too much on my own accomplishment. I need *His* help.

Remember: through Him, nothing is impossible. The question is: are we focusing too much on our own goals? Are we spending enough time with God? Are we prepared for His return?

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Rev 16:15)

Blessed indicates that this is the third of seven beatitudes in Revelation (see also 1:3, 14:3, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7,14). *Coming as a thief*, looks back to Jesus' warning to believers to be vigilant because of the unexpected timing of His return.

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (Mat 24:43-44)

Sometimes it's hard to believe that we are still here, with everything this world has been through, and how much has changed over the last years. But, we are still here because God has a wonderful plan for us; for our life. He is waiting for more people to turn to *Him*. This is what we all must understand: He will only wait for so long, then He will let His Son, Jesus, know that "that's enough; go get My people". And

this event will take place when we least expect it. That's why I think it's so important that we stay focused on Him (the Father).

We may not know when this event will take place, but we ought to know how it's going to happen. What is the Bible? It's His word, and what He says is going to happen; that's the way it's going to be.

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. (Mark 13:31)

But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. (Mark 13:23)

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. (Rev 2:16)

I don't know about you, but I love the word *repent*. If we use the word *repent*, along with *love* and *believe*, it draws us closer to God every day. Most of us try to be so perfect, but being perfect is not what brings us to heaven. (No one is perfect) It's what we *believe* that matters. We can choose to believe whatever we want, but is it going to be good? Jesus' blood was shed for our sins. If He was willing to do that much for us, how can we not be ready, and willing, to accept Him?

We are in the last days, and we should be prepared for His returning. How can we know? In Mark 13:3, there were several people that asked Jesus when all this was going to happen and they asked Him, "what will the signs be?" This was Jesus' answer...

And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.

(Mark 13:7-8)

Think about it! What is really happening in this world; all the things that are taking place in the Middle East, the wild fires, hurricanes, and so forth? You hear people

talking about the world's greatest earthquake in history, or I should say, they're *predicting* the greatest earthquake in history. California is one of the states that is mentioned. Talking about all of this, how can someone not be ready to except Christ as their Lord and Savior?

For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. (Mark 13:19-23)

There is so much to write about in Revelation, I could go on, and on, and on. As you all know, we can only do so much at a time. I encourage all of you, if you are interested in knowing more about the return of Jesus, to just pick up the Bible and read about it.

Like we saw earlier, we don't know what hour He's coming, but we ought to know what's going to take place in that time. We can read it in the Bible. How do I know that? Because I looked it up. Don't ever feel like giving up because you don't understand everything that's in the Bible. I've read several things in the Bible many times, and didn't always understand the meanings, but with the help of other Christians, and with prayers, I was able to figure it out. So don't give up just because you don't clearly understand it!

In your prayers, ask God to show you and to help you understand it better. Trust me: that's not too much to ask of our Father. He will do anything to help His children understand His Word. Stay focused on the time we are in, and stay in His Word. May God bless all who read this.

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Current Resident

Focusing on the Family

10 Ideas: Overcoming Sibling Rivalry

~ by Dennis and Barbara Rainey

1. Model honor and respect as you relate to one another in your marriage, and as you relate to your children. You can't expect your children to honor one another if you don't first relate with honor and respect in your marriage. This doesn't mean you won't argue with each other on occasion. There were times when Barbara and I were embroiled in a disagreement and we stopped and said to our brood of witnesses, "Children, your mom and dad love and respect one another. We just have a differing opinion on a matter right now." That would help us settle down and it also assured them that we loved, honored, and respected one another. In some cases we postponed the remainder of our "conversation" until later after the children were in bed.

2. Recognize the three kinds of sibling rivalry. The lion's share of how children argue with one another generally falls into three categories of how they seek to hurt one another: *Verbal* (using words), *physical* (using physical pain), and *relational*

(using relationships). As parents, you need to have a game plan on how you're going to handle each of these three categories.

3. Train them to ask for forgiveness when they offend or offer forgiveness when they're hurt. The Bible talks about bringing the fruits of repentance as we seek to reconcile with a brother. While you can't force children to be repentant, you can train them in the mechanics of asking for forgiveness, and you can appeal to their heart to seek forgiveness. And you also need to train them to grant forgiveness when the other person comes asking for it.

4. Be in agreement as a couple on your boundaries and penalties when there is sibling rivalry. Barbara and I used the passage from Proverbs 6:17-19 that talks about seven things the Lord hates. Those became a framework from which we designed our system for penalizing our children for many of their conflicts. There are certain things that can't be allowed to go unaddressed: lying, hitting, biting, and

name calling, for example, were not acceptable in our family. As your children move into the teenage years, you will need a mutually agreed upon game plan to change the penalties as they get older. It's also helpful to have children memorize passages of Scripture in response to acts of sibling rivalry. Romans 12:14-18 talks about being at peace with all men. Assign them Scriptures that speak of how we should treat one another, and see how God's Word begins to work its own way into their soul.

5. Listen to both sides before coming to a judgment. I can't tell you how many times I have almost disciplined the wrong child, or learned that the child who got caught in a fight was not the original perpetrator. Often there is a catalytic reaction for an incident, and you have to do some detective work to determine who is at fault. If after investigating you can't determine who's at fault, ask God to help you catch the offending child in the future.

(Cont' on bottom of Page 9)