

September 2004, *Equipping*



### **The Delicate Miracle of Unity**

As we begin again, with holidays and summer passed, we breathe deep, plan out our schedules and dig into the much joyful work that lies ahead. Now, before we are immersed in our ministry, is a moment when we need to discern the difference between the many urgent items on our agendas and the truly important ones.

Topping the list is the ongoing unity of our church.

Unity is first and foremost a gift that God gives. Ephesians 4:14 declares “*He (Christ) is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups (Jew and Gentile) into one, and broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us.*”

The vision in Ephesians is an astonishing coming together of deeply divided people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This unity is both a gift given and a stewardship to be exercised. Ephesians 4:3 instructs:

*“Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

Tom Yoder Neufeld, in the Believers Commentary on Ephesians, renders this line “*eager to keep the unity...*” There is a sense of urgency, of hurry; this is top priority!

How are we to go about doing this? How are we to live like this, or, as Yoder Neufeld says, “walk together...” in the common bond of Christ’s unity?

First we need the spirit described in Ephesians 4:2.

*“...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.”*

The implications of humility and gentleness are radical and powerful in building unity. They are the opposite of pride and self-sufficiency. These graces make it possible to take enough time for hearing one another in order to gain better understanding of each others’ lives and journeys.

The spirit of “bearing with one another” implies a will to allow differences, to give room for different stages and steps in our spiritual journeys. Patience is possible when we bow to the sovereignty of our Lord’s working and ministering in the lives of each one of us.

The delicate miracle of unity will be nourished and maintained as we pray for one another, listen well to each other and engage our difficult conversations with the spirit of humility, gentleness and patience.

*Sven Eriksson*  
*Denominational Minister*