

*The Certain Sound
of Unity*

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS
P.O. BOX 18715
BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.
Copyright © 1998

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

Chapter 1 7

COSMIC UNITY VS. ONENESS IN CHRIST

Chapter 2 13

ENEMIES OF ONENESS

Chapter 3 23

KEEP THE UNITY OF THE TRINITY IN YOU

CONCLUSION 32

INTRODUCTION

Christians throughout the centuries have mishandled their differences. As a rule, divisions within the church have not been dealt with scripturally. In most church splits, one side is entirely at fault—the side that will not obey categorical doctrine.

For many years I have had the privilege of working with a staff of mature men and women who operate with magnificent unity. By the grace of God, there is never a spirit of division. There is no infighting to get things done. No one is whispering behind somebody's back. Our staff members know and practice categorical doctrine. We may not always agree on every issue; however, we will honor one another and have such unity that we will not be influenced to join Satan's cosmic crowd who are evil in their communication.

But remember, Satan is a master counterfeiter who promotes a kind of cosmic unity

among his ranks. How does a believer avoid this satanic influence? By coming under the bona fide authority of the Trinity and experiencing the unity of faith in the fullness of Christ, the Spirit-led child of God enters into fullness that includes active participation in a local church. This booklet describes the fruit of unity represented in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as it exposes the strategies designed to keep us from manifesting perfect oneness.

Chapter One

COSMIC UNITY VS. ONENESS
IN CHRIST

“His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered....The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved” (Job 41:15-17, 23).

One of the things that people face through the ages is the heartache, the sorrow, and the dilemma of division. It doesn't take much to cause problems. Satan works through his kingdom doing everything he can to keep his subjects unified and to recruit people for the roles of rebellion within his camp (see Proverbs 1:10-14). His factions are joined together, they stick together, and they cannot be moved. Nothing can separate them. They are so near that air cannot come between them.

That is what happens when something from the cosmic world is entertained by people within the local assembly. They enter into a unity, but it is cosmic unity, and it can destroy a ministry.

Not everyone who goes against a work of God becomes completely negative. Some are fence straddlers, and while they may not join the crusaders, they do not stand with God's people. Very often they wind up as casualties.

Thank God, Jesus Christ is always victorious through every battle we face. And frankly, people who go through these trials will better understand warfare. They become better equipped to discern evil spirits of division that can infiltrate so subtly.

The people who fall in with the devil's crowd, influenced by evil, are joined by cosmic unity. Because they do not have the peace of God, they join this group and that group, looking for support—all because they do not know God. They have forsaken the unity of the Body of Christ and do not stand with God's people, so there is no real stability in their lives. But we have been exhorted to "*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind,*" working together for the faith of the Gospel (see Philippians 1:27).

One Sound, One Voice

“It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord....” (2 Chronicles 5:13a).

Referring to the Godhead, Job 23:13 says, “He is in *one mind*, and who can turn him?” 1 John 5:7 tells us, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy [Spirit]: and *these three are one.*”

“Have we not all *one* father? hath not *one* God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?” (Malachi 2:10).

The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the Father’s one Son, His well beloved. And in Mark 12:6, He said, “They *will* reverence My Son!” implying certain consequences for those who do not.

“For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

The Trinity is one. In Their foreknowledge, in the determinant counsel, having designed a plan for the ages (Acts 2:23), They were one. They have *never* disagreed. They have *never* had differing opinions. They have never had different

thoughts. They have never been divided, and They have never changed their minds. The Trinity is one!

Oneness in the Plan of Salvation

In Their counsel, the Trinity determined that the one Son would be sent to execute the plan. He volunteered to die on a cross and to shed His blood for our sins. He would be crucified and buried, then raised again on the third day. The Trinity was one with this plan. They were one in Their determination that if any man seeing his need for the Savior would believe these things by grace through faith, he would be saved—not of himself but as a gift of God. They were perfectly one in that.

When They said, “Let’s justify men by faith so they can have peace with God” (see Romans 5:1), They were one. When They said, “Let’s never charge men with *any* sins, ever, nor impute iniquity to their account” (see Romans 4:7-8), They were in agreement. When They determined to give the Holy Spirit to whosoever would believe, sealing believers until the day of physical redemption (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30), They were one.

The Trinity was one on the truth of eternal

security. They agreed that as a Christian rebounds, he receives total forgiveness. Even if he falls seven times in a day, the believer can get up and go on, forgiven. The Trinity agreed that the Christian could isolate the sin, isolate his past, and continue his life unhindered (Proverbs 24:16). They agreed on the fact that They would *never* leave nor forsake any believer, ever (see Hebrews 13:5).

The Son was one with the Father when He said, "I am always going to please You, Father. I will never do one thing that doesn't please You" (see John 8:29). The Son never pleased Himself (Romans 15:3). He *always* submitted to the Father (John 5:19). He always did what the Father commanded Him to do (John 5:30). His words, His works, and His thoughts were derived from the Father (John 14:10). Jesus Christ always submitted His humanity to the Trinity's table of organization. Never once did He disagree with the Father.

The Holy Spirit, equal with the Father and the Son, has never once glorified Himself but always glorifies the Son, in agreement with the plan of the Father. They have oneness, and oneness means They cannot be separated. You can't even tell Them apart. The Trinity thinks as one,

acts as one, speaks as one. They do everything in oneness.

Oneness in the Body of Christ

If the Father, the Son, and the Spirit indwell us (and They do, according to John 14:23 and 1 Corinthians 6:19) and the Word of God dwells in us richly (Colossians 3:16), then the Body of Christ can be just as one as the Trinity is. We had better be, because we are commanded to be just as one as They are! (See John 17:21-22.)

Don't accept the lie that your marriage can't have oneness. Husbands and wives, don't confess that you can't be absolutely as one as the Trinity is. There can be amazing oneness, and we all have witnessed it in many of the lives around us.

Two people praying can be totally one (Acts 12:12). We can worship in total oneness. We can serve in absolute oneness (Psalm 102:22). Why? Because, we are members of His Body, and Christ cannot be divided (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Chapter Two

ENEMIES OF ONENESS

The problem I have seen in church splits is that people simply do not know the Book. They don't adjust to grace, and they are wrong. Some always want to say how they have been wounded. Then they wound others because they are not of God. Even though they are Christians, they are trapped in a satanic system and some have never come out of it. There are couples who always need the pastor to be an arbitrator for every disagreement. For years they just get by, always struggling because they don't have oneness. The solution to the problem is plain: They need to get right with God and live!

Jesus prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, *that they also may be one in us*: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; *that they may be one, even as we are one*" (John 17:21-22).

There are people who do not want to confront other Christians that are causing discord, so they make statements such as, "All of us are partly to blame." That is not true! It is *not* everybody's fault. Away with that pseudo-humility. In almost every case, division is the fault of one side—the side that will not obey the Word of God. The Bible clearly says that if we have anything against a brother, we need to go alone in a spirit of meekness, as God leads.

God is one, the Trinity is one, the plan is one, the provision is one, the purpose is one, the power is one, the peace is one, and the program is one. Every single Christian should be absolutely one with God.

Paul prayed that we would think the same thing, being "perfectly joined together in the same mind" and the same judgment of doctrine (1 Corinthians 1:10)—that we would think exactly the same thing.

"But," you say, "everyone *can't* think the same thing." That is true if we don't know God's Book. Yet if we know the Bible, we can think the same thing and still have diversity of gifts. We can allow others to express their opinion and not accuse them, though it may be wrong if they are not right with the Book. Still, we do what is right

according to God's Word and do not compromise.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Oneness is one of the most precious things in all the world. When there is oneness in worship, people begin to have revival in their lives. During a recent worship service, I saw a couple who had come to a place where they felt they really didn't love each other anymore. I counseled the husband to take steps toward intimacy by faith. He hadn't held his wife's hand for months, but now there they were, worshipping God together, holding hands. Then I saw him put his arm around her and kiss her on the cheek. Later they reported a revitalization in their marriage and in every part of their individual walks. This can only happen through God's oneness.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the

dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing,"—*descended life!*—"even life for evermore" (Psalm 133)

Watch What You Eat

"He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isaiah 44:20).

People who neither feed on the Lamb of God nor drink from the New Covenant can only feed on ashes. Ashes cause wounds. If several people were to turn against a pastor, at first the pastor may be led to say nothing about it. If they continue to sow discord and he finally addresses the situation from the pulpit, confronting the problem with the Word of God, those same people will say they were wounded. But, they were wounded by the Word of God because they were doing wrong. Still, years later they tell people that it was all the pastor's fault, when all he did was address the issue with doctrine.

What happened to those people? They were feeding on ashes and their deceived hearts turned them aside. They are unable to deliver their own souls, nor are they able to admit that

there was a lie in their right hand, the hand of approval. They approved of a lie, and it infected their lives.

During a conspiracy, God may give the pastor a series of messages to preach on grace. The conspirators, however, will be revealed by their reaction. They may say things such as, "The pastor is only preaching grace to soften people up. He is just trying to pacify the congregation." People can become so deceived that they will attack the grace message! But if he had preached against sin, they would have said he was preaching against their crowd. A pastor can't win with those who feed on ashes.

Watch Where You Eat

People can get into evil and never even know it. They divide and hurt local assemblies everywhere by letting corrupt communication enter their mind and come out of their mouth, and they never get right. I am not talking about someone who falls into sin or who simply disagrees with you.

Those who eat from the table of demons eventually get wounded (1 Corinthians 10:21). They eat from the devil's garbage can, feeding on the ashes of the *kosmos diabolicus*, which is

Satan's organized plan in the world, operating independent of God. This system of thinking is energized by Satan's supernatural forces in the air. Those who have been trapped by this system approve of a lie, and many of them never change. Because they do not know categorical doctrine, these people can't think with God precisely. They don't know the many-sided (*poikilos*) grace of God, and they don't know unconditional love.

Wounds and Bruises? Consider the Source

"For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous" (Jeremiah 30:12).

"For her wound is incurable" (Micah 1:9a).

"From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isaiah 1:6).

People become wounded when they leave the Throne of grace and go to the garbage can to get information against a brother. It isn't the brother who has wounded them; it's the garbage from hell, the lies from the devil. Instead of guarding their hearts, they allowed wrong

things to get into their souls. The devil's accusations and deceptions caused those wounds, not the brother or sister they are now against.

When this kind of crowd comes against you, they become enemies. They will blame you for the wounds that they have had since they were children. Oh, you helped for a few years by putting bandages on the wounds. But if these people never get right with God, their wounds are incurable because they came from the Fall.

Wounded people start placing blame, trying to change, control, and correct others. Do you want to know where the wounds come from? In Jeremiah 30:14, God is speaking: "All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; *for I have wounded thee* with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased" (Jeremiah 30:14).

Many of the wounded have been wounded by God. Yet in Jeremiah 30:17, speaking of Israel, God also said this: "I will restore health unto thee, and *I will heal thee of thy wounds*, saith the LORD."

In Acts 10:38, however, the Greek word for the oppression some people experience is *kata-dunasteuo*, referring to wounds caused by Satan.

Any man or woman who is right with God will recognize that wounds come from one of two sources: either God or Satan. No one on earth is ever the source of your wounds. People may be the instruments used for the purpose, whether divine or evil, but the strategy belongs to the kingdoms involved, and they are invisible.

“But someone molested me,” you might say. That is a terrible thing for anyone to have to endure. Yet, women have told me that they have been healed from the effects of molestation. They have been so healed that they no longer are living in their old wounds. They live in the mercy, grace, love, and power of God. They live in the joy of God, the unity of God, the wisdom of God, the promises of God, and the faith of God with obedience that brings glory to God.

Conspiracies of the Soul

There are two sides to God’s Book, the “two-edged sword” of Hebrews 4:12. One side convicts, the other side converts. Here we are talking about the side of the Book that convicts with divine reality in divine dynamics so that we will live in the true expression of oneness. There is not a reason under heaven that the children of God can’t have a revival. Still, one problem

stands in the way: *internal conspiracies* caused by Satan.

Conspiracies are progressive and begin in the soul. First, the emotions rebel against the mind. Then the mind struggles to use knowledge from God's Word, which stirs the emotions to rebel against people on the outside. The conscience (the place where the norms and standards for right and wrong are established) rebels against the mind. Self-consciousness rebels against oneness with God. The volition goes negative, then the old sin nature connects with the volition and self-consciousness to direct the individual's behavior as he chooses to live in one of the six human lust patterns. That's how an internal conspiracy works.

Every divorce starts with an internal conspiracy. A woman has never left her husband, neither has a husband left his wife without first experiencing an internal conspiracy. No act of fornication or adultery is committed without there first being an internal conspiracy against what God says about these things.

Depression is caused when a person has an internal conspiracy. The heart is divided (Hosea 10:2), and this person is double minded (James 1:8). According to the Greek, he has twin souls

at work within him. Without unity in the soul, anything can happen, because the believer has given a place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27).

What Satan wants is for us to be so one with his kingdom of darkness that “no air can come between.” He wants us to be choked from receiving God’s breath of life through the inspiration or “breathing in” of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Three

KEEP THE UNITY OF THE TRINITY IN YOU

“And the very God of peace sanctify *you* wholly; and I pray God *your whole* spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

“You” and “your” in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 are both plural pronouns. “Whole” is an adjective modifying the three nouns “spirit, soul, and body,” and speak of amazing unity. Our spirit, soul, and body can be one in absolute unity with God, with His Word, with grace, with mercy, with love, with compassion, and with the Great Commission to go into all the world.

God may say to you, “I want you to go to Bible college. By faith, go, study, be trained, and give yourself over to your call.” If you do not obey His voice, you reveal a lack of unity in your soul. If you say, “Yes, I will,” but then you

don't go, you will lose the unity in your soul concerning your call.

The Three Parts of Man

If we do not love as God loves, we lose the unity of the Holy Spirit in our human trichotomy, comprised of the spirit, soul, and body. When we don't forgive exactly as God forgives through the Holy Spirit in us, then we no longer have the unity of God in forgiveness. As a result, the soul enters into a partial conspiracy against forgiveness.

For example, a woman goes out on her husband because, she says, he is not able to meet her needs. Truthfully, she believes that God cannot meet her needs either. Her spirit, soul, and body are in rebellion against the Trinity, therefore she has no basis for peace within her human trichotomy. She is rebelling against love, purity, faith, conviction, and the Cross. She has come against the unity of resurrection power that could make her so happy, she would never be the same again.

The Cross brings in the unity of the Trinity. "Unity," in Ephesians 4:3 and 13, is *henotes* in the Greek, and speaks of a unity so intense that no one can get in between. In a unique analogy pic-

tured in Acts 27:41, *ereido* speaks of being fixed and established so that nothing can move you. "I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, *I shall not be moved*" (Psalm 16:8). People can't move you. Circumstances can't. Money can't. Sickness and disease can't. Not even separation from the one you love can move you.

Now, nothing can move you. Why? Because you are established. Your heart is fixed (Psalm 57:7). You have the unity of love, the unity of God's grace, and the unity of the Trinity's compassion. You have the unity of wisdom dwelling in you richly through the Word. You just sense that you are someone beyond this earth while you are still on the earth.

You are more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37). God always causes you to triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14). You have a unity that the Trinity has had since before the world began, a unity that endures through time and will continue for all eternity. That unity dwells in you through the filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) as you walk in love (Ephesians 5:2) with the Word of God guiding your every step (Psalm 119:133). Your meditations are sweet. You and God, God and you, together, are one. Just as the

Trinity is one, you are one with God and one with the Body of Christ.

Unity. Revival. The devil can't touch it and he can't stop it. Satan's crowd is so one that air can't come between them. But, we are so one that the devil can't come between us! The sin nature can't come between us. Not even gossip can come between us.

Unity in Communication

Even if a brother does fall, it is no one's business but God's. Each one of us stands or falls before Him. No one is worthy to judge another believer (Romans 14:4). It is a beautiful thing when young people keep their purity and do not play games with the devil. They allow their spirit, soul, and body to remain one with the power of the Trinity. But when a Christian falls—God forbid—the only place for him to go is to the amazing throne of grace.

Ephesians 4:29 tells us to let no corrupt communication proceed from our mouths. *Every word that a Spirit-filled believer speaks is edifying.* What he says ministers grace to the hearers. Jesus ministered grace to a prostitute and saved her. The Lord Jesus ministered grace to Peter, even after the denials, and waited to cook break-

fast for him on the shore. Then Jesus restored Peter and recommissioned him to preach before he was really proven (John 21).

Jesus Christ ministered grace to Paul through his struggles in Romans 7, when Paul was doing the things that he shouldn't do and not doing the things that he should have been doing. The Holy Spirit spoke to Paul and told him to shout, "No condemnation!" That confession brought him into the power of the Holy Spirit's transformation (read Romans 8:1-39) because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29).

Never say a single thing about a Christian unless he is present. Instead, go to him alone and use creative communication. Share with him in a spirit of meekness and love. The minute we say something about another person, we no longer have unity.

You say, "Can't we have honest differences?"

Yes, of course, but settle the issues to help the other person.

"Isn't there diversity of gifts?"

Yes, but we are not to have indifference toward one another in using that diversity.

Unity: A Healing Ointment

The one thing that heals us is having the

unity of the Holy Spirit through the unity of categorical doctrine, the unity of grace, the unity of mercy, and the unity of love controlling our trichotomy.

God has made it crystal clear that He wants His people to be one. Thank God for the many Christians who have oneness. They know unity and they practice it.

Ephesians 4:3 says, “Endeavouring *to keep* the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” “To keep” is a present active infinitive of *tereo* in the Greek text. It means that billions of years ago, the Trinity had perfect oneness about your life. They decided that if you would choose to believe, They would perfect you some day. They determined that They would never condemn you, even if you failed miserably. Even if you were to continue in sin, They decided that They would take you home early. They agreed to love you and never change that love, no matter what you are like.

All the Trinity desires is that we *keep* this same unity toward the brethren that They had toward us in eternity past, the same unity They have among Themselves. The Trinity has oneness about healing our minds and our emotions, a unity about wanting to bless us. The Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit want us to receive Their unity and be blessed.

God Has Commanded a Blessing

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: *hath he said, and shall he not do it?* or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and *he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it*” (Numbers 23:19-20).

God is out to bless us, and the devil cannot reverse it. Though I do not deserve it, I thank God for all of the precious co-laborers who have worked with me through the years. The thing that has kept us is our unity in the Spirit, not the unity of Adam or personalities.

The unity of the Trinity gives us the same mind while we have a diversity of gifts (Romans 12:4-5). Is there room for disagreement? Yes, but only if we love people, show compassion, and have a capacity to wait for them to come through, to wait while they grow. We are to be kind and loving, not stirring up the flesh.

Wherever there is unity, God will command a blessing, whether it is in marriages, in families, or in friendships. But first, our human trichotomy must be right with the Trinity, meaning

we first must receive the love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in our spirit, soul, and body.

After that, a man can go to his wife and say, "Honey, I have received the Trinity's love in my spirit, soul, and body. Here is what I did. Do you want to receive it, too? It's all grace. We will pray for each other, we will love each other, and we will practice communicating this love all the time." Before you know it, each one will have the unity of God in his spirit, soul, and body, and life will become the most wonderful thing in all the world.

How Unity Affects the World

I thank God for our precious foreign missionaries in Central and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. As they have gone forward representing God in all the world, their unity has given them one of the most unusual records in missionary history. When the Word of God dwells richly in the lives of missionaries, they do not become casualties on the foreign field. With the Holy Spirit filling them, these men and women have learned how to adjust to the grace of God. They have an unbelievable unity in the Lord.

When Christ is lifted up and we allow ourselves to be drawn into the fullness of God's life as He intended, pettiness and fault finding will disappear. We can be about our Father's business with perfect oneness and a diversity of gifts, filled with the Word and the Spirit, manifesting light to the world.

CONCLUSION

Because it is so vital that we grasp the principle of unity, I have been feisty in communicating some of these truths. The devil hates feisty, uncompromising preachers who know the Book and who have dogmatic convictions. But when we are under attack from the demons of the air, Christians can't afford to be passive. When a preacher is functioning with the oneness of the Godhead in His humanity and preaching the Word of God to a congregation that listen in the unity of the Spirit, the demons can't handle it. "Let's get out of here!" they say. Satan recognizes Christians who are firm in their convictions and will leave them for someone they can easily infect with a critical spirit.

Godly unity is the best resistance against Satan and his demonic forces. When we resist the devil through the certain sound of oneness, he has to flee. This clears the atmosphere of any interference during a service, opening the way

for salvation, healing, restoration, reconciliation, and victory that will stand the test of time. People are free to draw near to God, free to be led by the Spirit.

With this kind of oneness, people will be led to go into all the world with the glorious message of the Finished Work and reveal the unity of the Trinity through the unity they have within themselves and with other believers. *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”* (John 17:21).