You Are of the Messiah

By Warren Zehrung – May 28, 2005

A few years ago, a few of you young Church adults began an annual event which has become known as the "Togetherness Weekend." The object of this get-together is to bring scattered young adults of God's Church together for a few days to focus on our common faith and hope in the future, while building relationships that will, hopefully, bring greater unity to the Church of God and its various groups.

A superb awakening is taking place within God's Church. You spirited young members, from at least a half-dozen diverse church organizations, are reaching out in fellowship to like-minded brethren across artificial man-made dividing lines. This work of assembling yourselves together is pleasing to God. Please understand how special to God this "Togetherness Weekend" undertaking is.

I am going to try to emphasize today, that God is more than pleased with what you are doing here this weekend. I consider it a real privilege to speak to you, and I hope to impart to you just a few thoughts in the time that we have in the main sermon.

I would like to begin, strangely enough, with the Gettysburg Address. There was something ironic about that day when Abraham Lincoln met in November, 1863. This nation that we have found so beautiful, and you have all enjoyed the peace thereof, was torn in civil war. It was a somber occasion, and it was the dedication of a resting place, a cemetery for men who had died for unity. Abraham Lincoln, more than any man, fought for unity. It is appropriate that he was fighting for the unity of this nation, because this great nation of ours is a gift from God. It was promised to Abraham so many thousands of years before. God promised Abraham great blessings, and one of them was the United States. The United States was about to divide. Division is on our mind; we are a scattered and shattered people, and I will mention that a number of times today.

Abraham Lincoln worked hard to preserve the Union (unity). He said in that dedication, ironically, that, "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." Even though he said that nobody was going to remember it, it was an inauspicious occasion. He said those words, and they have lasted down through history, and they have become a part of our history.

I do not know if President Lincoln was wise enough to use that wording on purpose, so that they would be remembered, that would have been a good tactic to use, because they are very meaningful to us. I do not think that he underestimated the importance of what he was saying because those were very important words. But he said something else that I would like to share with you. He said, "It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this." I want to say to you young brethren, and I want you to think about this, it is altogether fitting and proper that we should do what we are doing this weekend. I believe that there is an undercurrent, a little undertow that

says something like, "Well we outcasts, we scattered brethren, we shattered brethren, we are not really mainstream church, we are just a gathering of people". What I am going to talk about today is how important it is, in God's sight, what you are doing here this weekend. I know that on the face of this earth that there is nothing going on, anywhere, that is more important than what God has going on at this gathering of people. We are of somewhat different minds on the minor points, the doubtful disputations. But on the main things, today is God's Sabbath, God is the Creator. We know God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ our Savior. We are in agreement on all of these things.

I think that there are those who demean you, and what you are doing here today, as this is not being sanctioned, or it is not one of the big organizations that the world would notice. But God's people are a small, scattered flock, and they always have been small in numbers. What God is doing is sometimes not even known by most of the world. I submit to you that God is very pleased with your togetherness, and something that I am going to show you from the scriptures today, is that it was very much on Christ's mind the night before He died. I believe our minds would have been on something else. If you were being executed, if you were being killed tomorrow, would you be thinking about this togetherness weekend? I believe, and I submit to you, that it is altogether fitting and proper that we should do what we are doing this weekend.

The title of today's sermon is "You are of the Messiah." This is a rather enigmatic title. For those who would like a simpler title, you can just call it "Togetherness."

I want to point out just how unique and how special you young people are, specifically in God's sight.

I want to show you from the Scriptures, from God's Word, that this "Togetherness" endeavor, that you are a part of, is very important to God.

Each and every one of you is holy. Holy means that you are set apart for a special reason. When you are baptized, and receive God's Holy Spirit, this makes you holy. Those of you who are too young to be baptized, you are holy because of your parents, your grandparents or your great-grandparents. What a privilege it is to be a fourth-generation Christian.

Your acceptance of one another, whether you are just approving or reaching out to become one body, one unified group of people, is pleasing to God. It is more than acceptable to God; it is something that God desires. God is not getting it (unity) everywhere. You know as well as I do, that we are a scattered and shattered people. There are groups who will not speak to each other. There are people who are disfellowshipped from talking to one another.

I will share briefly with you two little vignettes that really touch me.

This took place up in Chicago. The church had split many times. Two ladies that had known each other since they were young and had gone to church together, gone to the Feast together, and had gone to Passover together. One lady was with one group and another with another group, and it just happened that their church organizations had rented halls in a close area. The two ladies saw each other after services, and they embraced like ladies that love one another do. One of them had a bandana on her head, as she was bald because she was going through chemotherapy for cancer. She was dying and her friend saw her. It was a warm embrace, it was a good embrace. One of them was disfellowshipped from her church for that encounter. She was told that she should not mix with "those" people, and told that she knew the rules. I submit to you that that is ungodly – that is not who we are, and that is not of God. You will not find that kind of behavior in the Scriptures.

The other example is very similar. There were two people who had kept Passover together for years and years. The church split and they found themselves in different groups. They could not go to the Feast together any more. It came time for Passover, and the ladies thought, "Who will l I share Passover with, and who will wash my feet? I know, my friend that I have kept Passover with so many years".

They both decided to ask their respective pastor. "We will ask them if we can keep Passover together as we only live forty miles apart, and it would be great to have someone to keep Passover with". So both of the pastors checked with their "headquarters", and the question was answered the same by each of the "headquarters". They told them that they could not to do that, and they should keep Passover by themselves. Again, you are not going to find that anywhere in the Bible.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

As a brother or sister we love one another…

This event – this Togetherness weekend - is certainly inspired by God.

You are an exceptional group, to reach out, embrace, and take a brother and sister in Christ who has been separated and scattered, and sometimes broken and shattered, through no fault of their own.

God is pleased with unity. Ask yourself if you know John 3:14, because we know that we have passed from death to life. What does that mean? That means that we are talking about a salvational issue here today. We were all part of death at one time, but Jesus Christ delivered us from that. We have been saved by what He has done, if we remain true to the end. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. That is a level of godly love that is according to the Ten Commandments. We do not steal, we do not lie, we do not cheat and kill each other; we love one another. We must love one another, and I do not see any exceptions

here, about where they are from, which banner they meet under. If we do not agree with what John says we abide in death still.

I know that this togetherness event is inspired by God, and this is something that God is pleased with. I think that you ladies should write it up, take photographs of it and it should be published for many people to see. You could show the people fellowshipping, enjoying one another's company, believing, praying and worshipping the same God. These are people from various backgrounds, from maybe seven major organizations.

I would like to give you a project to do, when you go back home to your church area, tell your various church pastors about the common bond of God's Spirit that you found here this weekend, and tell them what you experienced; the peace, the happiness and the joy.

Then go a step further, and pray about this before you do it, but enlist his (your pastor's) support and endorsement of this OPEN type of get-together where people can meet without fear, and without being looked down upon. Ask him to come and speak to you next year. Ask him if it is permissible in his organization, or his corporation, to come and speak to you. I know that it is not permissible in a number of the organizations to come to a group that is not sanctioned by them. Ask your pastor to recognize your contribution to the unity of God's people, because this is very pleasing in God's sight. God is pleased with what He sees here today! We are worshipping God here today.

You young men and women are shining examples to the scattered groups that lack the unity exemplified here today. I know that it takes a lot of courage for some of you, but you have God on your side. There was a time in the Church of God; we might call it the "Golden Years" when the church was more unified. I do not think that it was a better church than we have here today, but I do believe that they were "Golden Years" in some ways. The gospel spread to the entire world with one voice, in a way that is not happening today as much. But those days are fading away, and those leaders are fading away. But you are the generation of the future, and you are the hope of the Church of God. Do you realize that it is going to be turned over to you? It is going to be handed to you. You should not think in your mind that it is being handed over to a corporation. There is no corporation that has been designed by God to further the gospel, to preserve the truth on the face of the earth. It is only those with God's Spirit who are able to do that. I thought of writing this sentence two or three ways, because God in His omnipotence does not rely on us. But in a way, God is relying on you to carry forward the truth as one generation passes and your generation comes into its own. You are the only ones who know the truth, and who are looking to the Kingdom of God.

Organizations, as we have seen much too much of, come and go, but God's Spirit is eternal and His truth is going to be lasting. You, as young individuals, are the last bastion of truth on the face of this earth. Do not think of yourselves as small, weak

and meaningless. What you are doing here today is unique, and it is special, and I know that it is hard in our mind not to think, 'Here we are… off the beaten path". This is the place, the venue that God has chosen for us.

Do you have any idea how courageous you are going to have to be in the very near future to represent God's Kingdom on this earth?

What is it that makes this "assembly" very special in God's sight? Why am I saying that this is special to God? There are probably groups of hundreds in churches meeting today. What makes you young people so very special to God in what you are doing this weekend?

Do you remember what was heavily on Christ's mind the night before He died? He had spent three and a half years teaching the disciples to become the apostles. But that night what was on His mind? It was *"That they may be one."* He was speaking of the (unity of the) brethren. That we would be one; and that means unified, together, of one mind, of one heart, and of one Spirit. These words were spoken by Jesus Christ five times the night before He died, as He prayed for us to His Heavenly Father. Can you imagine the intimacy that Christ felt with the Father as He prayed for His Father to restore the glory that He had with Him from the beginning? He prayed to the Father "that they may be one"; not scattered, broken, shattered, and many different groups, but that they may be one.

In John 17, five times He expressed His desire for our unity (how much emphasis is that?) He expressed His desire for the unity of His people. Are we doing it today? I am talking about the greater Church of God. Why do the men (ministers) not lay down their axes, why do they not lay down their swords? Why do they not get together? Why do we not come together and have a Passover, like the great Passover of Josiah. Why do we not lay our banners down and become one people. I cannot tell which organizations that you are from; you are all God's people. You are holy and you are special to God. Jesus was not praying just for unity of the disciples, but He was praying for a unity for us today, for those who would come in the footsteps of the apostles.

Please notice the significant repetition of the phrase "*that they may be one"* in Jesus' prayer.

John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given me, that they may be one, as we are.

That means one in heart, one in mind, one in spirit, and one in unity. Christ wants us to be the same way that He and His Father are: **one**. There is a unity there. We have the same goals, same desires, same plan, same future, and the same Spirit. Jesus was praying about the unity of the brethren, not only then, but now. We have a little glimpse of that today. There is some unity here. This is not common on the face of

this earth. If only the unity that we have here could be church-wide, and if this was what was going on in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, London, and all around the world. If all of the branches that have broken off; the people led by God's Spirit could all go to church together. It is ridiculous that among God's people they do not get together on the Sabbath and fellowship and be in unity with one another. It is ridiculous not to be able to go to the Feast with your family. I cannot go to the Feast of Tabernacles with all of my family, because my family is in scattered groups. That is not pleasing to God, it is just not.

The very night before He died, Jesus was praying about the unity of the brethren. But as we look around we see a divided church. That is what is so special about this group; we are not divided. This togetherness that we are experiencing right now is not for a day, it is not for a weekend, but it is for a lifetime, for an eternity. This is what God intends. Your friends that you are here with this weekend are to be your friends forever. It will not just be a thousand or a million years, not just in the Millennium. I guess we will quit counting time when we are Spirit beings, because (spiritual) time-less-ness does not need to count years. You and I have a much greater task before us today in the continuing future than did Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg. He was concerned about the unity of this nation, but we are concerned about the unity of God's people.

Let us look at some of the Biblical proof that God desires unity, oneness, and the spirit of unity amongst His people.

At baptism we are baptized into one Spirit. We are baptized into the Father, and into Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized **into one body** … and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

How much more clearly could that be written? Yet we see in the church today, that we are not all one. Spiritually, brethren become unified in one Spirit, and in one Body. Christ has one Body, and that body is the Church brethren. It also says in I Corinthians 12, *"that we all members in particular."* If we have love of the Body of Christ then we love one another. The Church by definition cannot be divided, and yet we find ourselves divided today. We cannot neglect a part of our body. You do not go in and take half of a shower, or you do not eat half a meal and do not feed the other half of yourself. This is the wording that God uses. We are the body of Christ, and this is the concept that we should be becoming familiar with. Men have set up artificial barriers between people. The front of the room cannot talk to the back of the room, or the right side of the room cannot talk to the left side of the room. It seems ridiculous and yet, shame on us, this is the state of much of the Church of God today. We are to be one people. You should be able to walk into the front door of any group of spirit-led people and be embraced, welcomed and loved. Christ is not going to be pleased until that day is fully come. The division amongst the people of God is

frustrating the plan of God. This is not the way it is going to be in the Millennium, and this is not the way it is going to be in the Kingdom of God. It should not be that way in our families, and it should not be that way in our churches.

Division in the Church of God is wrong. It is non-scriptural, and it is ungodly. Let me ask you this: When Jesus Christ looks down from His throne in heaven to the face of this earth, and He thinks to Himself, 'I will look in on My Church' – does He begin to try to name the congregations on His fingers and His toes? Or does Jesus Christ have ***one*** Church? It is scriptural that Jesus Christ only has one Church, and you are either a part it, or you are not a part of it. You are either a part of the unity, or you are a part of the problem.

Ephesians 4:2-3 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

That is why I am so pleased to be here today. That is what is so special about this gathering. You are all endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. You are actually doing it. You are thumbing your nose, so to speak, at those who would say, "We do not mix with "those" people."

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

Jesus Christ is going to marry one Bride. That Bride is the Church. That Church is the Body of Christ. He is not going to marry a part of a Bride from here, and a part of a Bride from there. God's own analogy would break down if we were to look at it that way. The Bride cannot be divided.

In the Kingdom of God – and it is sooner and closer than we realize – the divisions are not going to exist. We are going to learn to be unified, or we are not going to be in the Kingdom of God. There is nobody in the Kingdom of God who is going to say, "I am independent, and isolated from all of the others; I do not want to have anything to do with people. I do not even need people. It is just You and me Lord, I do not need those others". That is not the way that God looks at it.

I want to tell you a story that comes from a piece that was done a long time ago, called "The Rabbi's Gift." There are many versions, many renditions, and I have modified it even further for our edification and use.

This story takes place a few years before Jesus Christ was born to Mary. There was a great expectation of the Messiah's coming. People looked for the coming of the Messiah. In the Northern, what we call modern-day state of, Israel, there was a Rabbi, and there were people in his congregation. They were a little stronghold of the people of Judah. Remember all of Israel had (previously) gone into captivity, whether it was to the Assyrian captivity or the Babylonian captivity. They had come back and

re-established their homes in the land of Israel. They were descendants of the church in the wilderness; just a little group of believers. A little like what we have here today.

The congregation began to dwindle, and it was fading away, and the church was weakening. It came to the point where there were very few families who even showed up at the synagogue each Sabbath. They drifted away, as we see the Church doing today. They scattered as we are seeing in the Church today. Once they had been a thriving congregation, with many activities, and much happiness and joy. But somehow it faded away. It was in danger of dying out.

The Rabbi cared about his people, and he was beside himself. He gave the best sermons that he could give, and he had the young men come up and read from the scrolls, as we saw Jesus stand up in the synagogue and read from the Torah, the Holy Scriptures. Nothing was working, and so he thought to himself, "What can I do, I must save my congregation?" He knew, and he had heard that there was a prophet of God, not so far away, living up on the Golan Heights. The prophet pretty well kept to himself. Prophets are the kind of men that keep to themselves. The prophet was known for his wisdom. The Rabbi said, "I will go to the prophet of God, and I will ask him what I should do. I will tell him that my congregation is dwindling and we do not have unity in the congregation; we do not have life in the congregation anymore".

So he climbed the Golan Heights. He said to the prophet of God, "I have a dwindling congregation and I would like them to come back to life, and be vibrant once again." The prophet of God said, "I know, I have seen this, but I do not know what the answer is." So they both agonized over the demise of the congregation. "It is sad, I know how it is, but there is nothing that I can do about it," the prophet of God said, "as I look around I do not even see much expectation of the return of the Messiah. They should be looking for the Messiah". And indeed they should have been, because Christ was about to be born pretty soon. And so the prophet of God and the Rabbi wept together, and had a good-bye embrace together.

As the Rabbi started to leave, he turned and he faced the little stone structure one last time, and he said, "Are you sure that you have no advice for me, or for the people, because our congregation is dwindling?" And the prophet said, "Before you go, let us pray together." So they knelt and they prayed, and they asked God what they could do. The prophet was a wise man, and he said, "I know that the Messiah descends from King David. I know that the Messiah will be of the tribe of Judah. You have people in your congregation of Judah right?" The Rabbi said, "Yes, most of my congregation is of Judah". The prophet said, "I also know that Isaiah prophesied of that little piece of land where your synagogue is.

Matthew 24:15-16 "The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

This was a reference to the Messiah; and that He would come from the valley of the shadow of death. This went over most peoples' heads and they did not know about it. And the prophet said, "More than that I do not know." And so, the Rabbi started back to go down the hill, but he was heartbroken as he had hoped to find an answer to save his congregation, and to bring his people back together. Just as he was almost out of earshot, the prophet of God said, "Wait, just one minute." He said something in the Hebrew tongue to the Rabbi. He said, "There is one other thing about your congregation that you should know." And he said, "**One of them is of the Messiah**." And he closed his door and went back into his little stone structure.

All of the way down the hill back to Zebulon, the Rabbi thought to himself, "What does that mean, one in the congregation that I pastor, one of us, is of the Messiah?" It was hard to understand, and he did not know what it meant. He pondered, and he thought about it, and he slept on it. He got back the next Sabbath and he told his congregation. He said, "The prophet of God told me that of this congregation, one is of the Messiah." He said it in the Hebrew tongue, and it was hard to understand. One man in the congregation said, "You know Rabbi, that includes you, you might be of the Messiah." The Rabbi said, "Yes, that is right". But he said it in the Hebrew tongue, and in the Hebrew tongue it is hard to decipher. They did not fully understand the connotation of what was being said. If you just translated it literally it was something like, "You the Messiah." But it also had other meanings like, "You are the Messiah", or possibly, "You belong to the Messiah." Or, "The Messiah is with you". It had this connotation of intimacy. One of you will have a close intimate togetherness type of relationship with the Messiah. One of you is of the Messiah. So they thought about that. It was not possible to know exactly what the prophet of God meant – if he even knew himself.

In and out amongst the congregation they began to wonder amongst themselves, 'Is it possible that you (this one or that one) are the Messiah?' They looked around at the different men. They thought, 'We have some old people who pray, are they the Messiah? Is the Rabbi the Messiah because he is a holy man?' And they looked around.

There was an old man in the congregation and his name was Eli, and he had some young daughters, and he taught them well. He taught them to know God and to worship God. Their names were Miriam and Martha. They knew their Scriptures. There was another old man in the congregation who taught his sons how to farm. There was Jacob, he was a hard working man, and he taught his son Joseph his trade. Could Jacob be the Messiah that we are looking for? They did not know what to expect. What would the Messiah look like, and where would He come from? They did not know. Perhaps it was Jonah. He had taught his boys not only the word of God, but he had taught them the fishing trade. He had a couple of boys, Drew and Pete and they were following in their father's footsteps.

Who was the Messiah? They did not know. But a strange thing came over the congregation, since they did not know who the Messiah was, or who it might be, but they only knew that it was one in the congregation; they began to treat each other somewhat differently. If you are the Messiah, I might treat you with a little more honor, dignity and respect. It is human nature to do that. But all of a sudden, each person suspecting not themselves to be the Messiah, even though that was a possibility, they thought, 'The Messiah is one of us. I do not want to offend the Messiah, but I want to bless the Messiah'. And they began to treat each other with a newfound respect, a newfound dignity.

An aura unheard of began to envelope that congregation, and the congregation began to look forward to seeing one another, and to help one another, to care about one another, and to lift one another up, and to respect and encourage one another. They could not wait to get back together each week. They asked and enquired of each other. They prayed for each other. They furthered what each other was working on. All of a sudden, they were telling their friends, someone in our congregation is the Messiah, or possibly the father of the Messiah. We do not know who it is, but our congregation has to do with the Messiah. "You are of the Messiah". They began to take on the traits of the Messiah, and to practice it in their life. Each and every one of them began to live lives worthy of being the Messiah, just on the off chance that they were the Messiah. This new movement permeated the congregation and word spread. Pretty soon the old timers were coming back, and those who had drifted away came back. They were welcomed and embraced, and there was a new vibrancy about the congregation.

We could go on and finish the story of where the Messiah came from, but the point of this little story is that we should see the Messiah in one another. This is not a new concept.

This story corresponds with what we have here today. It is not going on everywhere. Everywhere else the church is still dwindling, dying and being scattered. But there is something going on here, there is a coming together. There is an expectation among you of, "I am going to find someone of like mindedness, someone that believes like me, someone that hopes what I hope for, looks for what I am looking for, and expects what I expect". And we, even today, expect the Messiah. The story corresponds with what we are doing here today. We are here at the time just before Jesus comes back the second time. This story is appropriate for us, it is not appropriate for the world. The world is not looking for the Messiah. They certainly do not see Christ in one another. They do not see the Messiah in one another. Maybe we do not – as much as we should. But hopefully after today, we will look for the Messiah. Because, "One of you is of the Messiah," as the prophet of God said.

Colossians 1:27 To whom [saints, people, brethren] God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles [world does not know]; which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory:

Jesus Christ is in you, through His Spirit, His life, and His teachings. You are the body of Christ.

Notice what it says: *"the riches of the glory of this mystery."* It is not a mystery to us, we know it. *"Christ in you, the hope of glory."* Christ must live in you, He must be in you. That is the Messiah in you. **You are of the Messiah**. The world does not know that.

Brethren, you are of the Messiah.

Jesus was asked the question: *"Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"*

There are not many people that know this. Sometimes I think that there are not many people in the Church of God who remember this.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, **and We will come** unto him, and make **Our** abode with him.

That is you. Look around at your brothers and sisters in Christ. Your Holy brothers and sisters, they are of the Messiah. God the Father and Jesus Christ, in Spirit, resides in them. How should we treat one another? How should we recognize one another? God the Father and Jesus Christ are living in you.

Brethren, you are of the Messiah. You should treat, and if you have not in the past, begin now, to treat one another with the respect and honor that you have for God the Father and Jesus Christ. Recognize one another no matter which banner each is under. God dwells in us.

I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

There is no exclusion in that verse. It is Jesus Christ in you who reaches out to others. That is not a natural thing to heal the breaches, and to bring about the reconciliations. That is Christ in you, reaching out to bring the unity to us.

I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

This is what we saw a while ago, *"the hope of glory."* That is the hope of being in the resurrection, and that is the hope of being in the Kingdom of God. We will be in the Millennium first for a thousand years with Jesus Christ, and then all eternity with the Father and all of the resurrected saints. That is the hope of glory. If we love one another, God dwells in us and His love is perfected in us.

I John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and **He in us**, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

God's spirit is rare on the face of this earth.

I John 4:14-15 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God **dwelleth in him**, and he in God.

This is what we are keying in on brethren; over and over I am going to say it. It is not redundant. **You are of the Messiah.** God dwells in you.

I John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and **God in him.**

You are of the Messiah. God's love is in you.

I John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

God loved us first. God showed us love and it is incumbent on us, it is proper for us, to extend that godly love to every one of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Do not have artificial barriers; do not put boundaries on your love of God. How do you interact with your brothers and sisters in Christ, if you know that they are of the Messiah, and they are of God the Father?

You are a part of the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is one that exists in oneness. There is only one Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is the Church of God. The concept of Christ's Body being composed of all church brethren is solidly established in scripture.

Colossians 1:24 For [Christ's] Body's sake, (which is the Church.)

I Corinthians 12:27 Ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular.

Ephesians 1:22-23 …the Church, which is His Body.

Let us clarify this. There are not a lot of different bodies. They are not to be divided, and they are to be unified. This is why God is so pleased with what is going on here, and the organizers of this event. They have made the door open for those that are led by God's Holy Spirit. They are those who would do the will of God, and those who recognize the Messiah in one another. The church, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22).

Colossians 3:15 Ye are called into one Body; and be ye thankful.

There is a point that we have not touched on. We are members of one another. You sure do not cut off one hand. You honor and you respect your hand, and your eyes, and your head and your body. That is who you are. You are members of me and I am a member of you.

Romans 12:4-5 For as we have many members in one body… So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 For we being many are one bread, and one Body.

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints… for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

I Corinthians 12:12 …All the members of that one Body, being many, are one Body: so also is Christ.

We are the one Body of Christ. We are to exist, not divided, not scattered, but in unity. But to do that we have to understand the dignity that is Christ in each other. Yes, we are human, we have weaknesses, but God has made a way to get past that.

God has only one family. Ask yourself this question. Do I have a genuine care and concern for all of the people in the family of God? Or, do I just want to associate with a very few?

You know this, but I just want to share it with you for the record. Whenever an individual, or group of people, reject another part of the Church of God, reject a part of the Body of Christ, and refuse to communicate and fellowship with other brethren – they critically violate the integrity of Christ's Body. There is no place for that.

You are expressing unity today. You are living togetherness. Live it in your whole lives, every day. Be a part of this movement, spread it, and work for it, endeavoring to make this grow. It is our responsibility to recognize others, and to cooperate with our fellow brethren in Jesus Christ. It extends far beyond organizational lines; they should not even be there. We need someone to organize the Feast, we need somebody to publish and teach, have baptisms, studies and things like that. But those lines are not there to separate the brethren, not ever. That is not what those lines are there for.

The Scriptures are clear. Christ's Body is not to be broken. Not a bone of His Body was broken. Even in the Old Testament, when they had the Passover lamb; not a bone was to be broken. That is because the Body of Christ is not to be broken. You are of the Messiah. There is no division and it is not to be broken. We are in this together, brethren.

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family [not lots of families] in heaven and earth is named.

You are of the Messiah. Tell yourself that over and over. Jesus Christ is in you, and just as importantly, in your brother and sister.

Ephesians 3:16-17 …that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Christ dwells in your heart. That should change you, and that should open up the doors. That should bring down the barriers. Do not recognize the barriers. They might be there for tax purposes, they might be there for mailing purposes, but not when it comes to the brethren. The lines have to be transparent when it comes to the brethren. Pray for them, fellowship with them, encourage them, die for them, and save them. That is what we are here for.

Ephesians 3:18-19 …may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

It certainly passes organizational boundaries. Brethren, we can courageously and fearlessly cross those lines and have fellowship with the brethren. If we get reprimanded it would be a badge of courage. Do not worry about what they do to your body; do not worry about being disfellowshipped. God is pleased with it. Jesus Christ says that you will be persecuted. I can tell you how not to be persecuted. Sit home and do nothing. If you reach out across lines you are going to step on some toes, and you will be persecuted for righteousness sake. Cross those artificial lines that would separate those who are led by God's Holy Spirit, as you are doing here today. You are proof that it works. God is pleased with that. We are small, this group is small, but it does not matter. We are the scattered ones, but we can be one in unity. God starts off with small things. In fact God uses the small things to confound the mighty.

I would hope that somebody would write about it, and tell other young people. It is not about finding mates, it is not about roasting hot dogs, it is about togetherness in the Spirit of God. **It is about the recognition that you are of the Messiah**. We are a special and chosen people. We are the children of God, and we are the family of God. With all of our substance we must be examples, and we must be teaching all of the other brethren. You must be teaching all of your friends and relatives that are not here today, and those that you have known in the past, we must be teaching them to recognize those who are led by God's Holy Spirit. There is plenty of work to be done. There are people that are in prison, there are people that are discouraged, and there are people that are elderly and sick. There are a lot of places where you can do it. You do not do it for the edification of yourself, or for your glory, but you do it for the glory of God.

This scattering of God's people must be healed. This scattering is not going to go over into the Millennium, it is not. You read Ezekiel 34. It is a shame, but Jesus Christ is going to have to do a lot of the healing. But we had better be doing our part before He comes back. There are people out there that still feel the power from the extended church. They say that they might be disfellowshipped, or marked, for speaking to

someone else with God's Spirit. Do not let that be a hindrance at all. There are some that are still confused. Read what it says in the Scriptures, and go by that alone.

One by one, because you are of the Messiah, you can be an example to others of what Jesus Christ prayed for that night before He died. "Father, that they may be one, one in unity, one in heart, and one in Spirit". That is what Christ was praying for. That is why I can say, unequivocally, what a privilege it is to be among you young people. God is pleased with those with whom this concept originated. But, thank God that it did, and thank God for those who worked to put it together. I hope that this grows, and not because you want the numbers, or you want the recognition, but because you are of the Messiah. It should grow to all of the people who call themselves Church of God today. What we must be doing is developing an ever-widening circle of contacts and friends. I know that you email, Facebook, Twitter and call each other. That contact should grow, and be kept on a high and godly plane, and always be pointing back to the unity of Christ. It should be pointing back to this concept that you are of the Messiah. Jesus Christ is the Savior, this is the Church of Jesus Christ, and there is no division between Christ and His Father.

This message of *unity and oneness* (that has begun anew with you) must spread to all of the church, because the division that you see in the Church of God that is scattered around the world is not going be in the millennium. We are not going to be forty, fifty years in the millennium and saying, "My friend goes to the Church of God over here. I call him sometimes, but we are not supposed to be seen together". Jesus Christ is going to be ruling and there is going to be **one** church.

Make contact with true brethren, and stay in contact, and as often as you can, keep it on a spiritual plane.

We must reach out to the entire Church of God.

John 17:21 "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.

If the world were to look at the church right now, in its scattered state, do you think that they would want be a part of that? That is not the way it works. Jesus said with the unity, love, sacrifice and laying down of our lives for each other, then the world would know.

It is bigger than this little place here in the country. *"That the world may know…"* That is how big it is in God's sight. It takes the Spirit of God in you, recognizing the Messiah in one another. You are of the Messiah.

When I first heard Herbert W. Armstrong in 1964, I fully believed that as the church was growing, and we had congregations in every big city, that the word would spread and get bigger and bigger, and Christ would come back. So my bubble popped, but that is going to happen.

I Corinthians 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ…that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be **perfectly joined together**…"

In God's word He says that there should be no division, but we see nothing but division. We are perfectly joined together when we recognize Jesus Christ and God's Spirit in one another, pray for one another, lay our lives down for one another. If we are not quick to reject one another, then we are perfectly joined together.

This Togetherness is not only for one good weekend of food, fun and friends.

Let us take up the challenge! Let us not just come for a good weekend, good food, and good friends. There is a challenge being extended to you.

The church is going to be the Bride of Christ. Think about that. Picture in your mind a beautiful bride with her tiara. Christ shows that example of you, the church, being of the Messiah, of His flesh, of His bones. You are going to be His Bride.

As you look out at the church today, pick a town, Miami, Chicago, New Orleans, is the church one? Is the church a unified body? Is the church one Bride? Brethren we have our work cut out for us. The Bride is not yet prepared, because we do not see Christ in one another as we should.

Soon, and it might be sooner than we think, those who are truly prepared for the marriage of the Lamb will come together in mind, heart, attitude, Spirit, and unity no matter which organization they are in. This is who is going to marry Christ. Christ is not going to marry the people that are fighting with one another. This is what is so wonderful about this gathering today. There is a beginning of unity here. It needs to grow and it needs to be supported. Never be ashamed. There are those who would demean, look down, and maybe even speak against what you are doing here today, because they do not ratify it.

God is going to work out some great things with your generation. You are going to see some tremendous wonders.

Many will be deceived, but God promises that He will **not** allow His chosen elect to be deceived. But you are going to have to be rooted and grounded, supporting one another, and drawing close to one another, and depending on one another. You will have to look to each other for the support of your lives.

It was prophesied that our sons and daughters, in the last days, will speak the Truth, just about now at this end time. That means that there is going to be a people, and I fully believe in my heart that it is you, who know their God. They will be guided and strengthened by His Spirit in this end time.

God is going to work some wonderful, marvelous, and great things with you people. It is not going to be the people that will not have anything to do with each other. God

will not use them. He will not use those that do not know that today is the Sabbath. He is not going to use those that do not know Jesus Christ. He is going to use those with an attitude of unity, who represent Him.

Acts 2:17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and **your daughters shall prophesy**, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

I submit to you, brethren, that the young women of the Togetherness Crew are fulfilling this prophecy. This is an inspiring meeting that is pleasing in God's sight. You will not very often find this on the face of the earth. The Father and Jesus Christ are taking note, and They are pleased. In fact, it is Jesus Christ in each and every one of you that has brought this about. Prophesy is being fulfilled. You might have thought in the past: *"young women will prophesy"*?

Jot down on your paper the ten biggest splinter groups that will not have anything to do with others because they are the best or greatest, or whatever, and try to picture in your mind a young woman standing up to give a sermonette. As they say down South, "It ain't gonna happen. But God says, "Your daughters will do inspiring things". I fully believe that this is one of the most inspiring things that I have seen in a very long time.

God is pleased with what is going on. It is going to happen. Your daughters will prophesy.

Prophesy can mean to get up and give a prophecy, and also mean inspired speaking, but it can also mean inspired activities. I would not be here, or the sermonette man would not be speaking, except that*…"Your daughters will prophesy."*

Joel 2:28-29 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and **your sons** and **your daughters shall prophesy**, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit."

That is something big, and that is something spiritual that is taking place.

Let me get myself in here, it says, "…*your old men shall dream dreams."* I am certainly dreaming dreams of what can be, and what should be, just by looking at what you young men and women have begun here.

Do not let it stop. Let us make it a point in our lives to warmly embrace and warmly receive all who have God's Holy Spirit.

Make a list. We must be doing everything possible to help one another in the furtherance of our faith. Let us show ourselves friendly with all brethren. I know that we can find fault, and sometimes when we get doubtful disputations we can say, "I

cannot abide that". But ask yourself is it possible that outside of the distractions that they too are of the Messiah? God is working with them.

Each of you is of the Messiah – Jesus Christ is in you.

Our community, not just here, but when you go home, should begin because of what we are doing, what we are learning, what we are putting into practice, should begin to resemble Christ's concept of what the Kingdom of God should be. The unity will be much better than it is now, because it is going to be a microcosm of the eternal Family of God. People will love one another, and everyone will be guided by God's Holy Spirit. Until it does, do not rest satisfied. Keep working at it.

We are obligated to become involved in bringing about **unity and oneness** among all the children of God. It is not the job of the big organizations, it is your job.

We disqualify ourselves if we sit on the sidelines and say, "That is not my gift, that is not my thing, and I am not going to do it. Let those other people who are good looking sharp and gifted do it". God places each of us in the Body where it pleases Him. He has put you exactly where you are to represent Him. You are of the Messiah, and you have an intimate relationship with the Messiah, and you are going to usher in the Messiah.

Brethren, today is a very, very special day, and I wondered whether to even say this or not. But I hope and pray that you remember today, and what you are doing here, for the rest of your lives. You are doing something that you know is pleasing to God. This is a very special occasion if you choose it to be, and I do not think that you will ever forget it.

God is the Master Designer, and He knows exactly what He is doing. He knows your heart and He knows your thoughts. He is the One that is going to give you extra strength.

Life is too short to both love and to hate – so choose "love." Choose the love of God.

Stay in close touch with your loved ones. Make new friends, and do not go home this weekend until you know everyone here. Love them as though your entrance into the Kingdom of God depends on your relationship with them. Love them that much, with that kind of close contact. God is pleased when His people reach out across barriers to their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Unity is what is important to Jesus Christ and to God the Father. As we said, as He was about to die Jesus said to the Father, *"That they may be one."* He was praying for the unity that we see a glimpse of here today. That is how important this assembly is.

We all expect the Messiah very soon, maybe sooner than we know.

When you think of the Church, do not think about the organizations or the building; think about the people, the grandmothers, grandfathers, the young children, and the people your age who have your salvation to be worked out. But this Church of God that we are a part of, broken, scattered and to some extent shattered, is not yet prepared for the return of Christ. We have our work cut out. This is a fantastic beginning, and I hate to refer to it as small, this is a wonderful group in God's sight. God is going to see you through it all.

Keep one thing in mind, "You are of the Messiah."

WZ/pp/sl