

**Re/Membering, by Daniel H. Kuhn, Jr. 17060903**  
**1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 12:12-26**  
**Elon Community Church, United Church of Christ, 3 September, 2006**

The word “remember” and its variants appear two hundred eighty-four times in the Bible. In Genesis 9:15 God said that whenever a rainbow is seen, God would remember the covenant that never again would a flood destroy all flesh. In Genesis 31, nephew Jacob and uncle Laban heaped stones into a monument they named “Mizpah.” They would remember that God was a witness over them in their mistrust of each other. In Exodus 13, Moses initiated the Feast of Unleavened Bread so the Israelites would remember how God brought them out of slavery in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> In 1 Samuel, Hannah prayed that God would remember her and give her a male child whom she would then set apart before God as a Nazirite.<sup>2</sup> The psalmist prays that God would *not* remember the sins of his youth, but instead, would remember him according to God’s steadfast love.<sup>3</sup> In Psalm 78, God remembered that the people were only flesh, and so God restrained God’s anger and forgave them. The Hebrew captives remembered the good old days as they sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept.<sup>4</sup> From the cross, the criminal pleaded, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”<sup>5</sup>

The opposite of remember is not always to forget. The opposite of remember is also to “dismember.” We have done much dismembering. We have dismembered world trust by disrespecting United Nations principles. We have dismembered families by not listening to each others’ points of view. We have dismembered churches by using Bibles as bludgeons.

The church is the body of Christ. Jesus prayed this prayer in John: “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,<sup>6</sup> so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”<sup>7</sup>

We have done a good job of dis-membering the body of Christ. A thousand years ago, in 1054, Roman Catholics attacked Orthodox Christians in Constantinople on their crusading way to Jerusalem. Remember that the word crusade comes from the Latin word for cross! Are we ever justified in killing in the name of Jesus Christ? In 1517 Martin Luther and the Roman Catholic Church went their separate ways. In 1803, Barton W. Stone and four other ministers formed the Springfield Presbytery and left the larger body of the Presbyterian Church. In 1906, the Churches of Christ non instrumental were formally listed as distinct from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

In 1794, James O’Kelly and sixty other Methodist Ministers parted company with Bishop Francis Asbury and formed the Republican Methodist Church, a year later to become the Christian Church. They founded many churches around here, including this one. The Christian Church is one of the roots of the United Church of Christ, and our denomination has had large

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<sup>1</sup>Exodus 13:3

<sup>2</sup>1 Samuel 1:11

<sup>3</sup>Psalm 25:7

<sup>4</sup>Psalm 137

<sup>5</sup>Luke 23:42

<sup>6</sup>John 17:21 Other ancient authorities read *be one in us*

<sup>7</sup>John 17:20-21

numbers of churches pull away since the General Synod stated its support of marriage equality. Those churches have said, “I do not belong to that body.”

In 1 Cor. 12 Paul described the church as the body of Christ. The body of Christ is made up of many diverse parts, just as the human body is. “If the foot would say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body.”<sup>8</sup> The body of Christ is made richer and fuller through the diversity of its members.

Can you imagine a human body made up entirely of an eyeball? I love Paul’s hyperbolic humor here. How would the eyeball get around? It would have to roll around. That would give a whole new meaning to the phrase, “He rolled his eyes.” To what would the eyeball transmit its information? What would the eyeball do if it rolled near an extremely good looking women – or man? The eyeball needs to relate to a brain and it needs feet to get it around. It needs heart-pumped blood to nourish it.

As members of the body of Christ, we cannot say to another, “I have no need of you.” Cerebral Christians need charismatic Christians. Biblical literalists need hermeneutical Christians. Pietists need activists. We just need to respect each other as members of the body of Christ. We must recognize the validity of each other’s approach to the Christian faith.

How do we do that? How do we recognize the validity of each others’ approach to the Christian faith? We do that only by keeping Jesus Christ at the center of our relationships. We remember that the Biblical literalist’s faith is built on Jesus Christ. We remember that the liberal and compassionate Christian’s faith is built on Jesus Christ. We remember that Democrats can base their faith on Jesus Christ as well as Republicans.

We gather around the table of our Lord and remember. We remember that we gather here as family members, and Jesus is at our center. We remember that we gather as long-time friends. We remember that we gather in that great cloud of witnesses, including those who have gone from our presence.

Sue and I remember our ministry and friends at former churches. We remember Gladys Treggea and Rev. Al Herman. We remember people who have been part of this church in the past. We remember Della Scott and Lois Luke. We remember Martin Shotzberger and Roberta Starr.

As we remember, we *Re/member*. We do a simple act in sharing communion. As we break bread and drink wine, we remember Jesus. We remember his teachings: “Love your enemies.” We remember his ministry of healing: the man called Legion. We remember his indignation at seeing injustice: the rich man and Lazarus. We remember his death on a cross.

By sharing the body and blood of Jesus Christ, We become one. We re-member the body of Christ. We re-member a divided church and show to the world that God sent Jesus to heal the divisions in the world and in our hearts. We remember the words of Jesus who said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>1 Corinthians 12:15

<sup>9</sup>Matt. 28:20