



Unity Equals Christians Loving Christians

By Kevin King



When I was a kid, I loved watching Schoolhouse Rock mixed in with my Saturday morning cartoons. They were short educational cartoons about science, history, or grammar. One of them was the "Great American Melting Pot" which talked about immigration and how many people came to America looking for a new life. People came from Ireland or Germany and continued to honor their heritage, but they identified themselves as American. I think in some ways this is true

about our Christian walk as well. We may be Catholic or Methodist or Vineyard or Messianic Jew or other denomination, but in the end we are all disciples of Christ. We don't lose our identity by joining a multi-denominational group like Alleluia. We are able to appreciate our differences and even see the strengths in others.

As I was reading Dan Almeter's book *Unity: On Earth as in Heaven*, I was struck by how long it has taken for unity of the Body of Christ to be

a priority. Division of the Body started in the first century between the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Today there are about 300 denominations in the U.S. alone. An attempt to unify the broken Body of Christ really hadn't been at-

tempted with much success until the beginning of the 20th century. To think of the level of success that Alleluia has had in the span of 40 years in being a model of unity for others can only be attributed to the Holy Spirit.

On the eve of Jesus' trial, knowing He had little time left with His disciples, He shared a new command to the disciples. He says in John 13:34, "A new command I give you: love one another." This was the final advice that Jesus had for His disciples before going to the cross. He could have told them to read their Bibles more or don't forget to go to church. He might have said don't forget the poor, but His final command was to love other Christians. I recently heard Andy Stanley speak on this passage and from his perspective, if Christians had simply loved each other, there would not have been either World War I or II. There wouldn't have been a Civil War. There wouldn't have been slavery. The world would have been an amazingly different place. This simply from Christians loving other Christians; who knows what could

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ACS Cast Going to State



Congratulation to the ACS students who placed 2nd in the regional GCIAA one act play competition. (See story page 4)

Meet Another Underway Sister

By Alice Alger

Sandra Johnson was born in Massachusetts and moved with her family to the Netherlands at the age of one. She lived there until she was five, becoming fluent in Dutch. In fact, that was her first language. The family returned to New England where Sandra attended school. After high school graduation, she attended Trinity College in pre-med for a year. Meanwhile, her father had a conversion to the Lord and started their local parish praying for her conversion. One day reading a book on Medjugorje, Italy, she became deeply aware of her hunger for the Lord and fell on her knees. After that moment, she wanted to learn more about the Lord and transferred to Franciscan University, studying under Scott Hahn and

graduating in 1994 with a degree in Theology. Nicole Lawson was her college roommate.

She married and had four children: Joy, Osborne, Faith and AJ. The family moved several times and ended in Phoenix, Arizona. Later, she and her husband separated.

A miracle story from her life was her son AJ's almost drowning when he was two. Sandra and her mother found him floating on his back like a pro in the lake by her mother's house. A nurse told her that this was a miracle because babies don't do that; they sink like rocks. The Blessed Virgin Mary had supported him, and he was declared uninjured at the hospital.

Over the years, Sandra kept in contact with Nicole and when the



Sandra and Faith Johnson

opportunity came to visit Nicole in Alleluia in 2010, she came and fell in love with Community. When she went home, she decided to return permanently. Sandra and the children moved here in 2012 directly into Bob and Kathy Visintainer's house on the corner of Richmond Hill and Ruby Drive and went Underway the same year. She is in the Fuller Support Group and attends St. Joseph Catholic Church. She loves nature and enjoys board games and handiwork.

"Alleluia is a haven of sanity in a world gone mad. Community life and fellowship have been food to my soul," she stated.

Two of her four children, AJ and Osborne, are home-schooled, and Joy is out of school and lives at home. Faith is currently a freshman at ACS and enjoys drama and art.

Greet Sandra next time you see her. She is friendly, out-going and most huggable.

Unity in Diversity

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happen if we love non-Christians too.

What does it look like for Christians to love other Christians? It doesn't mean giving up who you are, but it does mean accepting people as they are. Early in my Christian walk, I belonged to a denomination that believed the Holy Spirit was no longer active in the world. According to this belief, the Holy Spirit only was active to do miracles in the first century to validate the work of the apostles to the world, and now the Bible did that going forward. So when I realized the Holy Spirit was still active in the world, I had problems with that old church. I felt they were wrong in their beliefs, and I wanted to fix them (just as they tried to fix me). One day, a friend of mine was talking with me about the struggle with the old church, and he said, "It's amazing how much they can

do without the Holy Spirit. Just think what you can do with the Holy Spirit!" My way of thinking was spiraling me downwards into judgement and anger; his positive spin gave me compassion for them, a newfound respect for their accomplishments, and hope for the future. I had gained the ability to say I love them even though I believe in an active Holy Spirit, and they believed in an inactive one. At most, one view could be true, but both could be wrong. I could be wrong (and probably am on a lot of theological issues), yet God still loves me. John 13:34 continues, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another," which means that just as Jesus Himself accepts all MY wrong thinking, I have to love others when I believe they are thinking wrong.

I have been part of several different denominational churches over the years, each with a different set of beliefs. Some valued missions, others valued church planting, and still oth-

ers valued holiness or worship. Each of these aspects of the church has value that needs exploring. Dan alludes to this when he talks about the Four Quadrants: charismatic, contemplative, liturgical, and evangelical. Like

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An Additional View of Abortion



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During the Full Covenant Retreat, we heard many calls to remember the ones who are suffering in our midst, mindful that their suffering is often unknown to us, and to eagerly seek to bring the Lord's Love and Healing to them.

This call resonated with a deep desire of mine planted during my time with the Sisters of Life in New York City. The Sisters of Life are a Catholic religious order of women, aka, nuns, who are dedicated to spreading the culture of life. They serve those who are vulnerable to abortion and those who have suffered from abortions.

Before my time with the Sisters, I wanted the women who had had abortions to come to God's healing power. While I was with the Sisters, I learned that many of our words may hurt these women and cause them to despair of God's mercy and forgiveness. The Sisters of Life have been privileged to walk with many women along the road of God's healing in their lives. I learned that they always speak of these women as those who have suffered abortion. I learned that when we use words like murder, slaughter, homicide — even in settings when we may think everyone is on the same page — our words may fall on hearts wrought with pain and only confirm their fear that their abortion is unforgivable. They hear, "Murderer, killer..." They already carry that burden deeply in their hearts and need a word of hope to help them bring it to Jesus. The Sisters of Life make an express point to never speak of abortion without also speaking of God's mercy and forgiveness.

This beautiful insight springs from the Sisters of Life charism of life and the grace of their mission. It is one which I have long wanted to share with you, my brothers and sisters in Alleluia, and this seems like the God-given moment. I think that the Lord would have us reflect on Mark 5:25-34, the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed. He showed me that this story is not only about her, but about those who had been talking about Jesus, "She had heard reports about Jesus." What had she heard that inspired her confidence? What aspects of Jesus would booster the courage to seek forgiveness and healing for my hidden and shameful sins? I know that my own heart has taken courage from the gentleness of Jesus who allowed this woman to approach Him in secret, the mercy with which He healed her, and the goodness with which He then beckoned her into relationship with Himself.

The question, then, is "Who touched my garments?" and we are the disciples to whom He speaks. "To whom have you been a witness of my love for you?"

There are two things which I want to add. The first is another thing that I learned from the Sisters: namely, that the pain of abortion is so deep, that we do not force someone's confidence regarding it. If we know someone who has suffered an abortion, we can pray for them and speak of God's mercy whenever the topic of abortion comes up, but we do not force their confidence. If they come to us and open that door to us, then we pray and may enter that conversation.

Finally, to my brothers and sisters in this body who have suffered from abortion, I want to say a word. I probably do not know who you are. I want to speak for myself and for all of us who have offended you with our words. Please forgive me. Please forgive us. We do not know what we do. We will try to do better. We love you and we are so grateful for your love for us. I ask the Lord that we may all continue walking forward into His Mercy.

By Mary Krupa

Unity

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facets on a diamond, if a person turns the diamond, all the sides should sparkle, not just one. If as Christians we don't explore the different aspects of our faith, we are like a diamond

with only one side that shines; all the others are dull. While I must admit that as a Protestant, I haven't added practices that are explicitly Catholic to my life, what I have done is expand my vision for what it means to be a disciple of Christ. For instance, I have asked questions from my Catholic brothers about rosaries, and why do you do things this way, and what

does this mean, so that I now have an appreciation for rosaries or why things are done a certain way in the Catholic Church. In being a part of a multi-denominational organization like Alleluia, we get to experience each quadrant of the Body of Christ and many of the facets that each has to offer without having to leave the denomination we've chosen.

CERT Training Becoming Available for Alleluia Community Members

By Barbara Harshman

The following information is provided by Augusta Fire Department/ Emergency Management Division

DID YOU KNOW.....

• There is a very good chance that your neighborhood will be on its own during the early stages following a catastrophic disaster.

• After a catastrophic disaster, citizens will volunteer to help. Without proper training these people can expose themselves to potential injury and even death!

• Experience has shown that basic training in disaster survival and rescue skills improves the ability of citizens to survive until responders or other assistance arrives.

The Augusta Emergency Management Office supports a program called Community Emergency Response

Team (CERT) Training. We are a part of a national network of CERT communities. The program is designed to help neighborhoods prepare for and respond after catastrophic disasters such as winter weather storms, tornadoes, and other major emergencies.

Once trained, a CERT member will be able to provide the following services in their neighborhood:

- Increase their neighborhood's disaster readiness
- Assess damage after a disaster
- Extinguish small fires, teach fire safety
- Perform light search and rescue operations
- Perform triage and provide medical services to the injured
- Organize procurement of supplies

"The first responder on the street

ACS 1-Act Play Cast Going to State Competition

Congratulations to the ACS students who placed 2nd out of three schools in the East Regional GICAA One Act Play competition on October 28 in Eatonton, Ga. Rachel Visintainer and Ania Hatfield won Best Performance awards for their portrayals. The cast will be going to Division I State Competition on Nov. 10th in Milledgeville, Ga.



Rachel Visintainer and Ania Hatfield

may not even be the police or firemen; it's the guy who's there when the accident occurs. The CERT followed by the local first responders, followed then by the national officials can make a real difference in our community," quoted by Robert Eckels, Harris County Judge, U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The Alleluia P&R Team hopes to have trained "emergency responders" who, in the event of an incident in Augusta, could assess the situation in the Faith Village area and help respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters and neighbors from the effects of the incident. We don't want anyone to be overlooked during an incident. Please pray about participating in this. Call Mary Keegan to sign up.

CERT training for Alleluia will be held 6-9:00 p.m. in the school auditorium starting Monday, Jan. 4 for 7 weeks. We need to have 20-25 people to hold the 7-week class which includes a "drill" at the end of the 7 weeks on the following Saturday (February 20).

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(Courtesy FEMA website)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.