

PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

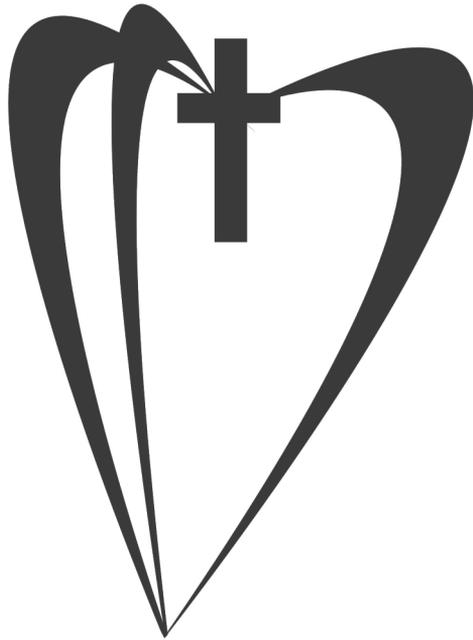


**“That they may be one just as We are one”
(John 17: 22)**

**To be united, you must all bow.
How can we meet, if we do not bow ?!**

Dr. Mark Nagy

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“Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5)

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Dr. Mark Nagy

Electronic Version

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 7 |
| Chapter One: | |
| The First Story: King of Righteousness | 9 |
| The Second Story: The Loving Father | 15 |
| Chapter Two: | |
| The Church of Christ | 21 |
| Chapter Three: | |
| Inquiries and Quotes by the Church Fathers | 27 |
| Chapter Four: | |
| What is the aim of Unity? | 33 |
| How can unity be achieved?..... | 38 |
| Chapter Five: | |
| Liberal theology threatens the Church and its unity | 41 |
| Chapter Six: | |
| Week of Prayer for Christian Unity | 47 |
| Chapter Seven: | |
| How to work for unity | 53 |

Chapter Eight:

| | |
|---|----|
| Prayers and Spiritual Songs for Unity | 59 |
| Bibliography | 77 |
| Explanation of the cover | 79 |
| Epilogue | 85 |

Introduction



**In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
One God Amen**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

❖ The main aim of this book is prayer for unity, in order that all Christians can experience true love to each other, and thus the Holy Spirit works inside true believers from all denominations to achieve the perfect visible Christian unity in the way the Holy Spirit of God will guide us. Christian unity does not mean to leave the true Faith but means to hold it with all our strength through the work of the Holy Spirit.

❖ This is not a call for any Christian to leave his church to go to another church. I am just advising that the true Christian must stay in his church and pray for the unity of the church around the world, believing that Jesus Christ is the basis & center of our Unity.

❖ Not discussing the differences between the Christian denominations, does not mean that I deny their presence. But since I found hundreds of books detailing the history of these divisions and theological differences between denominations while not giving a call for unity, there came the idea of this book to call everyone to pray for the unity of the church in a simple way that believers in Christ from different denominations can accept.

❖ This book also discusses briefly the Liberal theological thinking that has invaded some churches. By discussing this issue, I aim at making Christians aware that this way of thinking can be the biggest danger that threatens the church and its unity today.

❖ Despite the fact that the actual visible divisions of the church all over the world are so clear, meantime, there is also an invisible unity that gathers true Christian believers from different eras, **“Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation”** (Revelation 5:9), from all Christian churches. The unity of God’s church is an eternal fact, and our mission is not to create it, but to show it.

Chapter One

The First Story: King of Righteousness

Two thousand years ago, there was a great wise king. That king established a great kingdom which was dominated by love, joy and peace. All the people of this kingdom were proud that their king was the King of Righteousness, who never refused any request from His people according to His unlimited wisdom and love. He was treating them as His children and everyone felt that their king is indeed their father.

All the people outside this kingdom were astonished at the secret of joy of the citizens in this kingdom. Some of those people decided to try to live in this kingdom, where they found that they were welcomed by its king and so they decided to live in it forever. However, some others decided to fight this kingdom to destroy it, but the King of Righteousness achieved complete victory and destroyed them.

One day, the King of Righteousness decided to travel to a far place to bring all the good to His citizens. He left His kingdom to His children to run its affairs. In the beginning, the kingdom was united and strong so that its citizens were living in joy and peace. The more wars take place against the kingdom, the more powerful it becomes. Until the enemy of this kingdom - who is called Satan - managed to bring divisions among the children of the King, so that they were divided firstly into two sections, then to three sections. Moreover, things

became worst when the differences extended to find a place inside each section. As a result, the power of this kingdom began to be weaker and weaker. However, the continuous care of the King of Righteousness for His children, in spite of the great distance, protected the kingdom from downfall.

Each section of this kingdom started to blame the other section; then each section started to prevent its followers from dealing with people who follow other sections, until they began to fight each other. The biggest problem was that each section thought that it would be honest to the King of Righteousness if it fought the other sections, which had broken some of the laws or even who thought in a different way. Sadly many lives were destroyed during these wars. Alas!!!

I wonder what would be the reaction of the King of Righteousness when He returns to His kingdom? Would He destroy one or two sections of His children to support the other section? Or would He gather the many sections and unite them again in one kingdom?

Surely, the King of Righteousness will unite them, and would never sacrifice one of His children who has lived honestly to his king even if he has broken some laws due to ignorance or weakness. The reward of each section may differ, “ **for one star differs from another star in glory.**” (1 Corinthians 15: 41), but the main aim that the King of Righteousness will seek to achieve is to “bring them together and make them one” (John 11: 52) as they used to be.

This is exactly what happened to the Church of God. The Lord Jesus Christ has established a united kingdom, and all the persecutions along the ages and the power of sword failed to destroy it. When Satan did not find any way to destroy the kingdom of Christ from the outside; he decided to destroy it from the inside through divisions. But blessed be the Lord for keeping His kingdom and working in it in spite of its divisions.

I shall ask two questions to whoever reads this story, and I hope to answer them honestly:

The first question: How many times have you fought other Christian denominations, and started competing to prove their mistakes and weaknesses?

The second question: How many times have you prayed for the other Christian denominations, so that God would unite us all in one church?

Every Christian believer has to take the Lord Jesus as a model to follow and pray for the unity of the Church.

Prayer, with repentance, is the key to the ecumenical movement which aims for the Christian Unity.

I would like to point out that all Christian denominations (Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant) have theological differences and thus are not equal in the accuracy of faith. But surely Jesus Christ has got true believers from every church⁽¹⁾. Jesus gave us the promise that **“the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”** (John 6:37).

(1) Surely what is meant in here are churches who believe in the essence of Christianity (Like the Holy Bible, Faith in one God, Holy Trinity doctrine, Divinity of Christ, Divinity of the Holy Spirit, Incarnation, Redemption and Resurrection, Eternity) and live according to the Gospel of Christ. But concerning the heresies as Jehovah witnesses and the Adventists, all true Christians from different denominations have to be united to face their heresies.

Some may say: “My denomination is the original”, while others may say: “My denomination is the most accurate.” I do not negate that your denomination may be the best one, but this does not give you the right to reject and fight your brother to prove his mistakes. Instead of fighting him for his weakness, pray for him and look to the shining points in him. When our Lord Jesus met the Samaritan woman who had five husbands, He did not blame or rebuke her for her weakness, instead He looked to a small good point to encourage her and told her: **“You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”** (John 4: 17,18).

Oh alas! I wish that we would see the shining points in our brothers. By encouragement, the King of Righteousness was able to turn this woman into a preacher.

I Wish that we would have a heart like that of Saint Paul who says: **“For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh”** (Romans 9: 3). This verse was written about the brothers of the Apostle Paul, the Jews, who have not yet believed in Jesus Christ as a savior. But as **“the word of God is living and powerful”** (Hebrews 4:12), we can apply it today on the divided church. So to speak, the apostle Paul would not be happy to belong to a 100% perfect church while thousands of his Christian brothers and sisters who believe in the essence of Christianity are perishing. It is a marvelous kind of love that we do not often realize nowadays.

We have to realize that the triumphant church in Heaven is composed of all true believers from all Christian denominations of all ages. Jesus Christ does not put a sign at the gate of Heaven with the following words written on it: “Entrance for Christians of the specific Denomination Only”.

Many Christians think wrongly that Christ died to save only the believers of their denomination. Others, in ignorance, say that the church of Christ includes all denominations and theological thoughts without any exception. But do all denominations believe in the essence of Christianity? Do all these millions of Christians live in a manner “**worthy of the gospel of Christ**” (Philippians 1:27)? Of course Not. But aren’t there, in every church those who follow Jesus and are true believers in Christ? Of Course Yes. Those believers, “**of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**” (Revelation 7: 9), are the ones who compose the one body of Christ, “**For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.**” (Romans 12: 4,5).

If you love the Lord Jesus with all your heart, you have to love your brother from the other denomination as yourself. Keep loyal to your church faith and enjoy the work of the Holy Spirit in your Church, but take care from using the love of Christ as a false excuse to attack His children from other denominations. The Faith of your Church that you take as an excuse for attacking your brother is the same who obligates you to love your brother and pray for him.

It is God who will protect every true faith. **“Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”**(Ephesians 2:20) and the everlasting rock in whom we are defended, will protect His church whom He loves and for whom He has laid down His life. Keep your faith; not through attacking and fighting but through firmness in Jesus. Fighting will generate more fights till our Christianity turns to be a kind of research or theory and we will get far away from the life in Christ. If your faith is perfect, you will be steadfast in it, and if it suffers from some weakness, it will be completed in Christ **“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”** (1 Timothy 2: 4).



The Second Story: The Loving Father

David was a wise Father full of mercy and love. Although He was the most powerful and richest of all people, He was very humble. He went around doing good for the poor. This great Father had three children. He loved them with all His heart. They were small children who didn't know anything except love. They used to play together with pure love that words cannot express. All who saw this felt that David had only one child and not three. Their hearts used to think of love only.

These children grew up and became adults who represent the future of their country. But unfortunately, love did not grow up with them, in fact it diminished. They all loved their Father but they failed to love each other. Each one of them used to think in a different way to express his love to his Father.

One day, the eldest son came to his Father and said: "I love You so much, that is why I decided to join the Faculty of Engineering to become an engineer to help You in Your great projects."

And then the next son came to his Father and said: "I love You so much, that is why I decided to join the Faculty of Commerce to become an accountant to manage all the finance of Your great projects."

Finally, the youngest brother came to his Father and said: “I love You so much, that is why I decided to study all kinds of arts in order to satisfy Your heart.”

The Father was so happy with the love of His children, but something always bothered Him: that each of His sons did not think or care about his brothers; each one only thinks of himself. When the children assembled together to talk with their Father, each of them talked only about himself and his career. Each one considered his brothers’ jobs and specializations unimportant or even useless and unworthy.

The engineer used to tell his brother, the accountant: “A simple grocer can do the calculations and expenses, so what is the difference between you and him?” Then he tells the artist brother: “Cannot children draw pictures?! What is the great thing about drawing a picture or playing a concert? What does the society gain from that? But for me, it is totally different: an engineer can build factories and schools which are essential for the society.”

The accountant replied to his brother, the engineer saying: “What is the value of engineering without a strong economy? Without a strong economy, none of the raw materials will be available to build anything, and then who would manage the business and all the accounts of any project?” Then he says to his young brother: “And you artist, I do not grasp anything of what you do. Does a person die if he does not draw a picture or play music?”

Finally the youngest brother who was terrific in all kinds of arts answered his brothers; “I am an artist who was born with a sense of art. All the books of the world cannot give you this sense of art. The engineer and the accountant follow some steps already created by others to accomplish their jobs. But as for me, every day I create a new piece of art. I have always something new in my life.”

During all this, the heart of the Father was suffering from the talk of His sons, so He devised a plan to restore again the unity of His children’s hearts, so that they can be united in the Spirit. He gathered them and said: “I want to build the greatest palace in the world.” The engineer shouted: “Who can build it except me? Engineering is the only way to achieve my Father’s dream.” The accountant interrupted him saying: “Of course such a big project cannot be done without financial and managerial supervision. Without my support the project will fail.” Finally the youngest brother said: “What is the use of a great palace without the touch of art and beauty? It is worthless.” After that, each one of them started shouting and arguing while the heart of the Father was suffering. He knew that each of His sons loved Him, and wanted to show Him his love, but unfortunately they were showing it in a wrong way.

Then suddenly the Father rose and said “That is enough”. The most beautiful palace will be built only with your unity in work. You are one in Me; I am your Father. You have only One Father, not three fathers. The most beautiful palace will be built by your united hearts. Is not that what I have taught you? Did you forget My words: **“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house**

divided against itself will not stand.” (Matthew 12:25). I will not allow you to destroy My house. My house is yours. My kingdom is for you. I have given you everything. Did you forget your First Love which united you when you were still young? Ah. Did you forget? David Cried. (John 11:35).

For the first time, the brothers started to understand their Father’s feelings. They started to feel that competition is not the way to make their Father happy, and for the first time in many years, they sat around one table, assembled by love, not to discuss who is the most important; instead they discussed how to make their Father happy. They finally understood that they made their Father suffer from their behavior and divisions. At the beginning, it was not easy. It was difficult for them to confess their mistakes, and to acknowledge the role of each other. But the continuous follow up of their Father in their discussions helped to remove all obstacles.

The work in the project began. And every day, love started to grow again in the hearts of the brothers. Each one started to discover the importance of his brother in the success of this great project.

The elder brother said to the accountant: “I really do not know what could I have done without your help with these managing and accounting issues? It exceeded all my expectations. The job you are doing in organization and managing is really wonderful.” And then he said to his youngest brother: “And you my brother, I admit that your choice of colors and art made me experience a beauty in my work that I have never experienced before.”

The youngest brother replied to his elder brother: “It is me who did not know that engineering is a beautiful art. I was mistaken. You are really an artist.” And then he said to his brother, the accountant: “And you also my dear brother is an artist. You have the art of financial administration.”

The accountant brother interrupted the artist saying: “Please wait a while my brother. It is me who have not appreciated the value of art before. I was mistaken. Art has a lovely effect on man’s life.” And then he said to the engineer: “And you my brother are doing a perfect job that I could not imagine. You are really a brilliant brother.”

As the Father followed up the work, His sons gave the surplus of the success of the work to each other. ⁽²⁾

Finally, when the most beautiful palace in the world was finished, the Father assembled His sons and asked them: “What is your opinion now in working together? Did you experience the meaning of Unity, My children?” His sons cried. The engineer said: “Father, we are no longer three. We are now united by the Spirit.” The accountant followed him saying: “We offer You our deep regret and apology concerning the pain that we made You suffer due to our divisions.” Finally the artist brother said: “We are one in You.”

Dear brothers and sisters...

The Father David represents the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.” (Romans 12:10)

The three brothers, when they were young, represent the early united church. Although there was a difference in the time of acceptance of faith between the first believers but love assembled them. They were from different countries, speaking different languages, but their hearts were united.

Over time, with the growth of the church around the world, deep divisions between believers started until they became three main churches (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant). They all love the King of Righteousness, but each one focuses on his own way of love. In fact, he focuses on himself. But the Lord of Glory cries because of this division, and He wants to unite His church. He is the only one who can unite the church because He is the only one who has established it. In our unity, the church will enjoy the beauty of the first Church. It will combine the upright faith and the best practical ways of applying it.

Everyone can participate in the unity of the church by praying for it from the depth of one's heart.



“These things I command you, that you love one another.”
(John 15:17)

Chapter Two ***The Church of Christ***

The word “Church” is a derivative of the Early Greek word “κυριακον” (Keriakon), meaning “Lord’s house”, which in English became “church.” The Koine Greek word for “church” is “ἐκκλησία” (ecclesia) which means, in general, a group of people assembled for a specific reason and according to the New Testament, represents the group of believers.

When the number of believers began to increase, they started to use “Churches” in the plural form to describe the groups of believers from different countries, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: **“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”** (Acts 9:31)

According to the Nicene Creed (325 AD), the Church of Christ is:

1. **One:** Where Christ is the Head of the Church and the center of its unity.
2. **Holy:** Because the Holy Spirit works in it, sanctifies its members, and guides them to work.
3. **Catholic:** Because it assembles the true believers **“Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation”** (Revelation 5:9)
4. **Apostolic:** Because it continues in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, and works to spread Christ’s words to all people.

Also the Church of Christ is:

1. **Orthodox:** Right faith, because Jesus is its founder.
2. **Evangelical:** The Holy Bible is its doctrine.
3. **Catholic:** It gathers believers from different generations, cultures and ages.

Visible and Invisible Unity

Invisible Unity

The church enjoys an unlimited unity, where its source is the unlimited God, assembling believers from different eras. This unity is not affected by visible human divisions in the Church. This invisible unity is an eternal fact.

Visible Unity

The Lord allowed the divisions of the church; however this was not the pleasure of the Father's heart, who wants to see the visible unity among His children on the earth, through the salvation of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

The fathers of the Early Church strived to maintain and achieve the visible unity, as we can see Saint Paul indicating that the believers should make every effort **“to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”** (Ephesians 4: 3-6)

Do we seek to maintain the visible unity today as Jesus asked us to do?

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Lord Jesus asks from every church leader, from every pastor, from every Christian believer to exert effort to maintain the visible unity in His church. Divisions do not glorify Christ. On the contrary, they hinder the Gospel of Christ.

We have to seek unity, through the work of the Holy Spirit, **“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”** (Ephesians 4:13)

The relation between the Church and Christ.

1. The Church is the Body of Christ

The church is the body of Christ, and Christ is the head of this body; this is illustrated in Saint Paul’s Letters.

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22,23)

“But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:15,16)

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.” (1 Corinthians 12:27)

“He is the head of the body, the church”(Colossians 1:18)

2. The Church is the bride of Christ

And this is shown in Saint Paul saying: **“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”** (2 Corinthians 11:2)

The Church is the holy bride of Christ who **“gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”** (Ephesians 5:25-27)

We can also find a fantastic image of the Church in the book of Revelation, where Saint John wrote: **“Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”** And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” (Revelation 19: 6-8)

3. The Church is the house of God

The church is the house of God, where Christ is the cornerstone and the believers are the living stones of that

house, as shown in the first letter of Saint Peter: **“you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,**

“Behold, I lay in Zion

A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,

And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” (1 Peter 2:5,6)

Yes, **“The stone which the builders rejected**

Has become the chief cornerstone.” (Psalm 118:22), (Matthew 21:42), (Mark 12:10) , (Luke 20:17) , (1 Peter 2:7)

Saint Paul, the Apostle, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote to the believers in Ephesus saying: **“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”** (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Also we can see clearly that the church is the house of God, in the First Letter of Saint Paul to his disciple Timothy, where he said: **“but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”** (1 Timothy 3:15)

The Strength of the Church

- + Is measured by the extent to which it holds the evangelical, catholic, and orthodox faith.
- + Is measured by the work of the Holy Spirit in it and through it for the salvation of the souls.
- + Is measured by its ability to positively influence and strengthen other Churches, and not by proclaiming their weaknesses to the others.

The Believer and the Church

- + The believer serves Christ through serving His church, devoting the gifts given to him to serve the Lord. **“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all”** (1 Corinthians 12: 4-7), **“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”** (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- + The believer works to show the way of life to sinners, through proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to them. His most precious wish is to see all **“being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”** (Philippians 1:11)
- + The true believer always works and prays for the unity of the church according to the Gospel, realizing that the unity of all believers inside the church is God’s will.

Chapter Three ***Inquiries and Quotes by the Church Fathers***

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1: 10-13)

Dear ...

Christian Orthodox Brother

Christian Catholic Brother

Christian Evangelical Brother

Christian Anglican Brother,

❖ Don’t you see that we have a base in common that joins us together; Christ, the Son of God, who promised that **“he who has the Son has life”**(1 John 5 :12)

❖ Don’t you see that the Holy Spirit works in your Christian brother from the other denomination, because **“no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”** (1 Corinthians 12:3).

❖ Don't you see that Christ refused to be owned by one family: **“He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”** (Matthew 12:48-50)

❖ God uses his children from different churches for the glory of His name, so who are you servant to stop Jesus from using your brother? This exactly what happened with the disciples in their wrong jealousy on the work of Christ, as mentioned in Luke 9: **“Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.” But Jesus said to him, “Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.”** (Luke 9: 49,50)

As a father deals with his children of different ages by different ways, according to their personalities and ages, God deals with His children from different denominations by many ways. Who are you to do a framework for God's treatment with your brothers?

❖ Don't you see that Jesus focused on the unity of believers in His prayer to the Father, as He prayed: **“Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.”** (John 17:11), **“that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one”** (John 17:21,22).

Jesus puts the strength of His unity with the Father and the unity of the Father with Him as an example and identity for a unity that He asks us to have in Him and in each other. And as Jesus sees this kind of complete unity exceeding our abilities and imagination, He returned and asked the Father again! And He is still advocating by His blood!!

❖ Don't you see dear brothers and sisters, that the mistakes of the fathers did not prevent Jesus coming from Abraham lineage. In Jesus' lineage, we can see people with some obvious weaknesses, but all these weaknesses did not prevent God from dealing with Abraham lineage. It is the same when it comes to the Church, the weaknesses of some personalities in some churches during some periods, did not and will not prevent Jesus' work in this church.

Jesus did not say for example: "I will not come from Abraham's lineage due to the wrong relationship that happened between Judas and his daughter-in-law", or "I will not come from Rahab's lineage since she was a sinful woman before she joined the people of God", or "I will not come from Solomon's lineage since Solomon is the son of Bathsheba with whom David committed adultery and killed her husband." All these weaknesses did not prevent the blessings of the Lord to be received.

This is a lesson for us not to put history and weaknesses that happened in the past as an obstacle between us and our brothers and sisters. Rather, Jesus should be our main concern. If Jesus did not refuse to come from the lineage of people who had their mistakes and weaknesses in history, why will He not work with His children who were born in churches which have their weaknesses in the history?

❖ Why do we focus on the weaknesses of some churches in a certain era and forget the work of Jesus today with the children of these churches?

Why do we look to the weakness of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, while not looking to the number of Saints it has given throughout the various eras? Why do we forget the work of Christ through the Catholic Evangelism in many countries?

Why don't we see anything except the mistakes and divisions that happened and are still happening in the Protestant churches and forget the millions of souls that were brought to Jesus through them. We forget their pioneer role in spreading the Holy Bible around the world?

Why do we attack the Orthodox Church for some practical matters, and we forget its pioneering role of preserving the right faith? Why do we forget the powerful work of Jesus in His Church throughout the different eras?

❖ Why do we fight each other through books and sermons, turning away from Jesus by this way, (For demons, knowing their own weakness, for this reason formerly set men to make war against one another, lest, if they ceased from mutual strife, they should turn to battle against demons. Why, they who become disciples of Christ, instead of warring with each other, stand arrayed against demons)⁽³⁾ . May we focus on Christ and let the Holy Spirit guide us in His processional victory.

❖ Don't you see that Jesus wants you to take the position of

(3) " Incarnation of the Word" by Saint Athanasius - Episcopal Publishing House

the intercessor in the weaknesses of your brothers and sisters, and not to take the position of the judge. **“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.”** (Romans 14:4)

❖ For how long will you think that your church is Christ’s only church and that the other churches are not? The Church of Jesus is composed of those whom Christ bought by His blood **“Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation”** (Revelation 5:9). The Church of Christ is composed of those who believe in the essence of Christianity and live according to **“the faith of the gospel”** (Philippians 1:27)

❖ For how long will new denominations start appearing everyday? The real believer works in serving Christ in his Church, not leaving his church and establishing a new denomination, as it happens today in some churches.

The real believer works for the unity and not for division.

❖ When shall we make the heart of Jesus happy by our unity in celebrating Christmas and Easter together? What a wonderful thing it is for the Heavenly Father to see His children all together celebrating Him and honoring one another above themselves.

Quotes of the Church Fathers about Unity

The word of Church is not the word of division but it is the word of Unity and harmony. There must be one Church around the world, although there are many churches distributed in many areas around the world.

(Saint John Chrysostom)

The Church is one which with increasing fecundity extend far and wide into the multitude, just as the rays of the sun are many but the light is one, and the branches of the tree are many but the strength is one founded in its tenacious root, and, when many streams flow from one source, although a multiplicity of waters seems to have been diffused from the abundance of the overflowing supply nevertheless unity is preserved in their origin. Take away a ray of light from the body of the sun, its unity does not take on any division of its light; break a branch from a tree, the branch thus broken will not be able to bud; cut off a stream from its source, the stream thus cut off dries up. Thus too the Church bathed in the light of the Lord projects its rays over the whole world, yet there is one light which is diffused everywhere, and the unity of the body is not separated.

(Saint Cyprian of Carthage)

Reconcile us all, O God of truth, and be gracious to us. And just as this bread was scattered over the mountains and when collected was made one, so too gather your holy Church from every nation and every country and every city and village and house and make it one living Catholic Church.

(Liturgy of Bishop Serapion)

Chapter Four ***What is the aim of Unity?***

The main aim of the unity is to:

Satisfy Jesus' Heart

as it is written **“He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.”** (Isaiah 53:11)

Doesn't the Lord Jesus deserve that we satisfy His heart since He gave us the grace of existing?

Doesn't the Lord Jesus deserve that we satisfy His heart since He saved us by His death on the cross, and gave us eternal life through His glorious resurrection?

No Christian, regardless his/her denomination, will differ in the answer of these questions.

Indeed that's right, yes, the Lord Jesus Christ deserves that we satisfy His Heart.

But what is the relation between unity and the satisfaction of Jesus' heart?

There is no doubt that many believers around the world, from different Christian denominations (Orthodox, Catholic,

Protestant), satisfy Jesus' heart. This is something logical. But unfortunately there is another fact that we cannot neglect, which is that Jesus' heart suffers so much. He is hungry and thirsty due to the absence of love between Christians. Nothing in this universe can satisfy Jesus' heart as much as true love.

Imagine Father David's feeling when seeing His children who have failed to love each other. Their love to their Father is never perfect, since **"If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"** (1 John 4 :20)

Some may say: "Wait a moment, there is no hatred between the Christian denominations. You must be exaggerating!" Well, what about the bloody wars, based on denominational differences, that took place in the human history between Christians? Instead of preaching in the name of Jesus, we killed each other and thus pierced Jesus not only with one spear, but with thousands of spears directed to His heart.

That was in the previous eras, but now we fight each other in different ways: not through swords but through words and tongues. How many books and sermons have gone far from Jesus to attack other Christian denominations, enumerating their weaknesses, contending in naming their fathers' mistakes, without praying for them and asking Jesus to unite us all in one Church? The one who really loves Jesus should love Jesus' children in other denominations and pray for their weaknesses.

But how can Unity satisfy Jesus' heart?

Unity can satisfy Jesus' heart through:

1. Love

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

One of the principal and self-evident facts is that in order for a Christian to love the Lord Jesus a complete love, he must love his brothers and sisters in Christ. Without this love, the believer will lose a lot; he may even lose the work of Jesus' in his life. **“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”** (1 John 4:16)

And as **“faith without works is dead”** (James 2:20), also faith without love is useless, since **“though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”** (1 Corinthians 13:2)

I know that some may say: “This is true, but Christians from all denominations love each other.” Unfortunately this love does not match the standards that Jesus gave us. What do you think of a person who claims that he loves his brother down deep from his heart and tells his brother: “Dear brother, I love you from all my heart, but I do not want to talk to you, nor share you anything. I will not visit you, and please do not visit me. Get your children away from mine.” What kind of love is this?!

We have to be speaking the truth in love of Jesus Christ so that we **“may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—”** (Ephesians 4:15), understanding that Christian love does not mean to disclaim the true faith under the coverage of love, but it means holding to the right faith by all our strength through the work of the Holy Spirit.

2. The right Faith and the best application of this Faith

Although love is the first priority to satisfy Jesus’ heart, however **“without faith it is impossible to please Him”** (Hebrews 11:6)

The Christian Churches⁽⁴⁾ may differ in some practical issues, but the principles of Christian faith is one. So what is requested in unity is to enrich love between Christians to match with God’s standards, and unify different churches in some issues where differences are preventing the visible unity. **Unity in principles of faith is a fundamental demand**, while also the agreement on the practical issues helps to enrich the fellowship between different churches.

3. Saving Souls

How can we save lost souls by bringing them to Jesus, while we fight each other, often leaving the quest for lost souls and focusing on fighting each other? Instead of fighting each other, we have to be united in facing:

(4) What is meant here of course is every Church which believes in the essence of Christianity and takes the Holy Bible for its dogma.

1. Heresies that attack the essence of Christianity such as Jehovah's witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists and Mormons.
2. The destructive liberal theological teaching which refuses the work of the Holy Spirit and denies the inspiration of the Holy Bible. Liberal theological thinking is Satan's new tool to divide the church, even inside the one denomination.
3. The stream of immorality and homosexuality which has invaded the world, wrongly taking "Freedom" as its motto.

The Church, Christ's Holy bride, refuses all symptoms of sexual immorality which have invaded the world. She declares the Bible's true teaching with courage, giving the world a living example for purity and chastity, which she has learned from her Almighty & Loving Holy Groom.

How can Unity be achieved?

The unity of the church does not mean that all denominations around the world should become only one denomination under the leadership of one person. All we need is that the churches accord together, to work **under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, who will guide us to the true meaning of Unity, and guide us how to reach this unity.**

The unity of the church will not be achieved when all Christians decide to do everything in the same way; instead it will be achieved when we all follow the same leader. And when we all approach Jesus, the center of the circle, walls between denominations shall be destroyed, and we will all be united in Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Despite the importance of ecumenical movements and theological discussions in achieving the unity, all these efforts will be incapable of achieving the visible unity except through the Holy Spirit, who works in the believers in order that they realize the importance of the unity and how they can be obedient to it. **The unity of God's church is an eternal fact, and our mission is not to create it, but to show it.**⁽⁵⁾

Christian unity is not a fancy slogan, instead it is a living life offered to us by the Holy Father, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

(5) The Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple

And as the beginning of the Church on the day of Pentecost was through the Holy Spirit, also the unity of the Church will not be achieved except through the Holy Spirit, who will guide the leaders of the Churches to the One Evangelical Apostolic Orthodox Faith. If we truly want the work of the Holy Spirit, we have to be humble and confess the sin of hatred and pride for **“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”** (1 Peter 5:5).

We have to remember that the first fruit of the Fruits of the Spirit is love, which will lift the people of God above denominational disagreements to reach the depths of Jesus’ love.

Christian unity does not mean the disregard of the true faith, but it means holding to it by all our strength through the work of the Holy Spirit. True unity is done according to God’s thoughts, not according to human thoughts.



**“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you.”**

(Matthew 7:7)

Prayer For Christian Unity

Dr. Mark Nagy

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Chapter Five

Liberal theology threatens the Church and its unity

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” (2 Timothy 4:3,4)

“because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1: 21,22)

True Christian unity is based on obedience to the Father through faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, we can see today, some communities with some false liberal theological teaching which denies the essence of Christianity and yet claims to be Christian. With the presence of such false teaching, no true unity can be realized since it will not be from God.

The cause of the spread of the Liberal theological teaching in some churches, especially in the West, is due to the liberal theological universities, in which some atheists teach under the cover of the accurate scientific knowledge. In the hands of the Holy Spirit, theology enriches the fellowship with God, but in the hands of non-believers, spiritual degradation is the expected result.

Liberal theology is a new arm of Satan, that if it enters a church through one of the pastors or ministers, destroys it and makes the church lose its spiritual power.

Liberal theological thinking has a wide range of definitions ranging from minor denial to any faith decision, to refusal of all beliefs and confessions of faith approvals and all that is supernatural (i.e. miracles).

Theological liberal thinking teaches that everyone has the liberty to contradict the Scripture in order to prove his own beliefs, even if it is wrong. For example: In some liberal theological universities, in order to have a doctorate degree in theology, you must give a new idea even if this idea is completely out of the Christian faith. In reality, each one of those who follows the liberal theological thinking **“looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.”** (Philippians 2:21). The most important thing for them is the (ego) and not Christ.

In most cases, liberal theology begins with small foxes that end with spoiling the vines. Liberal theological teaching, when completed, ends at denying the essence of Christianity, giving the opportunity for unorthodox teaching to be spread.

Those liberals, who deny what God has assured, and assure what God has denied, have to know that real freedom is in obeying God and His Word, since **“where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”** (2 Corinthians 3:17). The freedom which those liberals follow from rejection and denying **“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”** (Jude 1:3), is in fact, slavery. Whoever commits a sin is a slave to it, and what is sin except pride and not obeying God?

Churches which live according to the Gospel enjoy “**the glorious liberty of the children of God.**” (Romans 8:21), but the communities which follow liberal theological thinking are, in fact, under the yoke of bondage.

God teaches us to love all people and to pray for them. But according to that love we have to face those who are getting away from the truth, to throw themselves and others in the way of destruction. Lord Jesus loves sinners but refuses the sin. “**God is love**” (1 John 4:8), but this love is the complete Holy Love which refuses sin in every form and title.

Facing liberal theological thinking

Facing liberal theological thinking is of extreme importance, and all shepherds of the churches from different denominations have to be united in doing this, or else, they will be condemned for the blood of those who have been lost from the herd.

Leaders of the churches must review liberal theological universities which are spread around the world; they must not be deceived by Satan’s lies which claim that liberal theological thinking will help the church to cope with the modern civilization. The Christian faith has stable facts that cannot be changed since the Lord “**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**” (Hebrews 13:8)

Facing liberal theological thinking is a role that is not exclusive only for leaders and pastors; all public Christians have a role which is not less important. At many times, the public Christian believers are the real defenders for faith, they are even the right guide for the leaders and pastors who have lost their way.

Ecumenical work has an important role in facing liberal theological thinking, since the unity of Christian churches and their cooperation together weakens Satan's work and uncovers his plans and thoughts.

Satan's attacks are becoming more and more powerful day by day; the devil is fighting the church “**having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.**” (Revelation 12:12). This fact does not cause true believers to fear, because those who are holding on the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, know that God “**did not leave Himself without witness**” (Acts 14:17)

Although liberal theology has left a spirit of perturbation and divisions in many churches, God is still working strongly in His church. The darkest hours always come before the dayspring. We are now facing heresies and unorthodox teachings that use the name of Christianity inside the church. But the Lord Jesus is the Good Shepherd; the One who protects His Church. And as He gave victory to the early Church against the heresies such as Arianism, using Saint Athanasius in the defense of the Right Faith, He will also use now a great cloud of witnesses from pastors and seculars to defend the truth through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Liberal theology and Unity

“Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”
(Ephesians 2:20-22)

Liberal Theology \rightleftharpoons Church division

Liberal Theology causes more divisions in the church, while these divisions help liberal thinking to spread widely.

Where the Spirit of God is found, unity around God’s word takes place. However when the spirit of liberal heresies circles, divisions, heresies and Ego start appearing.

There is no true Christian unity between churches except based on the foundation of the living faith in Jesus Christ through His One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The unity of the church is based on the work of the Holy Spirit which guides us to the One, Evangelical, Apostolic and Orthodox Faith. If liberal theology refuses the work of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Bible and **“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”** (Jude 1:3), then what unity are we talking about between Churches which are conservative on the

Right Faith and those who adopt wrong teaching? **“For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”** (2 Corinthians 6:14)



Ιησους Χριστος Θεου Υιος Σωτηρ
Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior

Chapter Six

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity⁽⁶⁾

The modern ecumenical movement began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when Christians began to pray and work together across denominational boundaries.

As a result of these prayers which have been raised for unity, believers started to respond to the work of the Holy Spirit. There began a transformation in the mentality of Christians and a growth in the spirit of Unity among them. Ecumenical councils, which assemble Christians from different denominations, have been established in order to promote unity; firstly through prayer and secondly through theological discussions. Finally, Christians began to recognize that divisions prevent the spread of the Gospel.

One of the fruits of the ecumenical movement is the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” in which believers are united from different Christian denominations to pray for unity.

The traditional period for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Pastor Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feast of St. Peter and the feast of St. Paul, and therefore have a symbolic meaning.

(6) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2008 - The Pontifical Council for Christian Unity & The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches

The Week of Christian Unity was eventually called the “Church Unity Octave” by Pastor Wattson, since there were eight days between the two feasts.

In 1926, The Faith and Order movement began publishing suggestions for an “Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity” to allow a bigger number of Christians to participate in the Prayer for unity. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time, churches often find other days to celebrate the week of prayer, for example around Pentecost, which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the church.

In 1935, Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocated the “Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” on the inclusive basis of prayer for “the unity Christ wills by the means He wills”. And starting from that time, Prayer for unity began to spread more and more around the world.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus’ prayer “**that they all may be one**” (John 17).

In 1964, The “Decree on Ecumenism” of Vatican II emphasized that prayer is the “soul of the ecumenical movement” and encouraged the observance of the Week of Prayer.

In 1966, The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] began an official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material.

In 1968, the first official use of the Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by WCC Faith and Order Commission and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity]

In 2008, the church celebrated 100 years of Prayer for Christian unity under the name of “**Pray without ceasing**” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). A title reflecting the need of continuous prayers for the Church unity in order that the children of God enjoy the gift of visible Christian unity.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Themes 1968-2017

In 1968, materials officially prepared jointly by the WCC Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity began to be used.

1968 To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1: 14)

1969 Called to freedom (Galatians 5: 13)

1970 We are fellow workers for God (1 Corinthians 3: 9)

1971 ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit
(2 Corinthians 13: 13)

1972 I give you a new commandment (John 13: 34)

1973 Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11: 1)

1974 That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord
(Philippians 2: 1-13)

1975 God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1: 3-10)

1976 We shall be like him (1 John 3: 2) or, Called to become what we are.

1977 Enduring together in hope (Romans 5: 1-5)

1978 No longer strangers (Ephesians 2: 13-22)

1979 Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4: 7-11)

1980 Your kingdom come (Matthew 6: 10)

1981 One Spirit - many gifts - one body
(1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13)

1982 May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)

1983 Jesus Christ - the Life of the World (1 John 1: 1-4)

1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord
(1 Corinthians 2: 2 and Colossians 1: 20)

1985 From death to life with Christ (Ephesians 2: 4-7)

1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1: 6-8)

1987 United in Christ - a New Creation
(2 Corinthians 5: 17-6: 4a)

1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4: 18)

1989 Building community: one body in Christ
(Romans 12: 5-6a)

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1990 That they all may be one... That the world may believe
(John 17)

1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations!
(Psalm 117 and Romans 15: 5-13)

1992 I am with you always ... Go, therefore
(Matthew 28: 16-20)

1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity
(Galatians 5: 22-23)

1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind
(Acts 4: 23-37)

1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another.
(John 15: 1-17)

1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock
(Revelation 3: 14-22)

1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God
(2 Corinthians 5: 20)

1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8: 14-27)

1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his
peoples (Revelation 21: 1-7)

2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ
(Ephesians 1: 3-14)

2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life
(John 14: 1-6)

2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36: 5-9)

2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4: 4-18)

2004 My peace I give to you (John 14: 23-31; John 14: 27)

2005 Christ, the one foundation of the church
(1 Corinthians 3: 1-23)

2006 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am
among them (Matthew 18: 18-20)

2007 He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak
(Mark 7: 31-37)

2008 Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:(12a) 13b-18)

2009 That they become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37:15-28)

2010 You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:48)

2011 One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of
bread and prayer (cf. Acts 2:42)

2012 We will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus
Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58)

2013 What does God require of us? (cf. Micah 6:6-8)

2014 Has Christ been divided? (1 Corinthians 1:1-17)

2015 Jesus said to her: Give me to drink (John 4: 7)

2016 Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord
(cf. 1 Peter 2:9)

2017 Reconciliation - The love of Christ compels us
(2 Cor 5:14-20)

Chapter Seven

How to work for Unity

Prayer and work for unity is the duty of every Christian believer. The Lord Jesus prayed and worked for the Christian unity as this was the delight and will of the Father.

The Lord Jesus Christ established the invisible and unlimited unity which assembles all true believers who live in a manner **“worthy of the gospel of Christ”**(Philippians 1:27) from all eras, however He is asking us to accept this gift of unity and to proclaim it to the world as a living witness to the love of the Holy Father, and salvation through Christ as was mentioned in Christ’s Prayer: **“that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me”** (John 17: 21)

There are some basic principles that each Christian believer should apply in his daily life so that God can use him to proclaim the unity inside His holy church. God wants to do amazing things and wonders among us. (Joshua 3:5)

Main Principles for the work of unity

1. Unity in relation with God.

This means a living, personal relationship with God through my commitment to the church.

It is through the love of the Father, the acceptance of Christ in my life, the work of the Holy Spirit inside me and the fellowship with my brothers and sisters inside the church, that I can hear God's voice and be obedient to this voice.

It is through a renewed living relationship with God **“who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation”**(2 Corinthians 5: 18), that I can accept reconciliation with myself and others.

We cannot talk about unity of the church in the world, and the work of Jesus Christ in His church, while not experiencing it in our own personal life.

- ❖ Come today, and renew your promises with God in your life.
- ❖ Remove from your life everything that prevents your unity with God, and thus with yourself.
- ❖ Confess to the Lord all your weaknesses and sins, and let Him be the King enthroned on your heart.
- ❖ Ask the Lord to use you for the glory of His name inside His holy church.

2. Unity inside the family.

Do you live the unity in the church inside your home? Do you work for unity and love inside your family, or you are a source of division? Remember well that **“if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”** (1 Timothy 5:8)

- ❖ If you are suffering from divisions inside your family, come today and repent this sin.
- ❖ Ask the Lord to give you grace to work for the unity inside your family.

3. Unity inside the local church.

Being loyal to church and experiencing fellowship and unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ are fundamental requests for unity.

How can we talk to others about the church unity among different denominations while we are a cause of division in our local church?

We have to make every effort **“to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”** (Ephesians 4:3), even if this means to be oppressed and afflicted by others, yet we respond by love and forgiveness. Let us take Christ as our living example as: **“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth”** (Isaiah 53:7) but He prayed for those who have killed Him: **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”** (Luke 23:34)

- ❖ Come today and repent on each time you were a cause of division inside your church.
- ❖ Repent every negative word you said about your brothers and sisters, whom Christ died for their salvation.
- ❖ Thank the Lord for your church in which you grew up and pray for all the weaknesses inside it.

❖ Do not leave your church because of some weaknesses in the ministry, instead glorify Christ in the church, confessing that you have also your weaknesses and failings. **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”** (1 John 1: 8), **“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?”** (Luke 6:41)

If you have some weaknesses in applying some of the above principles, repent today and be sure that God can give you victory on all your weaknesses, so that your vessel be **“for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”** (2 Timothy 2:21)

How can we work today for the Unity?

Every Christian believer can work for unity through:

1. Prayer for unity.

“Men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1)

Prayer with repentance is the key to the ecumenical movement. Jesus prayed for unity of His disciples and for all believers, and we have to take the Lord Jesus as our perfect example and pray for the visible unity among all Christian believers.

Let us pray for unity on a daily basis. Prayer is a gate for us to be united with Jesus and our brothers and sisters in the Lord asking for the visible unity: firstly in our local churches and then between different Christian denominations.

Let us ask the Lord to give us Love **“from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith”** (1 Timothy 1:5). Let us pray for the victory of our brothers and sisters in Jesus from different Christian denominations and ask for their blessings.

We have to pray for leaders of churches, and for all theological discussions so that the Holy Spirit who **“searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”** (1 Corinthians 2:10) guides us to the way of unity according to His will.

2. Love.

“If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.” (1 John 4:20,21)

We have to offer real love to our brothers from other denominations, knowing that Christ is the source of our unity. For example, if your colleague at work is from another Christian denomination, do not sit with him to talk and focus about theological and historical differences between churches, instead offer him love and enjoy talking about the “author and finisher of our faith”: The Lord Jesus Christ the most **“fairer than the sons of men”** (Psalm 45:2)

True love in Jesus is a reflection of the invisible unity, of which Jesus is its source.

3. The Proclamation of Unity.

“That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” (John 17:21-23)

Every Christian believer must understand that divisions hinder the spread and proclamation of the gospel. If Christian unity will make the world believe in the message of salvation as shown in (John 17:21-23), divisions have the reverse action: they hinder such proclamation.

If we have to talk about Christian denominations as a testimony to the world, let us talk about the common ground that unites and assembles us, instead of attacking each other and entering in endless discussions which do not glorify Christ but indeed make His heart sad and cause others to stumble.

Also, one of the ways which supports us in proclaiming unity is the attendance of common unity meetings, like the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity”, which most churches around the world approve of.

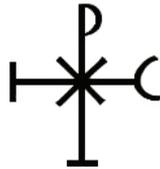
Chapter Eight ***Prayers and Spiritual Songs for Unity***

From Jesus Christ, to all Church pastors and to every believer in the world.

- ❖ I came so that you may be one.
- ❖ But today, I see My church so divided.
- ❖ I did not want to see My body divided.
- ❖ When shall you ask for the unity my dear pastors?
- ❖ Until now you did not ask for the unity from all your hearts.
- ❖ Don't I deserve to see the labor of My soul and be satisfied?
- ❖ Members of My living body,
- ❖ When will you be united in prayer?
- ❖ When will you pray for the unity of my church?
- ❖ Did you forget My promises to you:
- ❖ **“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”** (Matthew 21:22)
- ❖ **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”** (Matthew 7:7)
- ❖ Prayer makes miracles.
- ❖ If you do not know how to pray for the unity,
- ❖ My Holy Spirit will guide you.⁽⁷⁾
- ❖ The unity cannot be achieved without the work of My Holy Spirit inside you.

(7) “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26)

- ❖ To be united, you must all bow.
- ❖ The unity does not mean to be identical.
- ❖ I do not want to see all Christians identical in the way they love Me.
- ❖ The unity of the church will glorify Me.
- ❖ My big desire is your unity.
- ❖ Through your unity, you will be a living Gospel and you will be my witnesses to the entire world.
- ❖ I am the head of the church and the center of its unity.
- ❖ Accept Me as your only king and be united.



From a soul full of desire for the unity to Jesus Christ: head of the church and the center of its unity.

- ❖ Lord Jesus Christ,
- ❖ We thank and praise You because You loved us and washed us from our sins in Your own blood.
- ❖ Help us to love You from all our hearts.
- ❖ Teach us how to love Your children who are different from us and with us.
- ❖ We have the desire for the unity,
- ❖ However we do not know the way to accomplish that unity.
- ❖ Will You not unite us again, that Your people may rejoice in You together?
- ❖ Guide us with Your Holy Spirit to the way of unity according to Your means.
- ❖ We confess that we have divided Your church which You have purchased and redeemed with Your blood on the cross.
- ❖ Forgive us for every pain that we have caused You through our divisions.
- ❖ Remove the mist from our hearts in order to see our sin.
- ❖ Restore us and we will return, for You are the Lord our savior.
- ❖ We thank You that You are still working in us and through us despite our division.
- ❖ Sun of Righteousness,
- ❖ Disperse the darkness of division.
- ❖ Lighten our hearts with the light of unity.
- ❖ Lighten our minds in order to understand that what unites us is much more than what separates us.

- ❖ Teach us to intercede in the weakness of our brothers and sisters.
- ❖ And to rejoice with their deep fellowship with You.
- ❖ Our Good Shepherd,
- ❖ Protect Your Church from all heresies,
- ❖ And from the ferocious wolves.
- ❖ Protect Your children from all Unorthodox Liberal Theological thinking which works against “**the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**” (Jude 3)
- ❖ Unite us Master in the truth.
- ❖ You are “ **the way, the truth, and the life.**” (John 14:6)
- ❖ By Your light, we rush the armies of darkness and division,
- ❖ And without You, we can do nothing.
- ❖ Teach us how to be humble and submit to Your glory.
- ❖ Surrendering our lives and our unity to You completely.
- ❖ So that You hold us on the everlasting arm.
- ❖ Uniting us in the cross.
- ❖ Help us to be united in our testimony about You,
- ❖ So that we become the light of the world through our unity.
- ❖ In order that the world believes in Your great love and Your holy salvation.
- ❖ Give us grace to be healed from the wounds of divisions.
- ❖ Help us so that You become the center of our interest and our unity.
- ❖ Teach us how to love You so that satisfaction of Your heart becomes our first priority and the goal of our lives.
- ❖ Make the winning of souls to You our long-sought desire.
- ❖ We are waiting for the work of Your Holy Spirit, Master.
- ❖ And as the beginning of the church in the Pentecost was

through the work of the Holy Spirit.

- ❖ Also the unity of the Church will not be achieved without the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Glory to the Father and the Son & the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ The One God who loves His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Amen



A Prayer for the unity derived from the Prayer of Abbé Paul Couturier.

Lord Jesus,

- + who prayed that we might all be one,
- + we pray to You for the unity of Christians
- + according to Your will,
- + according to Your means.
- + May Your Spirit enable us,
- + to experience the suffering caused by division,
- + to see our sin,
- + and to hope beyond all hope.

Amen



Prayers from the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2006”⁽⁸⁾

Lord,

- + Teach us to pray as Jesus taught His disciples.
 - + As they were united in their hearts,
 - + So may we be one in our faith, love and service.
 - + May we celebrate difference,
 - + Rejoice in diversity and willingly share the riches of our patterns of prayer.
 - + Grant us the wisdom to recognize Your presence in our brothers and sisters in different ways in order that our belief in unity in our own churches and with other churches may be increased.
 - + Allow our coming together in Jesus’ name to transform us to be one in reality,
 - + So that the world may believe in His abiding presence.
- Amen



Reconciling God,

- + Help us to overcome the grievances and bitterness which failing and sins of the past have built in us.
 - + Teach us Your forgiveness so that we may, in humility, seek reconciliation with You and with Your children.
 - + Strengthen in us the love of Christ, source and guarantee of the unity of Your church.
- Amen



(8) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2006 - The Pontifical Council for Christian Unity & The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches

Prayers from the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2008”⁽⁹⁾

Lord of unity,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

+ We pray without ceasing that we may be one, as You are one.

Father,

+ Hear us as we seek You.

Christ,

+ Draw us to the unity which is Your will for us.

Spirit,

+ May we never lose heart.

Amen.



Lord,

+ Make us Your disciples,

+ attentive to Your Word, day and night.

+ On our journey towards unity,

+ give us hope for fruit in due season.

+ When prejudices and suspicion seem to dominate,

+ we pray You, give us the humble patience necessary for reconciliation.

Amen.



(9) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2008 - The Pontifical Council for Christian Unity & The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches

Lord God,

+ In the perfect unity of Your being,

+ keep our hearts so burning with the desire and hope for unity

+ that we will never stop working for the sake of Your Gospel.

+ We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Other Prayers

Our mighty God,

- + We thank You for the invisible unity which assembles us in the name of Jesus Christ,
 - + And we ask You for the visible unity for the glory of Your Holy Name.
 - + You who crown us with the right faith,
 - + Unite us in Your truth.
 - + You “ **who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation**” (Ephesians 2:14)
 - + Destroy the wall of pride that separates us from each other,
 - + Renew our visible unity in Your name,
 - + Eliminate every thinking working against the true right faith.
 - + Help us to work for the unity,
 - + According to Your means and according to Your will.
 - + We thank You that You hear and accept our prayers,
 - + For the sake of the Holy Blood of Christ.
- Amen.



**“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!”** (Psalm 133:1)

+ *Where* the Father achieves His will in the believers,
And the Holy Spirit overflows in the hearts,
And Christ in the middle satisfies us with His love.

+ *Where* the Father is the complete Holy love,
And the Holy Spirit is the Helper,
And the Lord Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

+ *Where* the blood of Jesus purifies us from our sins,
And the Holy Spirit **“makes intercession for us with
groanings which cannot be uttered.”** (Romans 8:26)
And the Father Himself hears and accepts the prayers.

+ *Where* the right Faith unites us in the truth,
And Hope in Christ is unshaken.
And Love abides us in the God of Love.⁽¹⁰⁾

**“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!”** (Psalm 133:1)



(10) “ God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”
(1 John 4 : 16)

Father and Son and Holy Spirit,

- + You are One God in the Holy Trinity.
- + We ask You to assemble Your children “**Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation**” (Revelation 5:9),
- + In Your One Holy Catholic Orthodox and Apostolic Church.
- + Make us one Christian World.
- + Who has the desire and works on spreading the message of salvation.

Holy Trinity

- + Sanctify us,
 - + To be prepared for Your work in us and through us.
 - + To live united with You and our brothers,
 - + Forever and ever
- Amen



Holy Father,

- + We thank and praise You for choosing us in Jesus Christ to be Your sons by adoption.
 - + Help us to feel our responsibility towards being one family in Christ.
 - + Strengthen our will so that we can do our best in the elimination of difficulties in the way to the visible unity.
 - + Send to us Your Holy Spirit in order to remove our divisions, so that we cry out:
 - + “Abba, Father” , Glory to You forever and ever.
- Amen



Lord Jesus,

- + Help us to achieve Your will in that all Your children enjoy visible unity.
 - + Lighten our hearts to love each other as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.
 - + Lighten our minds to recognize that You are the center of our unity.
 - + Lighten our eyes in order to see the work of Your Holy Spirit in other churches.
 - + Strengthen us our Lord so that we work together for the unity of the Church,
 - + And to glorify Your Holy Name in the world.
- Amen



Holy Spirit,

- + Who intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.
- + Help us to pray for the unity as we should do.
- + Guide us in the way of unity.
- + Remove from us the stony proud heart,
- + And give us a new fleshy humbled heart.
- + So that we recognize that our division is a sin from us against God.
- + Lighten our spiritual eyes,
- + So that we can see the gift of the unity given to us from the Holy Father.
- + Lighten our minds which are very slow in understanding,
- + So that we understand the unity we have in Jesus Christ.

Spirit of God,

+ Make us holy so that we can be purified from the sin of Ego and Pride,

+ To be cured from the sickness of division.

+ And to work together as ambassadors for Christ on earth.

Glory to The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit,

Forever and ever.

Amen



“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

(John 14:14)

Spiritual Songs for Unity

1) The Church's One Foundation

1. The church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

2. Elect from every nation,
Yet one over all the earth;
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

3. Though with a scornful wonder,
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping;
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

4. The church shall never perish,
Her dear Lord to defend
To guide, sustain and cherish,
Is with her to the end
Though there be those that hate her,
And false sons in her pale
Against a foe or traitor,
She ever shall prevail.

5. Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blessed,
And the great church victorious
Shall be the church at rest.

6. Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee.

Words: Samuel John Stone, 1868



Other Spiritual Songs⁽¹¹⁾

2) We all will be one as Jesus and the Father are one.

There is just one Lord Jesus,
One God, one Father, one King.
There is just one Holy Spirit,
One triune God--so we sing that . . .

We all will be one, as Jesus and the Father are one.
As the Father is in Jesus;
As Jesus is in Him,
They will be in all of us,
And we will be in Them.

There is just one foundation
One Church, one order, one way.
There is just one revelation.
One doctrine, one hope--so we pray that . . .



(11) http://members.tripod.com/~Spirit_songs/indexunity.htm

3) *Unity, for this Lord we pray!*

Mold us into one. O Lord, let us yield ourselves to thee.
One in the Holy Ghost. O Lord, let us yield totally.
Let Thy Kingdom come. O Lord, let us yield ourselves to thee.
All division cease. O Lord, let us yield totally.

Unity! For this, Lord we pray!
Harmony! Let all strife fade away!
Let us stand in Your presence until we are one in Thee.
Let us all seek Your face until we are one in Thee.

One in government. O Lord, let us yield ourselves to thee.
Order of the Word. O Lord, let us yield totally.
One firm foundation. O Lord, let us yield ourselves to thee
One sure covering. O Lord, let us yield totally.

All one in the faith. O Lord, let us yield ourselves to thee.
One in knowledge. O Lord, let us yield totally.
One Kingdom of God. O Lord, let us yield ourselves to thee.
One pure doctrine. O Lord, let us yield totally.



4) Let us all be one that the world may believe in Jesus, in Jesus

John 17:21

Let us all be one that the world may believe

In Jesus, in Jesus.

Let His love flow out that the world may believe

In Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us love one another that the world may believe

In Jesus, in Jesus.

Let His love flow out that the world may believe

In Jesus Christ our Lord.



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Explanation of the cover

Logo of the Book

The logo of the book takes the form of a heart with three sides where the sides are united in the Cross.

The heart is a symbol of love and unity.

The three sides are symbols of the Christian denominations.

As the three sides must bow to be united in the Cross to form the shape of a heart, also the Christian denominations must bow to the cross to be united.

The Front Cover

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:22)

1. Lord Jesus Christ

“Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5)

“Jesus wept.” (John 11:35)

Jesus Christ is crying about the division of His children and the lack of visible unity. His Prayer to the Father was and is still **“that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one”** (John 17:21,22).

2. The Cross

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

A picture of a cross where the word “Unity” is written in the middle. The Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save us, is the center of our unity, and He is the only one who is able to unite us through the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of each believer.

3. The Church

“To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:21)

A photo of one church with different domes as a symbol of the Church unity. Each Christian who believes in the essence of Christianity and lives in a manner **“worthy of the gospel of Christ”** (Philippians 1:27), sacrificing his life to serve the Lord, is a member of God’s One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

4. The Holy Bible

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16)

The Holy Bible is the constitution of Christianity which assembles different Christian denominations. Every Church who works according to the word of God will grow and spread its spiritual fruits, while whoever moves away from the written truth, weakens and dies spiritually.

5. Worship and Praise

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19)

An image of worship and praise, where believers from different denominations, cultures and ages are singing and praising the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. Eucharist (Ευχαριστία)

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.” (Mark 14:22-24)

Through the Eucharist, Christian believers from different ages are united, around the body and the blood of the Lord, to declare the death of Jesus, His holy resurrection, and to remember Him until He comes again.

The Back Cover

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” (Hebrews 13:7)

“Because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.””
(1 Peter 1:16)

1. Saint Athanasius (296-373)

The well-known Bishop of Alexandria in the fourth century; He was the 20th Pope of Alexandria. He had sacrificed his life for the testimony of the Divinity of Christ during the Council of Nicaea and after it, exposing himself to the exile and persecution many times. It had been said to him: “The world is against you Athanasius “, but with the complete trust in Jesus & with his strong holding to right faith, Saint Athanasius replied: “ And I am against the world “

2. Saint Abraam Bishop of Faiyum and Giza (1829-1914)

One of the saints of the Coptic Orthodox Church. His great joy was in reading and studying the Holy Bible, and used to give his visitors bible teaching and advice according to the word of God.

He was known by his great love to the poor, his very generous donations to whoever needs it, even if this means to give all the money he has. He never accepted to be offered better food, than that available for the poor in his diocese.

He led a simple life just like his Master and God used him to do many miracles.

3. Lillian Thrasher (1887-1961)

One of the heroes of the faith in the 20th century, as she served in her life more than 10 thousands orphans and widows in the south of Egypt.

A lovely coincidence, that the birthday of Lillian Thrasher (27 September) is the same birthday of George Müller (1805-1898) who has established the great orphanage in Bristol in England.

She left the United States with all her friends, and future to obey God's call to her through (Acts 7: 34)⁽¹²⁾, where she arrived Assiout in the south of Egypt on 26 October 1910.

She opened the orphanage in 1911, and she depended completely on God for the supply of the needs of the orphans and widows.

4. Mother Teresa (1910-1997)

Mother Teresa is considered one of the greatest evangelists in the 20th century to spread the love of Jesus to the world. She began her service between the poor in Calcutta, after which her service rapidly spread around the world.

She had received a number of honors, one of which is Nobel Prize for Peace in 1979, and when she had the prize, she said " I do not deserve it" , and she gave all the money to the poor saying "It is from them and to them"

(12) "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt." (Acts 7:34)

5. *Mother Baselia Schlink (1904-2001)*

A living example of the heart sacrificed to serve the Lord. She has founded, together with Mother Martyria, the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary which played a very important spiritual role in Germany.

She wrote a lot of books characterized by the depth of the living experience with the Lord Jesus. Most of her books were translated to different languages.

6. *Brother Roger (1915-2005)*

A living example for the Christian Unity; He founded the ecumenical Taizé Community in France in 1940, which is formed of brothers from different denominations.

Taizé played a leading role in the proclamation of Christian Unity, and attracted thousands of young people, especially from Europe, to the living faith in Jesus Christ.

Epilogue

**“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God, (The Father)
And the communion of the Holy Spirit”**(2 Corinthians 13:14)
be with all of us,
to unite us in the truth,
in Jesus’ Church,
the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church.

Amen



Other books for the author

- ❖ Ambassador of Heaven.
- ❖ Lord Jesus' visit to the child Maria.
- ❖ Wait for the Lord.
- ❖ Victory is waiting for you.
- ❖ Sanctify me Oh God.
- ❖ Come to Jesus' bosom
- ❖ Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.
- ❖ Sacrament of Matrimony
Seeking God's face or the world's satisfaction?!
- ❖ Our Father in heaven

**This is a call for prayer for the visible
unity of the church around the world.**

And these are God's promises:

**“For where two or three are gathered together
in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”
(Matthew 18: 20)**

**“And whatever things you ask in prayer,
believing, you will receive.” (Matthew 21: 22)**

**Every true Christian must believe that visible
Church Unity can be done on earth as “The
things which are impossible with men are
possible with God.” (Luke 18: 27)**

**Unite us Holy ...
In Your Holy Name**

دار النشر الاسقييه -



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