



## "Five Principles of Unity" Now in the Ukraine

by  
Bake Coffee

It was about this time last year when one of our Advisory Board members, Warren Clark, was preparing for his first trip to the Ukraine. He would be joining friends from Open Door Missions ([www.opendoormissions.org](http://www.opendoormissions.org)) on a mission trip to Kiev and to Luhans'k, where he would have the opportunity to teach the Five Principles of Unity to churches. He was a frequent facilitator of this material, and felt prepared for the lessons he would teach. But he was not at all prepared for what he was to experience!

He encountered Christians who were starving for God's Word. He barely was able to get through the first scripture passage when the probing questions began. Midway through the first night's lesson, people began getting up and leaving *in order to immediately obey what they understood God to be saying to them through the scripture*. Warren shares testimony of actually seeing the countenance on their faces change as they at once understood the truth of the scripture and their necessary next step. Warren had a front-row seat to watch the Spirit of the living God work in the hearts and the lives of those people. We have come to understand that these results were not at all about our ministry or our material—God could have done this through anyone. God did not call Warren there for the people of the Ukraine. He called Warren there for Warren's benefit (and for the benefit of Christian Unity Ministries). Isn't that just like God? What a privilege!

As Warren arrived at the train station to return home, he was met by a group of local pastors, telling him he simply could not leave because their churches all needed to hear this Biblical message of unity. He was heart-broken, but pledged to return. And now he is—this time with four additional members of Christian Unity Ministries and seven members of Open Door Missions. God is giving us yet another opportunity to teach in more churches in both Kiev and Luhans'k, and to watch what His Spirit can do through His Word. We leave October 18 and will return (God willing) on October 30. We will take with us copies of "Five Principles of Unity" translated into their language. Will you pray that we will find soft hearts in these churches and that God's Word will change people and the communities in which they live? Your prayers matter!

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### 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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## Drifting Away

by  
Marcus Norris

### NOTICE

***“Special business meeting next week for the purpose of destroying long time friendships, splitting our church in anger, and disillusioning our youth. Please prepare for this meeting by spending each day this week presuming the worst about people seated across from you, gossiping about the staff, and recommitting to your personal agenda for our church while criticizing others’ ideas. At the meeting, feel free to say what you really think and in harsh words, to really make your point clear. Anonymous phone calls to the newspaper should assure community-wide attention for this event”.***

I’ll bet that you have never seen a Notice like that in any church newsletter! Even the most strife-filled congregation does not consciously choose a date for self-destruction by intentionally practicing the behavior described in that Notice. Yet, every conflicted congregation shares at least some of the pathological traits in that Notice. If self-destruction is not intentional or planned, then how does any church ever come to such a moment? And if we figure that out, doesn’t it happen too quickly for anyone to stop it? I would suggest that the answer to both of those questions is stated in Hebrews 2:1 (NIV):

*“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”*

There it is. No congregation self-destructs at once; it is a gradual process....just drifting away from God’s Word. Satan knows better than to launch a frontal attack on a church by penning a Notice like the one above. Instead, he is content to wait for believers to do it to themselves by drifting away from (or even ignoring) Biblical teaching about how we ought to relate to one another. When we stop feasting on God’s Word and allowing it to control us then, in the words of one author, we become “anorexic believers”. That is, churches eventually self-destruct when individual members spiritually starve themselves by drifting from the Word.

If a church is to avoid drifting away and becoming a self-destructing anorexic, then it must have a regular

and systematic approach for studying the Scriptures, especially the teachings about how we relate to one another in a spirit of Unity. There are three reasons why a church must make a deliberate effort in this area.

**First, new believers must be taught.** It is likely that new believers have never heard nor been taught the Biblical doctrine of Unity, so they don’t know how to think and act toward other believers, especially when an issue arises. They must be taught how to trust and implement Biblical models for conflict resolution, rather than the pop psychology of the world with which they initially enter the Body. They must be led to understand that God’s Word has the answer to every question dealing with how we relate to one another in the Body of Christ. They must be helped to appreciate the amazing wisdom of the Bible as it relates to the relationships in our lives. Drift away? These church members may have never been anchored in the first place.

*If a church is to avoid drifting away and self-destructing, then it must have a regular and systematic approach for studying the Scriptures, especially the teachings about how we relate to one another.*

**Second, long term believers must be reminded.** Look carefully at Hebrews 2:1 again. It presumes the reader has already “heard” (learned) Scriptural teaching, yet by neglect has drifted away. It may be that, though he/she has read God’s Word on the subject of relationships, he/she has not yet figured out how to apply it. Sometimes, the application is the most difficult part. Moreover, those who have already been exposed to the Biblical principles of Unity will drift away when they become complacent, forgetful, or even proud about their knowledge of relationships. These members must be re-anchored!

(cont.)

**Third, it is mandated.** Note the emphatic command (**must pay**), and the comparative adjective (**closer**), and the active noun (**attention**). This verse does not merely *suggest* that we *might* take a *casual glance* back at God's Word, *if we have time*. It is demanded that as bona fide disciples we must carefully consider what we have learned so that we avoid a dire fate: **drifting away**.

So where would I start if I wanted to introduce a new believer to, or review with a long term believer, the Biblical teachings about Unity? Christian Unity Ministries has identified from the Scriptures five principles of Unity, which offer an excellent foundation in this doctrine:

1. **The Principle of the Spirit:** there is only one head of the Church, and He is in us all.
2. **The Principle of the Enemy:** there is only one enemy of the Church, and he hates unity in the Church.
3. **The Principle of Perceptions:** I have some responsibility for how others perceive me.
4. **The Principle of Accountability:** we should love each other enough to confront and restore.
5. **The Principle of Focus:** my focus should be on Christ.

Due to space, I have not listed associated Scripture references on which each principle is based, but this study draws on teachings and examples from both the Old and New Testament, demonstrating that Unity is part of the eternal Truth and purpose of God for His children.

We would be stronger believers and would have more peaceful congregations if we would accept the warning in Hebrews 2:1, by paying closer attention to these things we have heard from God's Word about Unity, lest we drift away from Christ's influence, and into the enemy's painful influence. And being stronger believers, steeped in His Word and applying it to every relationship in our lives, maybe "Biblical unity" would become more than just an ideal—maybe it would become reality in our church!

*Marcus Norris is the city attorney of Amarillo, Texas and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Christian Unity Ministries. He has facilitated a number of small groups in "Five Principles of Unity" and serves as a deacon and Bible teacher in First Baptist Church, Amarillo.*

## Prayer Beacon Shines All Around the World

*When you seek to join First Baptist Church, Anahuac, Texas, they want to know two things from you: (1) Do you know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? And (2) Do you have a passport? They may not be the biggest church in Texas, but their vision for the world is virtually limitless.*

*That same vision has now birthed an exciting new on-line prayer ministry called The Prayer Beacon. The Prayer Beacon (found at [www.prayerbeacon.com](http://www.prayerbeacon.com)) refers to itself as "a gateway through which God invites all of Christendom to pray for those activities that increase the kingdom of God."*

*With [www.prayerbeacon.com](http://www.prayerbeacon.com), you will find opportunities to pray for ministries committed to missions around the world. And if you have such a mission yourself, you will find the opportunity to partner with Prayer Beacon and have people around the world praying for you!*

*If you truly believe that prayer is the powerful tool God says it is, then you should check out [www.prayerbeacon.com](http://www.prayerbeacon.com) and LOG ON!*

If My people who are called  
by My name will humble  
themselves, and pray...



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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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## **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!***