

SPIRITUAL UNITY: GOD'S PLAN—PLANK ONE, ONE BODY

We have previously observed that God's concept of unity is not a uniting of diverse religious doctrines and organizations, but of oneness of fellowship among God's people even as the Father is one in the Son, and the Son is one in the Father (John 17:20-21).

We have also acknowledged that such unity is not humanly possible and must therefore depend on an attitude and a willingness by all who would serve God that is willing to put complete trust in a plan devised by God (Ephesians 4:1-3).

And, yes, God has such a plan. It rests on a platform consisting of seven planks. Paul wrote, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

The first plank in God's plan for unity, as stipulated in Paul's letter quoted above, is **ONE BODY**.

A viable body existing without a head is inconceivable—a truism beyond dispute. But it poses a vital question: if God's plan for unity provides for one body, then who is its head?

The Bible's answer to this question is clear and concise. Again, to the Christians in ancient Ephesus, Paul wrote, "And He (God) put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Notice that this passage introduces another factor for us to consider: this one body of which Christ is the head is his church. This also tells us that, contrary to current thinking, Christ is not the head of hundreds of bodies differing in everything from name to doctrine to work (mission). Such a contradictory hodgepodge is the exact opposite of the oneness the Father requires and for which the Son so fervently prayed.

Contrary to the mess humans have created in spiritual matters is God's will for **UNITY OF RELATIONSHIP**: the one body of his Son, the Christ, in which all who would be saved are reconciled to him and who, in Christ, are thus reconciled to one another (Ephesians 2:14-16). This is Plank One in God's plan to achieve the unity, the oneness, of Jesus' prayer. As surely as it is God's plan, it will work—if we are humble enough to accept and implement it.

—Jerry F. Bassett