

Espousal Newsletters

By W.F. Handschumacher — Article Two - Unity of the Faith!

From the first day I became a Christian I had a passion to understand the truth of God's Word. I took an interest in looking at church life and comparing it with what the Bible said. Today, with the help of technology, I get an accurate picture of the condition of the church across America and in certain parts of the world by listening to Christian teaching. I grew up in a Christian family and attended church as a young boy. However, I began to question some things as I grew older, especially after receiving Christ. One thing that always puzzled me was the lack of unity. The church should be a place where people work together and love each other as Jesus taught. Yet, there seems to be a different church on every street corner competing...and, in some cases, fighting over whose doctrine would ultimately dominate. "Something is wrong here," I thought.

During the Jesus movement of the 1970's, I saw people of different denominations come together and fellowship around their common experience of salvation in Jesus Christ. I watched in amazement as God moved in miraculous power in this atmosphere. As the decade of the 70's came to a close, so did the revival. A unity that is truly born of God ruins you for anything else. Since that time I listened to many teachings on the unity of the church and its importance. Most man-initiated unity is at the expense of God's Word. Compromising truth to get unity was never an option that interested me (and I do not think it interests God either). The early church had a "oneness" and a sense of family that many Christian leaders in our time try to duplicate and can't. The first century church did not face the same pressures and diversities we do. However, they knew something that is a mystery to most modern day Christians. This mystery would totally revolutionize the Church in America, if we let it.

In the early part of 1970, I saw a "hidden" truth from God's Word that was strangely absent in the majority of Christian teaching I heard. As I learned more, I realized that this truth was central to everything in the Bible. The Apostle Paul sheds some light on this mystery in Ephesians 5:30-32...

"For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The covenant of marriage between a man and wife reveals the mystery of the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church. Paul called it a "great mystery." This means we need to give it special attention and consideration. The joining of a husband and wife in marriage involves the making of a covenant. To get the full impact of what Jesus did on the cross, understanding the meaning of the covenant institution is imperative. We need to develop a

the meaning of the covenant institution is imperative. We need to develop a "covenant mentality." Being "covenant minded" is almost non-existent in the modern day church. However, the covenant was at the center of every act in the first century church.

In Luke 22:20, Jesus said at the last supper with His disciples, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." The cross and the blood of Christ represent a "New Covenant." We find that the Bible calls the New Testament a "blood covenant," or a covenant made through the spilling of the blood of Jesus Christ. So, what is a blood covenant?

A blood covenant is not an institution understood by the average American citizen or church-goer. It is understood in the Middle-east (where the Bible was written) and by most tribal cultures. Covenant is the oldest and most ancient institution known to man. A blood covenant is a serious, solemn and binding agreement. Breaking a blood covenant condemns the offender to death. The agreement involves the union of two individuals (called covenant heads) where all assets, liabilities and resources become common. However, it is much more than that. This union is an exchange of each other's life declared through the spilling of blood in the "blood covenant ceremony." At the end of the ceremony we see what appears to be two individuals. However, what can't be seen is the union between these two "blood covenant brothers." From this time forth they are not two "individuals." They are one new man. Whenever one has a need, the other will meet it as if it were his own. If one is being attacked by an enemy, the other will defend him as if he were the one being attacked. Each will die for the other, if necessary. A blood covenant represents the ultimate in personal commitment and friendship. It not only joins the two "covenant heads" together, but also their families.

Calvary is a "blood covenant ceremony" on a universal scale. It is the place where Divinity and humanity (and the families they represent) are joined in an unbreakable agreement. God's Word contains the terms of the agreement. This covenant, cut in the blood of Jesus Christ, also joins together every Christian everywhere. In this Divine covenant every believer becomes a member of God's family making us brothers and sisters. This new family relationship over-rides all previous racial and cultural differences. Jesus said that the defining characteristic of God's family is oneness. This oneness, or covenant union, is the very thing that causes the world to recognize that Jesus came forth from the Father.

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 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 17:20-23)



So why doesn't the world believe? This is one question that prompted me to write the book, "The Mystery Of The Faith." Many Christians lack knowledge about the blood covenant of Jesus Christ. They never received teaching about the tremendous blessings of the covenant, or about the dangers in failing to walk in it. Clearly, Christians lack a real understanding of Calvary because of the strife, division and powerlessness commonly found among them. My desire is to see an authentic "covenant mentality" re-established in the Church. I believe the "blood covenant of Jesus Christ" is the end time message for all believers. Christ is returning for His bride who has made herself ready by learning how to walk in her covenant with God and with each other.

Fred Handschumacher and his wife Linda have been our friends since 1978. They are a wonderful couple who personify hospitality. Fred has written a book called the MYSTERY OF THE FAITH. It was my reading of this book that prompted me to ask him to write the article above. He has spent his entire Christian life fascinated by the blood covenant of Jesus Christ. The book will no doubt be proof of that.

Altogether, it is one of the easiest read and understood works on covenant I have ever encountered. If you would like to order a copy you may contact them for more information at the link below: Visit their website — [Rock of Offence](#)