

THE PRACTICAL EXPRESSION OF THE HIGHEST REVELATION OF THE CHURCH IN EPHESIANS: THE ONE NEW MAN

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The mystery of God's will, which God purposed and hid in Himself until He could impart Himself into created and redeemed humanity as the content of the mystery, was revealed to Paul (Eph. 1:9; 3:3-5). This revelation was the source of Paul's stewardship of grace (v. 2), and he ministered the content of this revelation as grace in order to carry out God's eternal purpose according to the will of God (vv. 8-9; 1:1). The eternal purpose of God involves a display of God's multifarious wisdom in Christ through the church (3:10, 21), and this purpose is accomplished through the divine economy of the Triune God, which Paul succinctly presents in his well-speaking of the Triune God in Ephesians 1:3-14. Beginning with his well-speaking of the Father, who planned and predestinated the believers unto sonship (vv. 3-6), proceeding to his well-speaking of the Son, who accomplished the Father's will through His redemption on the cross (vv. 7-12), and culminating with his well-speaking of the Spirit, who applies the Son's accomplished redemption through His sealing and pledging (vv. 13-14), Paul's words reveal that the Triune God is the content of the spiritual blessings that have been imparted into created and redeemed humanity in order to produce the church.¹ These blessings come from the Triune God, and they substantiate and incorporate the Triune God as grace into created and redeemed humanity. The issue of this hypostatized, incorporated grace is the church, which is an organic expression of the life of Christ in the corporate person of Christ, not an organizational expression of like-minded adherents to a particular statement of faith. The revelation of the church that is unveiled in Ephesians is presented from the perspective of the Triune God. It is the church as God sees the church, not the church as humanity conceives the church. According to Ephesians, God's view of the church includes seven unique, high, and heavenly aspects: the Body of Christ (1:22-23), the one new man (2:15), the household of God (v. 19), the dwelling place of God (v. 22), the kingdom of God (5:5); the bride (vv. 23-32), and the warrior (6:10-18).

These seven aspects reflect the heart and mind of the

Triune God, and they are conveyed through the renewed mind of Paul. Without revelation, none of these aspects would ever come up in the vain thoughts of humanity (4:17; 1 Cor. 2:7-10). They are ever, however, in the mind of God, and they reveal the heart of God. The term *Body* speaks of God's desire for His divine life to be imparted into created and redeemed humanity in order to join them to Christ for His enlarged corporate expression (Eph. 1:23; 3:6; 4:15-16). The term *one new man* speaks of God's desire for the person of Christ to be incorporated with created and redeemed humanity for the unique and sole expression of God's new creation, which was created in Christ according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality and is being renewed according to the image of Christ (2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10). The term *household of God* speaks of God's desire for the enlargement of His expression in created and redeemed humanity through many sons who possess and enjoy His divine life and nature (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10). The term *dwelling place of God* speaks of God's desire for the realization of rest and satisfaction in the regenerated and mingled human spirit of created and redeemed humanity (Isa. 66:1-2; Heb. 4:12, 16). The words *her* and *she* in Ephesians 5:25-27 speak of God's desire to nourish and cherish created and redeemed humanity with His divine love in order to remove every vestige of the old creation in our being, which inhibits the realization in our experience of our being joined as one with Christ as His counterpart (1:4; 5:29, 31-32). And the phrase *the whole armor of God* speaks of God's desire for created and redeemed humanity to bear His corporate image as armor in the execution of His dominion over every rebellious element in His creation.

Without seeing the revelation of the church in Ephesians as the Body, the one new man, the household of God, the dwelling place of God, the kingdom of God, the bride of Christ, and the warrior, the decidedly low view of the church among unbelievers, as merely an organization with religious proclivities, would ever prevail even in the minds of believers.² These seven

aspects speak of the view of the church that prevails in the mind of God. Each of these aspects is high in their own right, but the highest revelation is the revelation of the church as the one new man.

The Highest Revelation of the Church as the One New Man

Of the seven aspects of the church in Ephesians, the terms *the Body* and *the one new man* speak of the deep ontological relationship that now exists between the Triune God and created and redeemed humanity, while the terms *the household of God*, *the dwelling place of God*, *the kingdom of God*, *the bride of Christ*, and *the warrior* speak of elements that derive from and express this ontological relationship. The ontological aspect of the church as the one new man and the Body subsumes all the other aspects of the church, which find their functional expression in the relationships that are signified by the terms *the household of God*, *the dwelling place of God*, *the kingdom of God*, *the bride of Christ*, and *the warrior*.

With the incarnation of God in humanity and with the crucifixion and resurrection of humanity in God, a new ontological relationship between God and humanity was created and manifested in time in the person of the God-man, Jesus Christ: The Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnated Son of God, who came from with the Father, became our Lord Jesus Christ in resurrection (1:3), making all that God the Father is to Him ours, especially His incorporate, coinhering relationship in life with the Father. As the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, we are in the Father and in the Son (John 17:21). And as the Son is in us and the Father is in the Son, we are in the Father, having access unto the Father through the Son in one Spirit (v. 23; Eph. 2:18). The term *one new man* speaks of the ontological, incorporate relationship that created and redeemed humanity now enjoys in the person of the Son through the divine life, which is signified by the term *Body*. The one new man is the enlargement and expression of Christ in created and redeemed humanity, which was made possible by the release of the divine life through the death of Christ on the cross and the impartation of the divine life into created and redeemed humanity through the resurrection of Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3). The terms *one new man* and *Body*, thus, speak of an ontological reality related to the incorporation of created and redeemed humanity into the person of Christ through the divine life of Christ. The term *Body* speaks of the life of Christ; and the term *one new man* speaks of the person of Christ. The church, as the one new man, manifests the person of Christ in and through the divine life of Christ.

The one new man was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality (Eph. 4:24), which is

Christ (v. 21; John 1:17), and the one new man bears the image of God, which is Christ (Col. 3:10; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18). Just as God and Christ, as the image of God, are inseparable (4:4; Col. 1:15), Christ and the one new man, as the image of Christ, are inseparable. Christ is the one new man because the one new man was created in Christ, and the one new man is Christ because Christ is the only constituent of the new man (3:10-11). Both Christ, as the embodiment of the Triune God, and the one new man, as the embodiment of Christ, mutually share the divine life of the Triune God, which is the central reality of the revelation of the church as the Body of Christ. The expression of the life of Christ, as seen in the Body of Christ, is the person of Christ, as seen in the one new man. The one new man subsumes the reality of the church's incorporation in Christ as His Body, and the one new man manifests Christ's particular and unique person. As the Body, created and redeemed humanity has the capacity to manifest Christ's person, because the church receives, shares, and partakes of His divine life. As the one new man, the church's manifestation of the one new man is not related to an outward imitation of Christ's divine attributes and perfect human virtues; it is a manifestation of the church's being like Him because it sees Him as He is in His person (1 John 3:2). The term *Body* points to the basis of the church's ontological relationship with the Triune God in Christ, which is the divine life, but the term *one new man* points to the highest reality in the divine economy, which is the church's ontological incorporation into the person of Christ. The revelation of the one new man thus subsumes and manifests the revelation of the Body.

As the highest revelation of the church, the revelation of the one new man also subsumes and manifests the revelation of the church as the household of God, the dwelling place of God, the kingdom of God, the bride of Christ, and the warrior. These aspects of the church speak of functional relationships that are derived from and express the ontological reality of the one new man. As the household of God, the one new man fulfills God's desire for an enlarged, corporate expression of His Son in created and redeemed humanity; as the dwelling place of God, the one new man fulfills God's desire for rest and satisfaction in created and redeemed humanity; as the kingdom of God, the one new man fulfills God's desire for the expression of His righteousness in created and redeemed humanity; as the bride, the one new man fulfills God's desire to lovingly sanctify and be joined to created and redeemed humanity; and as the warrior, the one new man fulfills God's desire for the application of His authority upon all the elements of death and rebellion, both in creation and in created and redeemed humanity.

The revelation of the one new man subsumes and manifests the revelation of the church as the household of

God. The one new man is a corporate composition of the many sons of God, who were predestinated unto sonship and who are incorporated in the person of the Son (Heb. 2:10; Eph. 1:5). The church is a corporate composition of those who have been given the authority to be children of God (John 1:12), having received the divine life as grace by believing into His name, His person (v. 16). The one new man, therefore, subsumes the aspect of the household of God by manifesting the enlargement of God's family.

The revelation of the one new man also subsumes and manifests the revelation of the church as the dwelling place of God. The one new man is a corporate man that is being built into a house for God in and with created and redeemed humanity. It is the enlargement of the seed of a human virgin who will crush Satan under its feet (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; Rom. 16:20), and it is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that his spiritual seed, Christ (Gal. 3:16), would be enlarged like the stars of the heavens from the sand of Abraham's fleshly descendants and from the washing waves of the Gentile sea (v. 29; Gen. 22:17). This enlargement is focused on the place of God's dwelling, which is the human spirit (Eph. 2:22). As a genuine man with humanity and a genuinely new man with divinity, the one new man is the kind of man that God is looking for, an enlarged God-man in Christ who is of a poor and contrite spirit (Isa. 66:1-2) and in whom God finds rest and satisfaction. The one new man, therefore, subsumes the aspect of the dwelling place of God by manifesting the indwelling of God in humanity.

The revelation of the one new man further subsumes and manifests the revelation of the church as the kingdom of God. As a corporate man, who is incorporated with the Triune God in the mingled spirit of created and redeemed humanity, the one new man expresses the authority of God, becoming a realm in which God's authority is manifested in righteousness (Eph. 4:24). In disposition the one new man is poor in spirit, lowly and meek (v. 2), but this disposition is its qualification to manifest the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:3). The one new man lives under the authority of God by putting off the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit (Eph. 4:22), and by putting on the person of Christ as the reality of God's righteousness and holiness (v. 24). The one

new man, therefore, subsumes the aspect of the kingdom of God by manifesting a living that demonstrates God's authority over, in, and through created and redeemed humanity.

The revelation of the one new man also subsumes and manifests the revelation of the church as the bride of Christ. Although there is no room for any natural person in the one new man, either male or female (Gal. 3:28), the one new man comes out of Christ, just as Eve came out of Adam, and the one new man is a part of Christ, just as Eve was a part of Adam. The one new man is one with Christ by virtue of being the members of His Body. The one new man is joined to Him in life and is sustained in this life by His nourishing and cherishing love (Eph. 5:29-32). In a reciprocal atmosphere of love, the one new man is experientially cleansed of every spot related to the natural life and every wrinkle related to oldness (v. 27), making it new in Christ

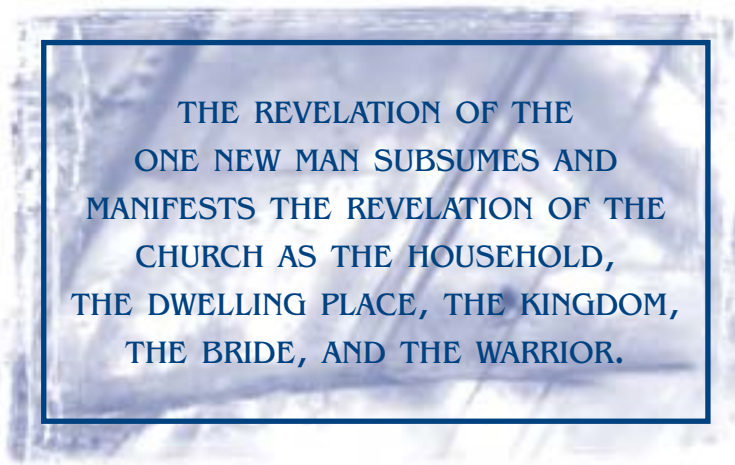
(2 Cor. 5:17), according to the newness of the sanctifying and washing word of the Lord (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26). The one new man matches the standard of God; it is "holy and without blemish before Him in love" (1:4). In this verse *love*

refers to the love with which God loves His chosen ones and His

chosen ones love Him...First, God loved us; then this divine love inspires us to love Him in return. In such a condition and atmosphere of love, we are saturated with God to be holy and without blemish, just as He is. (Lee, Recovery Version, note 7)

The one new man, therefore, subsumes the aspect of the bride by manifesting the sanctifying effect of the love of God that has been poured out in the hearts of created and redeemed humanity (Rom. 5:5).

The revelation of the one new man lastly subsumes and manifests the revelation of the church as a corporate warrior fighting for God's interests on the earth today. Only a new corporate man can put on God as its whole armor, fulfilling God's original ordination in the creation of humanity. Adam, who was created in God's image and who was given the right to exercise God's dominion in Genesis 1:26, was given this charge as a corporate man, when God said, "Let them." The one new man, who is being renewed according the image of Him who created him (Col. 3:10), Christ, has received the same charge to



execute God's dominion over the rulers, the authorities, the world-rulers of the darkness in today's world, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12). The charge given to Adam as a corporate man to exercise dominion was given before the fall, indicating that God's interests at that time were not challenged by the fall of flesh and blood but only by the same spiritual forces that the one new man is charged to confront in this age. Without the life of God, Adam was but one man, and thus, he did not have the strength in himself to stand against the deceit of God's enemy. By receiving the life of God and by being incorporated into the person of Christ, the one new man, however, is empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength (v. 10). Thus, he is equipped with God as his defensive armor in order to withstand the enemy and with God as his offensive weaponry to stand for God's interests related to the needs of the saints and to the needs of the ministry that imparts the contents of the mystery of the gospel to bring created and redeemed humanity into the reality of the highest revelation of the church (vv. 14-19). The one new man, therefore, subsumes the aspect of the warrior by manifesting a watchful defense of God's interests through the offensive application of the Spirit through prayers and petitions that emanate from the regenerated spirit of created and redeemed humanity (v. 18).

The revelation of the one new man, which subsumes and manifests every revealed aspect of the church—the Body, the household of God, the dwelling place of God, the kingdom of God, the bride, and the warrior—is surely the highest revelation of the church in Ephesians. This is because the one new man is Christ in His enlarged corporate expression, and there is no standing or position for created and redeemed humanity that is higher than that of Christ, who is the Head over all things. Conversely considered, however, there is no expression of Christ in created and redeemed humanity that should be lower than that which Christ manifests in His person. The principal expression of Christ in His person is that of His incorporate oneness with the Triune God and with those into whom the Triune God has been imparted through the stewardship of grace. Although the one new man is one in the Triune God, new in the life of the Triune God, and a man with humanity mingled with the Triune God, the humanity of the one new man is still constrained by the practical limitations of time and space in this age. Consequently, the one new man, even as the highest revelation of the church, must be able to be practically expressed in this age.

The Practical Expression of the Church as the One New Man

Although the revelation of the one new man subsumes and manifests all the other aspects of the church that are

revealed in Ephesians, this revelation involves more than a future, spiritual manifestation. Rather, the fulfillment of God's purpose and plan includes the practical expression of the intrinsic oneness and newness associated with created and redeemed humanity in order to show the world that He is a dispensing God because He sends Himself in the Son by the Spirit in His economy, and to display His multifarious wisdom to the rebellious principalities and powers, who depreciate and attempt to undermine His divine economy (John 17:21; Eph. 3:10). This practical expression involves more than an exhibition of the one universal church in eternity future; it involves the practical expression of the oneness of the one new man in local churches in this age, churches that exhibit the incorporate oneness of the Triune God with created and redeemed humanity by receiving and meeting with all those who name the name of the Lord in the geographic locality in which they live and walk as members one of another (2 Tim. 2:19; Eph. 4:1, 17, 25).

The one new man lives and walks in time and in space in this age, and in its living and walking, all the subsumed realities of the revelation of the church will be expressed through this one masterpiece created for good works in time (2:10). The church is a unique creation that must, at the same time and in the same place, be able to display the person of Christ as the one new man, the divine life as the Body of Christ, the divine sonship as the household of God, the divine rest and satisfaction of the Triune God as the dwelling place of God, the divine realm of God's rule and reign as the kingdom of God, the divine cherishing and nourishing in love as the bride, and the divine exercise of God's authority against His spiritual enemies as the warrior.

These various aspects of the reality of the church may be distinct according to revelation, but they are not separate according to experience. To touch one aspect of the church is to touch them all; consequently, the reality of one aspect of the church cannot be separated from the reality of the other aspects. Thus, if there is a universal and eternal dimension to one aspect, as there surely is with the kingdom of God, then there is a universal and eternal dimension to the other aspects, and conversely, if there is a local and practical dimension to one aspect, as there surely is with the dwelling place of God, then there is a local and present dimension to the other aspects.

It is possible to argue that the manifestation of the church as the one new man, the Body, the household of God, the kingdom of God, the bride, and the warrior have a dispensational fulfillment in the coming age and in eternity future and, thus, are not matters for our experience today, but this cannot be argued in regard to the aspect of the church as the dwelling place of God. Ephesians 2:21 and 22 speak of the church as the dwelling place of God,

saying, “In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.” In showing the connection between these two verses, Witness Lee comments on the word *you* in verse 22, indicating that it refers to the local saints in Ephesus (Recovery Version, note 1), and on the word *also* that immediately follows *you*, saying,

Also indicates that the building in v. 21 is universal and that the building in this verse is local. Universally, the church is uniquely one and is growing universally; locally, the church in a particular locality also is one, and the local saints are being built together in their particular locality. (Note 2)

The location of the dwelling place of God—the regenerated human spirit of created and redeemed humanity—is a further indication that the universal oneness of the church should be practically expressed in a local church that receives all the believers in a particular locality in oneness in this age.³ This is because the Triune God dwells in the regenerated human spirit of created and redeemed humanity today. And since He is not waiting until the coming kingdom or eternity future to indwell those whom He has called (4:1, 4), the imperative of oneness among those whom He indwells is not a matter that can be ignored today. Thus, the expression of the church as the dwelling place of God refers to the church in its local expression in time and space, not to the church in its future universal expression. Since the church, as the dwelling place of God, is practical and local, the one new man also must have a practical and local expression by virtue of the fact that these aspects of the church cannot be separated from one another. And conversely, since the one new man speaks of created and redeemed humanity’s ontological incorporation into the oneness of the Triune God, the church as dwelling place of God in time and space must also exhibit this oneness by virtue of the same fact that these aspects of the church cannot be separated from one another. Consequently, in order for the church on earth to match the highest revelation of the church in the heavens, the details related to the creation of the one new man must be manifested in practical and local expressions, especially as they impact the expression of oneness.

THE ONE NEW MAN LIVES
AND WALKS IN TIME AND IN SPACE
IN THIS AGE, AND IN ITS LIVING
AND WALKING, ALL THE SUBSUMED
REALITIES OF THE REVELATION
OF THE CHURCH WILL BE EXPRESSED.

The Practical Expression of the Church Manifesting the Details of the Creation of the One New Man

In Ephesians 2:15 Paul presents the details of Christ’s creation of the one new man on the cross, saying, “Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace.” The phrase *abolishing in His flesh* speaks of the negative work of Christ on the cross to terminate the main obstacle to the creation of the one new man in the humanity of the old creation—the law of the commandments in ordinances; the phrase *create the two in Himself* speaks of the positive work of Christ on the cross to incorporate the element of His divine life into created and redeemed humanity to create the one new man;⁴ and the phrase *so making peace* speaks of the defining characteristic of the one new man, who was created on the cross. The significance of each of

these details—the nullification of dividing ordinances related to the old creation, the fellowship of the divine life related to the new creation, and the condition of peace and oneness, rather than discord and division, should be manifested in the practical expression of the church.

Abolishing in His flesh:

The section in Ephesians related to the producing of the church, 2:1-10, begins with a reference to “offenses and sins” because sins bring in death (v. 1), and death must be overcome with the divine life in order to produce the church as the Body of Christ. Hence, Paul speaks of the church being made alive together with Christ (v. 5). Although this enlivening process is predicated upon the redemptive aspect of Christ’s death on the cross, neither His death nor the cross are mentioned in this section, either directly or indirectly. Instead, the references to His death and the cross that do occur in this chapter, occur in the following section related to the building of the church, verses 11 through 22, the section that provides the details concerning the creation of the one new man.

The reference to Christ’s death on the cross in the phrase *abolishing in His flesh* in verse 15 is not related to dealing with the deadening effects of sin but to dealing with the divisive effects of the law of the commandments in ordinances.⁵ Created humanity was deadened by sin, but it was also divided by ordinances that stood in the way of expressing the inherent oneness of

the Triune God through the one new man. Thus, there was a need to terminate both sin and ordinances on the cross in order to create the one new man. Of these two negative elements, sin and ordinances, the entire focus in the section on the creation of the one new man is on the latter element, indicating its prominence as an obstacle in the eyes of God.

In verse 15 Paul declares that Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity, “having abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace.” When Christ was crucified, all the ordinances were nailed to the cross. He broke down the middle wall of partition by abolishing the law of the commandments in ordinances. His goal in doing so was to create the Jews and the Gentiles “in Himself into one new man.” (Lee, *Life-study* 722)⁶

The law of the commandments in ordinances became a middle wall of partition, separating and dividing Jews and Gentiles. “By the middle wall of partition Paul meant the law of commandments in ordinances, the ritual commandments related to circumcision, the Sabbath, and diet” (199). These ordinances became a divisive factor, a middle wall of partition, and in this environment of division, the commandments in ordinances further became a source of enmity, exacerbating and deepening the divisions in the old creation.

The law of the commandments in ordinances, which were intended to preserve the Jews in a sanctified living by separating them from the unclean elements of the world, thus became a factor of division between Jews and Gentiles. “In order to create the one new man, it was necessary for Christ to abolish the ordinances...The Jews and Gentiles were separated to the uttermost by the ordinances” (205-206). When Christ was crucified in His flesh on the cross, the commandments in ordinances were abolished to remove the enmity created by an insistence upon their legalistic observance. These ordinances and the corruption of these ordinances into factors of division were terminated when the law of the commandments in ordinances was nailed to the cross.

All ordinances, which seek to maintain a holy living through the observance of outward commandments, have been abolished and terminated, and the enmity that they engender due to their association with divisive elements of the old creation has been terminated as well. There is no basis for division, because all human ordinances have been terminated. This termination became a reality when created and redeemed humanity was reconciled in one Body to God by being incorporated in Christ into the oneness of the Triune God. There is no factor of division in the humanity of the one new man, because the humanity of

the one new man has been incorporated into the divinity of the Triune God, a divinity that is uniquely expressed in oneness. Hence, any expression of the humanity of the one new man will only be an expression of oneness.

The expression of division among Christians throughout the history of the church, however, is an indication that Christians still give place to ordinances that hinder the expression of the oneness of the one new man. “Christians today are divided either by ordinances or by doctrines...Without ordinances or doctrines, there would be no divisions. If ordinances and doctrines were removed, all genuine Christians would be one” (584). The continuing presence and imposition of ordinances has produced countless divisions, denominations, and sects, and they are a constant reminder that the church has not put off the old man in experience, the old man whose defining characteristic is division.

The primary source of the divisions among Christians throughout the centuries has been ordinances. We may trace these ordinances all the way back to the time of Babel. God’s intention in His creation of man was for mankind to be one. This was the reason that He created just one man, not a multitude of men. God’s desire was to have one corporate man. However, as a result of Babel, mankind was divided into nations, into a number of different peoples. Between these nations, these peoples, there are many differences. Not only are there differences in a general way between the Jews and the Gentiles, but there are also differences among the various nationalities, for example, between the Chinese and the Japanese, and between the Germans and the French. These differences have created divisions, and divisions are related to ordinances.

From the time of Babel, mankind has been divided by ordinances concerning the ways of living and worship.

It is the tendency of Christians to create ordinances related to those practices which they personally find helpful. For this reason, there are ordinances about practices such as foot-washing and about speaking in tongues. Those who advocate speaking in tongues may have an ordinance imposing it, but those who oppose speaking in tongues may have an ordinance forbidding it. It is by ordinances like these that Christians have been divided. Therefore, it is of vital importance that we receive all genuine Christians and not become divided over ordinances. (713, 715)

The practical expression of the oneness of the Triune God in the church does not, as many Christians think, require spiritual maturity; it requires only that Christians receive one another based on their being received by God (Rom. 14:3), not on their agreeing with a particular practice or doctrine that has been codified as an ordinance. Since

genuine believers can be weak in faith and influenced by traditional practices (v. 1; Col. 2:8; Acts 21:20), spiritual maturity cannot be held out as a prerequisite for the expression of the oneness of the one new man in practicality. And since all believers begin as infants in the divine life and most remain in an infantile capacity (1 Cor. 3:1), spiritual maturity is a threshold too high and too impractical to cross over in order for there to be a practical expression of the church as the one new man.

Every new believer is regenerated in spirit but not transformed in the soul in general or renewed in the mind in particular (Eph. 4:23). This lack of transformation and the need for the renewing of the mind indicates that the former manner of living of the old man remains a powerful impediment to the expression of oneness (v. 22). The former manner of living of the old man is related to the vanity of the mind (v. 17), a vanity that is reflected primarily in the privileging of one's ways, one's ordinances, above the ways and ordinances of others. The first step toward expressing the oneness of the church as the one new man, therefore, must involve an exceedingly low threshold. This low threshold comes from God, and it asks only for a willingness to receive and meet with all those whom God has received. Since receiving and meeting involves a geographic location in time and space, the ground of locality serves to define the practical boundary for this low threshold.⁷

The ground of locality is ground upon which the spiritual oneness of the church can be practically testified to an unbelieving world, because the ground of locality invalidates every claim for conformity based upon ordinances by exposing them as being contrary to God's practice of receiving. Consequently, the dividing ordinances that were abolished on the cross cannot be reimposed in a local church that genuinely receives all believers who live in a particular locality. Thus, the ground of locality serves to manifest the practical expression of the church as the one new man, a manifestation that is not encumbered with ordinances that divide.⁸

Creating the two in Himself: The one new man was created in Christ in His death on the cross. In His death the law of the commandments in ordinances was abolished in the humanity of His flesh by virtue of His genuine standing as a man, and the effectiveness of this death in

the abolition of the law of the commandments in ordinances was applied to redeemed humanity by virtue of its incorporation into Him. The one new man was created in Christ and exists only in Christ. In *Life-study of Ephesians*, Witness Lee states,

Christ abolished in His flesh the law of commandments in ordinances; but He did not create the new man in His flesh...The negative things were terminated in Christ's flesh, whereas the new man, which...is positive, was germinated in Christ Himself. (209)

By being created in Christ, the one new man is the enlargement of Christ.

The phrase *in Himself* is very significant. It indicates that Christ was not only the Creator of the one new man, the church, but also the sphere in which and the essence with which the one new man was created. He is the very element of the new man. (210)

Henry Alford similarly comments on the deep significance of the phrase *in Himself*, saying,

He did not make our peace and then retire, leaving us to enjoy that peace,—but is Himself its medium and its substance;

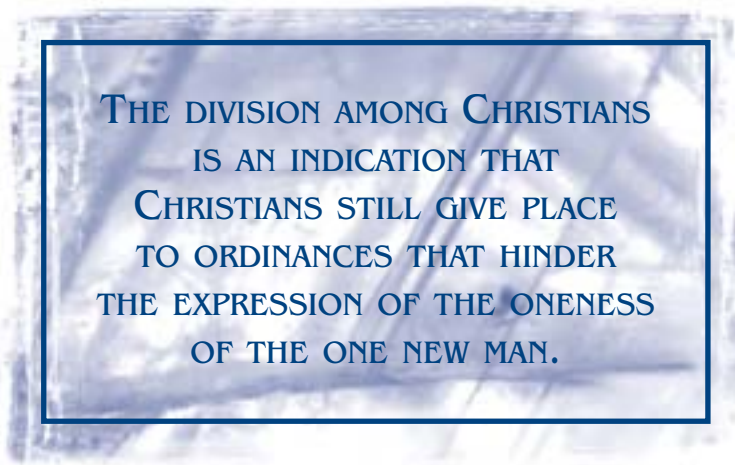
His making both one was no external reconciliation, but the taking both, their common nature, on and into Himself. (97)

In the creation of the one new man, not only did Christ take the common human nature of the Jews and Gentiles upon Himself; He also imparted the divine nature into those who were brought into Him.

Apart from being in Him, we could not have been created into the new man, because in ourselves we do not have the divine essence which is the element of the new man. Only in the divine essence and with the divine essence were we created into the new man. (Lee, *Life-study* 211)

Hermann Olshausen similarly comments on the role and necessity of the divine life in the creation of the one new man, saying,

The making both one, creating the two into one new man...is not merely external, a purely negative removal of the separating medium, but something truly spiritual; the



process of Christ's life was the actual creation of this one new man. (74)

The one new man was created in Christ and with the divine life of Christ as it is realized in the person of Christ. In this regard the divine life should not be viewed as an abstract spiritual concept; it should be considered in the context of Paul's reference to the reality that is in Jesus (v. 21), the reality that was produced in the human living of Jesus as the unique God-man. In the human living of Jesus, the divine life in Him was responsive to every human situation that He encountered; this life operated and functioned to meet the specific needs of specific people, bringing them to God and bringing God to them. His life was an all-fitting life and an all-ministering life. The one new man was created in this life, the divine life that was manifested as the reality in Jesus.

The one new man was created in the all-fitting life and all-ministering life of Christ; hence, the local expression of the one new man must manifest a continuation of this ministry of divine life in the person of Christ. This manifestation is depicted in verses 11 through 16 of chapter 4, which describes the one new man receiving and supplying the divine life through its incorporation in Christ, "out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love" (v. 16). In the supplying and the building up of the Body of Christ, there is a perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry and an arriving at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (vv. 12-13). Although these matters—supplying, building up, perfecting, and arriving—sound more like idealistic spiritual descriptives than attainable practical realities, they are the practical manifestation of the operation of the divine life that was incorporated in created and redeemed humanity in the creation of the one new man in Christ.

The practicality of these realities is illustrated in their connection to the content in the section that begins in verse 17 of chapter 4 and continues through verse 21 of chapter 5, a section that covers the living that is needed in our daily walk (Lee, Recovery Version, Outlines). Verse 17 says, "This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind." The words *This* and *I say* point back to the content of Paul's speaking in the foregoing verses; the word *therefore* grammatically indicates that there is a semantic connection between this content and the content in 4:17 through 5:21; and the word *that* indicates that the connection involves the practical expression of the one new man, which is reflected in basic principles related to this walk (4:17-24) and manifested through the details of this living (v. 25—5:21).

The verses in this section indicate that the divine life in Christ, which was operative in the creation of the one new man, is equally operative in the practical manifestation of the one new man, but only to the extent that the one new man no longer walks in the vanity of the mind. As long as the created and redeemed constituents of the one new man walk in the vanity of the mind (4:17), the building up of the Body of Christ will be frustrated practically. In order for there to be a practical realization of the Body building itself up in love, the one new man must be renewed in the spirit of the mind (v. 23), a renewing that puts off the old man in experience (v. 22). When there is a renewing in the spirit of the mind, the vain elements of the Gentiles' walk in our minds are dealt with, and there is a manifestation of a practical operation of the divine life in the church. The one new man is expressed practically in the mutual fellowship that is the result of created and redeemed humanity's mutual participation in the divine life. This mutual participation and fellowship are manifested through the operation of the divine life in the measure of each one part (v. 16), parts that are constrained by time and space.

The constraining ground of locality preserves God's sovereign placement of the members of the Body with one another so that the necessary supply of the divine life that is in the measure of each sovereignly placed part can be ministered to the other sovereignly placed members so that all can grow up into Christ, who is the Head of the Body and the person of the one new man. The ground of locality practically situates the believers with those who can, in God's eyes, most assist them in the process of putting off the old man and of being renewed in the spirit of the mind. The ground of locality creates an opportunity for the manifestation of the oneness of the one new man because it fosters the need for transformation through the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2). The ground of locality fosters our transformation by causing us to not think so highly of ourselves (v. 3), and it tests our transformation by testing our ability to receive, rather than despise, those whom God has received (14:3). "Receiving requires the transformation mentioned in ch. 12; if we remain natural, we will be unable to receive those whose views are different from ours in doctrine or in practice" (Lee, Recovery Version, 14:1, note 2). The receiving that exemplifies the reality of the one new man requires the reality in the humanity of Jesus, the reality of lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearance in love (Eph. 4:2).

These virtues are not found in our natural humanity but are in the humanity of Jesus. The fact that the virtues are mentioned here, before the oneness of the Spirit in v. 3, indicates that we must have these virtues in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit. This implies that in the uniting Spirit there is the transformed humanity, the humanity

transformed by the resurrection life of Christ. (Lee, Recovery Version, note 1)

Without transformation there can be no manifestation of the newness of the one new man in our relationships with other members of the Body, but it is difficult to even see our need for transformation when the many divisions of the Body of Christ enable us to reject rather than to receive, to pass judgments on the consideration of others rather than to be sober-minded concerning the measure of faith that they possess, and to be high-minded toward ourselves rather than long-suffering toward the other members with whom we have been practically placed.

In every local church there are uncomely members, but the ground of locality constrains us to clothe them with more abundant honor (1 Cor. 12:24) rather than to exclude them or separate ourselves from them. When the uncomely members are thus clothed and blended together, there is no division (v. 25); there is only oneness practically. In order to be blended together with the other members of the Body to express the oneness of the one new man, our notion of comeliness needs to be renewed, because we too often mistakenly view those who do not match our natural tastes or

accede to our ordinances as being uncomely. In fact, however, it is our inability to receive them as they are that is most uncomely. Thus, without the ground of locality, it is easy to justify our rejection of and our division from those whom we perceive to be uncomely. It is easy for the “spiritual” to be sectarian. The ground of locality situates us with those who will be of the most benefit to us in our learning of Christ and in our being taught in Him in order to manifest our creation in Him. To circumvent God’s placement of the members through division is to circumvent the operation of the divine economy in our experience, making it ineffectual through our failure to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace and through our unwillingness to learn the lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearance that is in the divine life of Jesus, the divine life that created the one new man.

The one new man that was universally created in Christ is manifested locally by being taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus (Eph. 4:21). The ground of locality enables the members of the Body to learn Christ in His person with His attributes and virtues in their corporate relationships

with the other members of the Body. The ground of locality focuses the walk of the one new man on matters that are corporate and relational for the purpose of transformation. This enables created and redeemed humanity to be taught in Christ in order to learn Christ as the reality of the attributes and virtues in the person of Jesus, and to express the virtues of His humanity—lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and bearing one another in love (v. 2)—in a relational living in the one new man. When the ground of locality is honored, the operation of the divine life that created the one new man in Christ will manifest the person of Christ in the one new man, which is also a manifestation of peace and reconciliation rather than division and discord.

Making peace: Through His death on the cross, which abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances and created the one new man in Himself, Christ

made peace (2:15). *Peace* in verse 15 first refers to the peace that was made between Jewish and Gentile believers, which came into existence through the abolition of the dividing ordinances among created humanity. *Peace* also refers to the peace that was made between the Triune God and created and redeemed humanity, which came into existence through the

incorporation of the one new man in Christ. Peace is a characteristic attribute of the Triune God, who is the God of peace (Phil. 4:7; Rom. 16:20), and peace, as it is scripturally considered, speaks of the incorporated oneness of the Triune God. The peace of the one new man is the peace that the Son knows, the peace that comes from the Father in the communicating operation of the Spirit. It is, as the Lord articulates in John 14:27, “My peace.” Consequently, peace is a much higher spiritual reality than the common human understanding of it as comity through agreement.⁹ F. C. Synge comments on the deeper implications of peace, saying,

The peace is profounder than cessation of hostilities between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. It is not so much that Christ has made peace between the two as that He has made the two into one in Him. He is not Peacemaker; rather He is the Unity of which Peace is a characteristic, as Discord is a characteristic of Disunity. (22)

Peace, as the defining characteristic of the one new man,

THE GROUND OF LOCALITY SITUATES US WITH THOSE WHO WILL BE OF THE MOST BENEFIT TO US IN OUR LEARNING OF CHRIST AND IN OUR BEING TAUGHT IN HIM IN ORDER TO MANIFEST OUR CREATION IN HIM.

was made on the cross when the created and redeemed humanity of those who were of Jewish and Gentile origin was reconciled in one Body to God (Eph. 2:16).

Verse 14 says that Christ is our peace. The peace here is not that between us and God, but that between us and other believers. In particular, it is the peace between the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers. Christ, our peace, has made the Jews and the Gentiles one, having broken down the middle wall of partition that separated them. In His flesh He abolished the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances, in order to create the two in Himself into one new man (vv. 14-15). In this way He made peace between the Gentiles and the Jews. (Lee, *Life-study* 587-588)

In the peace that was made, both Jewish and Gentile believers were reconciled in one Body to God.

This one Body, the church (1:23), is the one new man mentioned in the previous verse. It was in this one Body that both the Jews and the Gentiles were reconciled to God through the cross. We, the believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, were reconciled not only *for* the Body of Christ but also *in* the Body of Christ. What a revelation here! We were reconciled to God; we were saved in the Body of Christ. (Lee, *Recovery Version*, 2:16, note 2)

One Body in verse 16 refers to the positive aspect of the creation of the one new man, the incorporation of the divine life as the reality in Jesus into created and redeemed humanity. This incorporation was made possible through Christ's death on the cross, which released the divine life that was pressed and constrained within the shell of His humanity like the life within the shell of a grain of wheat (Luke 12:50; John 12:24).

The Lord was constrained in His flesh, which He put upon Himself in His incarnation. He needed to undergo physical death...that His unlimited and infinite divine being with His divine life might be released from His flesh. (Lee, *Recovery Version*, Luke 12:50, note 2)

Through His physical death on the cross, Christ created the one new man in Himself, making the oneness of His peace the defining characteristic of the new creation of redeemed humanity.

The one new man, who was created on the cross and reconciled in one Body, is practically expressed in a walk that keeps the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. The uniting bond of peace is the peace that was created on the cross and the peace that is maintained by the practical working of the cross in the daily walk of the one new man.

The uniting bond of peace is actually the working of the cross. By our experience we know that whenever we go to the cross, there are no differences between us and others. However, as soon as we come down from the cross, differences appear. This is true not only in the church life but also in our family life. Often the love between a husband and wife is buried beneath the differences that emerge when they come down from the cross. The only way to get rid of the differences is to go to the cross. When we go to the cross and remain there, the differences disappear, and we have peace. As we remain on the cross, this peace becomes the uniting bond in which we keep the oneness of the Spirit. Therefore, in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit we need both transformation and the cross. (Lee, *Life-study* 311)

The ground of locality preserves the possibility of the working of the cross; it does not ensure the working of the cross, because the working of the cross requires a willingness to put off the old man and to put on the new man. This willingness can be encouraged through exhorting words of grace (Eph. 4:29), such as Paul's word in verses 1 and 17 to the Ephesians concerning their high calling, through truthful reminders of genuine experiences of Christ, such as Paul's word in verse 21 to the Ephesians concerning their having been taught in Christ, and through frank speaking concerning the damage done to the Body by remaining in one's former manner of living, such as Paul's word to the Ephesians in verses 25 through 32. The working of the cross involves a choice, a willful taking up, and in the context of the peace of the one new man, a willful putting on. Thus, if a believer's first choice is one of division based on stated or unstated ordinances, how can the cross establish the condition of peace that characterizes the one new man? It is the divinely ordained and scripturally specified ground of locality that preserves the possibility of manifesting the peace that genuinely characterizes the reality of the one new man. When we realize and acknowledge that the practical expression of the one new man in the local church is a realm in which the divine life flourishes and grows through the operation of the cross, how can we depart into division when hard words are spoken and difficult situations occur, knowing that the words of eternal life are with Christ in His enlarged person as the one new man (John 6:60, 68)?

The Practical Expression of the Church Manifesting the Highest Revelation of the Church: the One New Man

The highest revelation of the church in Ephesians is the revelation of the one new man. This revelation, however, entails more than just teachings about the one new man; it unveils and conveys the intrinsic reality of the one new man. Thus, as a spiritual reality with spiritual content, the

one new man will have an expression. There is an eternal component to this expression, both in eternity future and in time now because the spiritual reality and content of this revelation is sourced in the divine life of the Triune God, which ever exists even in time. And just as there will be an expression of the revelation of the one new man in eternity that subsumes and manifests all the other aspects of the church as revealed in Ephesians, including the church as the Body, the household of God, the dwelling place of God, the kingdom of God, the bride, and the warrior, there is a practical expression of the revelation of the one new man that subsumes and manifests these same aspects in time now.

The proof of and form for the practical expression of the one new man is the local church, which manifests the intrinsic details associated with the creation of the one new man. The one new man was created in Christ through His death on the cross, which abolished the dividing ordinances among created humanity, released the divine life within Him as a new element into redeemed humanity, and incorporated created and redeemed humanity into the oneness of the God of peace as the peace of God. The one new man is expressed locally through its receiving of believers according to God, who neither recognizes nor imposes dividing ordinances on the members of His Body through the members of His Body. The one new man also is expressed locally through the operation of the divine life in the measure of each one part of the Body that lives and relationally walks with the other members of the Body in a particular locality. The one new man is expressed locally in a condition characterized not by oneness through outward conformity but by oneness in life and nature. The hope of our calling, which involves the eternal expression of the enlargement of the person of Christ in the one new man, requires a present, practical walk that is worthy of this calling, and thus there must be a practical expression of the enlargement of the person of Christ. This practical expression is the church, locally expressing the reality of the one new man by receiving all believers without regard to doctrines and practices that divide, by valuing the ministry of life through each one part of the Body, and by exhibiting the oneness of the Triune God through their peaceful oneness with one another in Christ. [AFC](#)

Notes

¹The reality of the content of the divine economy is conveyed and received through the revelation of the content of the divine economy. With revelation there is both a seeing with the eyes of our heart and a receiving in our spirit (Eph. 1:17-18). True revelation is not a matter of the acquisition of knowledge about spiritual things, because it is possible for us, as believers, to be always learning but never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. 3:7); nevertheless, revelation is conveyed

through words that are spirit and life (John 6:63), but these words and the content of these words come from God and are made known by God (Eph. 1:9). The Father must grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, and He must enlighten the eyes of our heart. When He does, He makes known the mystery of His will, and when the economy of this mystery is subsequently made known through a stewardship of grace, the riches of His grace begin to abound.

Revelation, therefore, involves both seeing the revelation of the reality with the eyes of our heart and receiving the reality of the revelation in our spirit. God grants the seeing of revelation according to His good pleasure, and the revelation that comes from God imparts the God of revelation. Elsewhere, I have written,

A revelation of the economy of God cannot be separated from a revelation of the Triune God because a revelation of the Triune God reveals and imparts the Triune God Himself and, thus, the economy that is in the Triune God. This is the understanding of revelation that informed Paul's writing concerning the role of revelation in the fulfillment of God's economy in Ephesians...

Revelation is the key to the fulfillment of the economy in God. This fulfillment will not come about by knowledge or organization; it will come about by the Father of glory giving us a spirit of wisdom and revelation, by the Spirit imparting revelation into our regenerated human spirit, by the riches of the Son being the content of the imparted revelation, by an enlightening ministry and a stewardship of grace that dispenses the content of the revelation, and by Christ being revealed as the Head over all things to the church. (31, 37)

In this current article, my references to the church as the one new man, the Body, the household of God, the dwelling place of God, the kingdom of God, the bride, and the warrior speak of both the revelation of the reality associated with these terms and of the reality of the revelation that is imparted in our spirit through the enlightenment of our heart. When these terms are utilized in reference to the revelation of the content of the reality, they are formatted as italicized terms because as terms, they are the "containers" of the content of the divine revelation. When these terms primarily reference the reality contained in the revelation, they are not italicized.

²The view of the church as a religious organization is so prevalent in human culture that this same view is equally ubiquitous in the minds of both unbelievers and believers. Because it is so deeply rooted in the vanity of the unrenewed mind, it is hard to conceive of the church as being something higher when we see the word *church* with our eyes or hear it with our ears. The concept of the church that comes up in our heart, regrettably, is one that associates this word more with a physical building than with the dispensing of the divine life in the divine economy. At its best the church, consequently, becomes only a means for the social, cultural, and moralistic improvement of the old creation; it is not something that we are in the new creation.

And since it is not something experientially new to us, because it does not come out of the God who makes all things new, it is not something of Christ. In the vain expression of this fallen concept, therefore, there is truly nothing of Christ.

³Most translations, including the King James Version, the American Standard Version, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, and Darby's New Translation, capitalize the word *spirit* in Ephesians 2:22, interpreting it as a reference to the Holy Spirit. Based on the revelation that man is a tripartite being (1 Thes. 5:23), created with a human spirit to be a vessel for God the Spirit (John 3:6; Rom. 9:23), the Recovery Version does not capitalize the word, interpreting it instead as a reference to the regenerated human spirit that is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. A footnote on Ephesians 2:22 points out that the *word* spirit is a reference to the believers' human spirit,

which is indwelt by God's Holy Spirit. God's Spirit is the Dweller, not the dwelling place. The dwelling place is the believers' spirit. God's Spirit dwells in our spirit. Therefore, the dwelling place of God is in our spirit. Verse 21 says that the holy temple is in the Lord, and this verse, that the dwelling place of God is in spirit. This indicates that for the building of God's dwelling place, the Lord is one with our spirit, and our spirit is one with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). Our spirit is where the building of the church, the dwelling place of God, takes place. (Lee, Recovery Version, note 3)

The fallen concept of the church as an organization is the source of considerable religious opposition to the biblical revelation that there was but one practical expression of the church in one city (Acts 8:1; 13:1; 20:17; Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Col. 4:16; 1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1; Rev. 1:11). When scriptural references, such as the ones above, are presented, showing that the expression of the oneness of the church was locally manifested and maintained according to the boundary of one city, the response is often that such an expression is organizationally impossible; i.e., "How can all the believers in Los Angeles meet in one place?" This response does not reveal a deficiency in the divine revelation, but rather the deficiency inherent in an unrenewed mind that is incapable of putting off the divisive organizational elements of the old man that were crucified on the cross.

The size of the church or the size of the city is an irrelevant consideration when it comes to meeting as the church according to the scriptural revelation. In cities with a small number of believers, no matter the size of the city, the believers met in oneness in homes. The church in Rome met in the house of Prisca and Aquila (Rom. 16:5), and when Prisca and Aquila were in Ephesus, the church again met in their home (1 Cor. 16:19). The church in Laodicea met in the house of Nymphas (Col. 4:15). The church in Colossae met in the house of Philemon (Philem. 2). In cities with a larger number of believers, no matter the size of the city, they met in public places and in homes. The church in Jerusalem met in the temple and from house to house (Acts 5:42). The fact that they did not always meet together in one place is also indicated in Paul's word to the Corinthians: "If therefore the whole church comes together in

one place" (1 Cor. 14:23). The word *if* implies that the coming together in one place of all the believers in one locality was not an organizational mandate. The only relevant consideration for a local church is to consider and to endeavor to keep the oneness of the Spirit through the manifestation, maintenance, and expression of the reality of the oneness of the Body of Christ as the one new man. Anything less than this minifies the accomplishments of the Triune God in His divine economy.

⁴Hebrews 10:20 speaks of a new and living way into the Holy of Holies that has been initiated for us through the veil of Jesus' flesh, that is, through His death on the cross. Our entrance into Christ is new and living because it involves the incorporation of the divine life, a new and ever living element, into created and redeemed humanity.

⁵In most commentaries, the bulk of the discussion on verse 15 is devoted to the meaning of the word *law*. Ernest Best in *Essays on Ephesians* acknowledges this, saying,

There is in fact very little about the law in Ephesians; it is mentioned only in 2.15 where it is said to be abrogated. Commentators differ here as to whether 'the law of commandments and ordinances' means the many commandments of the ceremonial law or is intended to refer to the whole law. (101)

This is not a meaningless discussion, but the fact that the bulk of the commentary related to the content in verse 15 is expended on this point shows that there is a limited understanding of the need for the removal of dividing-and-enmity-creating ordinances for the creation of the one new man. Furthermore, when the bulk of the commentary is devoted to discerning the proper scope of the word *law*, there is often little discussion of what Christ created on the cross—the one new man. In fact, there is a great paucity in the commentaries regarding the one new man. What is contained is often brief and perfunctory. Robert Govett, for example, simply states, "The Church is a 'new creation,' the formation of a 'new man,' in which the old distinctions of the flesh under law are done away" (94), and Lewis Sperry Chafer simply states, "The removal of both the enmity and the partition between Jew and Gentile is divinely accomplished through the creation of 'one new man,' not by renewing individual men, but by forming one new Body—the Church—of which Christ is the Head" (88). When there is little consideration concerning the abolition of ordinances in the creation of the one new man, there often is no discussion of the role that ordinances continue to pose to the practical expression of the church as the one new man in this age.

The phrase *the law of the commandments* is modified by the phrase *in ordinances*, and this clear grammatical construct should obviate the need for an extensive discussion of whether *law* is a reference to the whole law or to the many commandments of the ceremonial law, the ritual ordinances of the Jewish religion. Witness Lee notes, "The law spoken of in 2:15 is not the law of the moral commandments, but the law of the ritual commandments, such as the ordinances of circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and eating certain foods" (*Life-study* 202). It is

clear from Paul's word concerning the one new man in chapter 4 that the one new man was created according to God in the righteousness and holiness of His reality, whose righteousness is testified in the moral commandments of the law (v. 24). It should also be clear from Paul's exhortations in chapter 4 concerning the walk of the one new man that the moral commandments have not been abrogated, because the one new man displays a walk that upholds the righteous requirement of the moral law (vv. 25-32; Rom. 8:4)

In His human living Christ fulfilled the moral commandments of the law (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 10:4), but in His human living Christ often ignored the Jewish religionists' divisive insistence on the observance of ritual ordinances (Matt. 12:1-14). As the Lord of the Sabbath, who created the Sabbath for rest, He was above the rules and regulations that were imposed by the Jewish religionists for the observance of the Sabbath, especially when this imposition created enmity and division rather than peace and oneness. Christ's abolishing of the law of the commandments in ordinances on the cross was but a continuation of His abolition of them in His person and work prior to His crucifixion.

⁶From this point forward, the majority of the cited portions in this article come from *Life-study of Ephesians* by Witness Lee because his comments related to the creation, renewing, and expression of the one new man are by far the most extensive and detailed among Christian commentaries. While most commentaries pay scant attention to the one new man, fourteen of the ninety-seven chapters in *Life-study of Ephesians* are devoted to various aspects of the one new man. This alone should be enough to recommend this volume to believers who are willing to look into the truth of the one new man to see what is so (Acts 17:11).

⁷It is possible for any scriptural practice related to Christian meetings to become an ordinance that is intentionally or even unintentionally imposed on others and that, in turn, becomes a source of division. This includes practices related to spiritual matters, such as baptism and the Lord's table, and practices related to lesser matters, such as ways of worship and praise. There are many ways to worship and praise, for example, but the establishment of and reliance upon a "worship leader" or "praise leader" is an indication of the presence of ordinances related to how the believers should worship and praise the Lord. Thus, the leader and the ways in which the believers are being led become the focus and de facto "head" of the meeting, when the Spirit should have all the ground. When there is a "head" other than Christ in our meetings, believers who cannot worship in a proscribed way, for whatever reason, are effectively cut off. Even among the churches meeting according to the ground of oneness, it is possible to establish subtle ordinances, Witness Lee states,

If we do not deal with our ordinances, we shall eventually be divided by our opinions or practices. Christ should be our only source. We should not allow anything of our background or culture to be our source. Otherwise, we shall bring in different ordinances according to our various backgrounds and cultures. Christ, not our ordinances, is the source of the church life.

If we did not love the Lord, division would not present such a serious problem, for we would probably all be distracted by worldly endeavors. But because we love the Lord, we also love the Bible and care for the truth of the Bible. As a result, disputes may arise concerning doctrine. Such disputes may lead further to division. In that case, we would repeat the history of divisive Christianity.

In the meetings we may practice pray-reading and calling on the name of the Lord, but we should not allow either of these practices to become ordinances. Perhaps in the years to come the Lord will give us something new related to the release of the spirit. Regarding our faith in Christ and our belief in the Bible, we cannot change. But as far as the way to meet, we should always be open to receive something new and better from the Lord. In this way we shall practice the church life without ordinances. (*Life-study* 717, 726)

Even the scriptural teaching related to the ground of locality can become an ordinance if one's willingness to receive other Christians in his locality is predicated upon their acceptance of the truth of "one church, one city." Such an insistence makes this truth a de facto ordinance. A Christian who does not see or accept the scriptural basis for meeting as one church in one city is not any less of a Christian, because he has been received by God. Conversely, a Christian's standing in oneness is not diminished in the eyes of God if he suffers rejection for articulating but not insisting upon the scriptural charge to meet with all those whom God has received. Christ, similarly, did not lose His standing as the Son when He was rejected for asserting the truth of His sonship (John 5:17-19); He stood before God in all things, and He was declared to be well-pleasing and beloved (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). Every Christian will be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ and "receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced" (2 Cor. 5:10), not what others have practiced. The practice of receiving all believers in practicality will be rewarded, but the practice of division, based upon an insistence for conformity to a set of "commandments in ordinances," will not be a source for joy at the judgment seat of Christ.

⁸A proper local church meeting on the ground of locality—one church, one city—manifests not only the one new man but all the other aspects of the church revealed in Ephesians. This can be seen in the scriptural record pertaining to the local church in Ephesus that, at least at one time, met in the home of Prisca and Aquila (Rev. 1:11; 2:1; 1 Cor. 16:19). The Epistle to the Ephesians was written to the local church in Ephesus, which manifested the person of the one new man, Christ Jesus. Thus, Paul begins by addressing "the saints who are in Ephesus," who "are faithful in Christ Jesus" (1:1). The local church in Ephesus, consisting of the saints "in Ephesus," practically expressed the one new man by being "in Christ Jesus." The local church in Ephesus also manifested the living of the one new man by receiving the believers who lived and arrived in Ephesus (Acts 18:24), by holding to truth in love, by teaching in all

mekness and lowliness, and by bearing one another in love (v. 26; Eph. 4:15, 2).

As the local expression of the one new man, the local church in Ephesus also manifested all the functional aspects of the church subsumed in the revelation of the one new man. As the Body, the church in Ephesus participated in the fellowship of the Body by receiving the fellowship of the Body (2 Tim. 4:12); as the household of God, the brothers in Ephesus were a familial source of encouragement to Paul (Eph. 6:23; Acts 18:27); as the dwelling place of God, the church in Ephesus had the testimony that God dwelt in them also (Eph. 2:22); as the kingdom of God, the church in Ephesus manifested the Spirit's authoritative placement of elders as overseers of the flock in Ephesus (Acts 20:28); as the bride, the local church in Ephesus exhibited the love that sustained its standing as a genuine local church and then demonstrated the ramifications of the loss of this love (Rev. 2:4-5), the removal of its lampstand; and as the warrior, the local church in Ephesus fought for God's interests against "wild beasts" in Ephesus (1 Cor. 15:32) and those who taught differently (1 Tim. 1:3), and they also fought for God's interests through prayer and petitions on behalf of the saints and the ministry (Eph. 6:18-19).

⁹The peace of the one new man is Christ; it is He Himself who is our peace. Without a view of the one new man as the manifestation of the God of peace in created and redeemed humanity, it is easy to consider the matter of peace only through a purely human perspective. While Ephesians indicates that peace is a person, the understanding of peace in human society often involves only the thought of the cessation of hostility and strife brought about by conditions of social and economic deprivation. When such a view is allowed to color the consideration of the one new man, it is easy to deviate into material considerations related to the state of human existence in the old creation and even to decry the lack of such an enlightened and caring deviation among believers. Markus Barth illustrates this tendency in his articulation of moral ire over the failure of Christians to be involved in social actions.

When this peace is deprived of its social, national, or economic dimensions, when it is distorted or emasculated so much that only "peace of mind" enjoyed by saintly individuals is left—then Jesus Christ is being flatly denied. To propose in the name of Christianity, neutrality or unconcern on questions of international, racial, or economic peace—this amounts to using Christ's name in vain. On the other hand, if true evangelism is carried out, it not only will involve *some* social action, but will be from the beginning to end even that social, reconciling, uniting action with which Christ is identified when he is called "our peace." (45)

Barth's well-meaning passion is misplaced. Christ's peace is not identified with a series of social actions that reconcile and unite people outwardly but with the one spiritual act that destroyed the basis for any division by terminating every source of division and by incorporating created and redeemed humanity into the one person of His being.

Furthermore, without a view of the one new man as the manifestation of the God of peace in created and redeemed humanity, it is also easy to consider the matter of peace from an overly spiritualized perspective. For example, R. C. Sproul comments on the word *peace* in verse 15, saying, "Those who embrace Jesus Christ, whether they be Jew or Greek, slave or free, are now reconciled into one family, into one body, by their common devotion to Christ. He is our peace and our Redeemer" (63). This statement relegates the peace of the one new man to actions of the constituents of the one new man—the common devotion of believing Jews and believing Gentiles to Christ—rather than to the Creator of the one new man, Christ. It was the application of the terminating death of Christ to the ordinances of the old creation and the release of the divine life in Himself that created peace, not a common devotion to Him. To assert that our peace is related to a common devotion to Christ is to assert by implication that a lack of devotion to Christ is the source of the division that is apparent among Christians today. All genuine Christians love the Lord and are devoted to Him in varying degrees, but they are still divided, and there is little genuine testimony of the peace that was brought in through the cross. Our peace is Christ because the effectiveness of His cross has been compounded into His divine life. We can touch the reality of peace only when we are in the crucified Christ.

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