

## **Christian Unity Ministries:**

...exists to assist and equip Christian organizations to experience Biblical unity.

...accomplishes its mission through training events, conflict intervention, and publications to churches and Christian organizations across all evangelical denominational lines, with the objective of moving brothers and sisters in Christ toward Biblical interpersonal relationships with one another.

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## **Christian Unity Ministries**

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## **Make New Friends, But Keep the Old...**

by Blake Coffee



Our family's experience with Girl Scouts (I have two daughters) was mostly positive. My girls kept many friends and family (and my office) well stocked in cookies for several years! But among the things we learned through those few years, I will always remember this line from their theme song: Make new friends, but keep the old; one is silver and the other is gold. It is not scripture, but I have learned this year that it does reflect one of the ways of God.

2007 has been a wonderful year for our ministry, seeing God doing great things through our relationships with other churches and ministries. While responding to invitations from new friends in Romania and South Africa brought some amazing results, working with long-time friends in Ukraine also yielded unforgettable

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"Do we stay where we are or move forward to new things?"—God's resounding answer is "Yes! Both!"***

experiences. While we had several churches as new partners this year, we continue to find support from long-time partner churches as well. Finally, this year saw the launching of our new material, *Trusting God's People...* Again from VMI Publishers, which has already had some wonderful responses in just the first month of its release. But this year also saw the third edition (in English) of our oldest and most requested material, *Five Principles of Unity*, and will soon see the publication of this same material in both Romania and in South Africa. It is tried and true and is still finding a place in the hearts of God's people all over the world.

There is an important lesson for us in the way this year has unfolded. God has revealed Himself to us most excitingly through the new friends and projects but continues to reveal Himself powerfully through our long-time friends and projects as well. Even as we plan for the year ahead and ask the question every organization asks—"Do we stay where we are or move forward to new things?"—God's resounding answer is "Yes! Both!"

Is God opening exciting new doors for new relationships and new directions for our ministry? Yes! Will God still use the people and materials from this ministry which He has used in the past? Absolutely! And so, as we spread further and further to cover the territory God has given us, we have never needed your prayers and support more than we do now! Thank you for remembering us!

## Reclaiming Your Lost Sheep

by Blake Coffee

If there are any people at all in your church, then feelings have been hurt and wounds have occurred. That is just the way human relationships work. Moreover, if your church is not perfect (I am still looking for the one that is) then some—perhaps many—of those wounds have never been healed, leaving perfectly good church members feeling estranged and betrayed by people they thought were their friends. Finally, if your church has somehow managed to avoid any of these kinds of problems, then your pews are likely filled with people who have run from other (less perfect) churches where they were wounded, and they still carry those wounds.

Under either scenario, whether you are dealing with people hurt by your own church or those now in your church but hurt by other churches, you have a responsibility to them. You must find a way to lead them through a healing journey in order to make them productive ministers again, fulfilling their assignments from God. We as the Body of Christ seem to be struggling trying to figure out how to accomplish this task. Nevertheless, as difficult as it may seem to us, reclaiming the sheep who have wandered off is exactly the vision Jesus had for His church as described in Matthew 18.

If you have never been exposed to the writing of Dave Burchett, I strongly recommend it to you. His book *When Bad Christians Happen to Good People* rightly chronicles the pain we as Christians often cause to our very own. But his next book, *Bring 'Em Back Alive* is a clarion call to those of us still in the church to fulfill our responsibility of reclaiming our lost sheep. Here are Dave's words:

*I would love to see churches establish*

*regular classes and/or healing seminars for those wounded by the church. I think that many injured lambs feel alone, and having a forum where they can express their hurt and share their concerns with others would be therapeutic...Getting wounded lambs to tell their stories sooner rather than later will make it easier to address the real reason for the pain, which will greatly increase the lambs' chances of healing and returning to the flock.*

If this rings true to you and if you believe there is a need for a ministry in

*It was a little more than three years ago when First Baptist Church, San Antonio began offering Tuesday night support groups for people wounded by the church. The groups run twice a year and follow a 13-week format using **Trusting God's People...Again** as the curriculum. The results have been amazing.*

your own church for helping wandering sheep return to the flock, then don't stop reading yet! Learn from the testimony of a church who has already begun the process. It was a little more than three years ago when First Baptist Church, San Antonio began offering Tuesday night support groups for people wounded by the church. The groups run twice a year and follow a 13-week format using *Trusting God's People... Again* as the curriculum. The results have been amazing.

Here are some comments from one participant: *I have been absent from my ministry and from the church for 30 plus*

*years. This really helped me. It was as if I was reading about my own life. Each class began with prayer and ended with prayer. It was truly a Spirit-filled time. The Lord worked magnificently through this class and helped each of us who attended. I would highly recommend it to anyone who has been hurt by church folks.*

And this from another participant: *This group gave me a place to open up with my pain and struggles. The group members have a special place in my heart as they walked through endless details with me. I sensed a sol-idness grow in me as the broken places took on new meaning for moving on to reengage in the journey God has for me. I know God gave me this group as a special gift from Him.*

Finally, can you imagine how much it helps a pastor to have a ministry like this in your church? Here are the comments from Don Guthrie, pastor of FBC, San Antonio: *The ideas that fill this book have been taught in our congregation with powerful, positive results. As a pastor, I've seen the benefits for people who encounter the wisdom of God through this ministry. I think you will, too.*

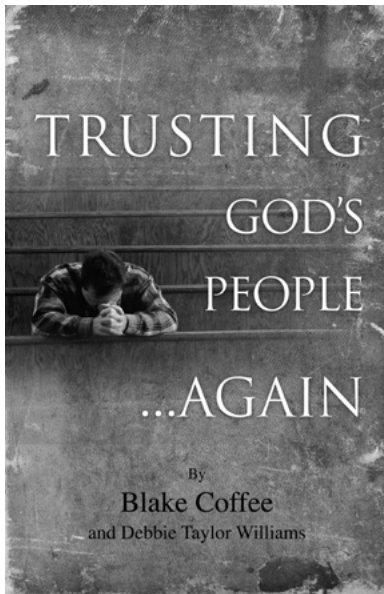
When you pray about this kind of ministry in your own church, I believe you are praying the very heart of God. I believe you will be surprised at how quickly He responds and how straight He makes your path for putting it in place. I also hope you will feel free to contact me if there is anything at all I can do to help you put it together in your church.

Reclaiming our lost sheep may be a critical next step for us, an important new skill as we work toward becoming the church Jesus envisioned.

*Now Available Through*  
[www.christianunityministries.com](http://www.christianunityministries.com)

## **JUST RELEASED!**

A new book by  
Blake Coffee and Debbie Taylor Williams



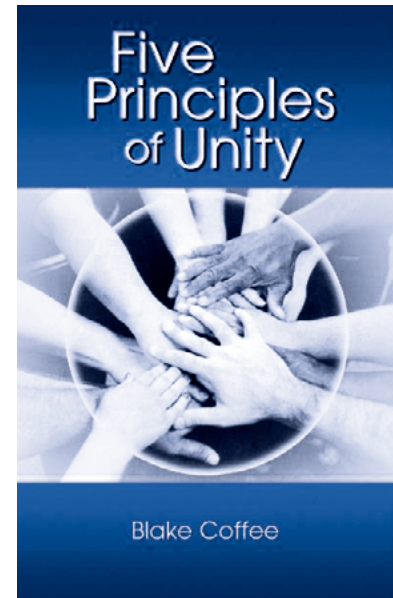
*“Our longing for community is a hot topic. Programs, ideas, and resources have flooded the Christian marketplace. One thing is glaringly missing: an honest discussion of how Christians hurt each other and what to do about it. This book fills the gap. It’s biblical wisdom and painful realism point the way to knowing God better and reflecting Him more clearly in the way we relate when we’ve been wounded. Vital reading!”*

Dr. Larry Crabb  
Best-selling author of *Shattered Dreams*

*“For 11 years it has been my privilege to admire Blake Coffee, to observe first-hand his God-given abilities to help people in conflict and after conflict. The ideas that fill this book have been taught in our congregation with powerful, positive results. Debbie Williams’ true-to-life story adds a new and compelling impact. As a pastor, I’ve seen the benefits for people who encounter the wisdom of God through this excellent book. I think you will, too.”*

Don Guthrie  
Pastor, First Baptist Church, San Antonio

**Makes great Sunday School or Small  
Group Bible study curriculum!**



### What readers have said:

*“It has changed my life. It will change the life of the Body of Believers where you worship!”*

*“When I first read *Five Principles of Unity*, all I could think was ‘This is NOT what I’ve been taught growing up in the church my whole life!’ That is why I think this ministry is so important. If those of us who grew up in the church don’t understand these Biblical principles, what about the seekers who have never darkened the doors of the church?”*

*“This study has been an important blessing to my life. I have had many occasions to use the *Principles of Unity* in talking to individuals-in both their personal situations and in their church difficulties.”*



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## *How Your Church Can Partner With Christian Unity Ministries*

God is at work, restoring health and unity to His church. Christian Unity Ministries has joined that work, bringing His message of Biblical interpersonal relationships and Christian community to local congregations. We do this through a multi-piece training program aimed at various aspects of church life.

God has begun to call churches to partner with us in this effort—churches who not only are intentional about their own health, but who also feel a responsibility for contributing to the health of other local congregations.

Would you pray, and seek to know whether YOUR church is called to be a partnering church with Christian Unity Ministries?

For more information, contact us at:

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P.O. Box 701685  
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## **BECOMING A PARTNERING CHURCH WITH CHRISTIAN UNITY MINISTRIES**

*Our **Partnering churches** are intentional about preserving the unity of the Spirit in their own congregation and receive all of our training at significantly reduced costs. They partner with us in each of the following ways:*

- *Regular monthly financial support in any amount;*
- *Being proactive about sharing testimony with other churches' leadership about this ministry;*
- *Sending their pastor or other designated representative to the Unity Ministries Annual Conference in San Antonio.*

*Join us in equipping God's people for unity. **Be a part of what God is doing!***