

WE ARE ONE April 11,2021

WE Are One..... is the hope and prayer of Psalm 133. This Psalm, is a Song of Ascent or a Praise of Ascent. Ascent indicates going up and so would have been sung as the Rabbis and Priests entered the temple. But the temple had most likely been destroyed when Psalm 133 was written, so the going up, was most likely a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and would have been sung on their trek.

Psalm 133, my New Oxford Annotated bible tells me, is a prayer for National Unity. Looking back in the Old Testament we know that King David, in around the year 950, Before the Common Era, **SO a long, long, long time ago**..... had united the 12 Israelite Tribes. But only 25 years later, dissatisfaction with high taxes and Solomon's preferential treatment of his tribe, resulted in the end of the United Kingdom. The 10 northern tribes broke away to form the Kingdom of Israel, leaving the 2 southern tribes of Judah.

Therefore; we know that Psalm 133 was written after the split. It may have been written after the Babylonians conquered Judah and destroyed the temple in 586 BCE and when almost all the people were deported to Babylon. This was the end of the first temple period and the beginning of the Exile and Jewish Diaspora.

So after this time pilgrimages to Jerusalem would have been possible when rulers permitted it and that began about 100 years later around 458 BCE. Still, a long, long time ago.

The first line of the Psalm goes like this if you remember ..."How very good and pleasant when kindred live together in harmony"

Can you imagine the Jewish travellers singing this prayer as they walked along together on their way to Jerusalem wishing that they were **one united** people with a homeland to call their own? And we know that wish was fulfilled after the 2nd WW.

Then I thought, What would we Canadians sing, if we were hiking along together on a pilgrimage in Canada praying for unity? And almost immediately I thought

about **This Land is Your Land**. The Canadian Lyrics were written by the Travellers in 1955.

“This land is your land. This land is my land from Bonavista, to Vancouver Island. From the Arctic Circle to the Great Lake Waters. This Land was made for you and me. “

This has been a year when I think many of us have prayed for harmony and unity. I have been pleased to see the way that our politicians Federally and Provincially have , for the most part, and I’ll say that again, for the most part, have pulled together to form a common and united front to work toward keeping us, the Canadian citizens as safe as possible from this world wide pandemic.

It’s always easy to be righteous in hind sight, but I don’t think any party would or could do any better when we know that we don’t manufacture our own vaccines. We are at the mercy of foreign countries to meet our needs and demands. Even though that is the case, I believe that our health experts and politicians have done a good job in trying to keep us safe and as well, trying to keep people employed. And I believe that we are united as a country, **We Are One**.

The theme of unity also reminded me of the year 2007, July 23th to the 27th when Marlene Martinoski , Betty Robertson and I flew to Corner Brook Newfoundland and Labrador for the 45th Celebration of United Church Women. The theme was

WE ARE ONE.

Our mission (as United Church Women was and still is) to love God, to foster Christian faithfulness, spirituality , commitment, and devotion and to promote love and respect by living generously and giving joyfully to all God’s people and to affirm and strengthen ourselves creatively.

The theme Hymn was **We Are One** VU 402. The hymn I used as our call this morning.

I corresponded with several of the delegates after the conference. Win Fleming from Port Coquitlam, originally from Indian Head, had known my father’s family when she was young.

Irene Hagar from Sable River in Nova Scotia and I still correspond. Two summers ago she and her daughter Lisa came to visit and I toured them around the south west. Irene is still an active member in her church.

WE ARE ONE.....The second scripture reading for today was taken from Mark 16 vs 15. It was likely added to the gospel in the 2nd century my bible explains. The saying is attributed to Jesus speaking to his disciples."Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation."

And what is the good news....That the kingdom is now and **all** of creation is good and **all** of creation is worthy and **all** must be treated with respect and justice.

When the disciples took their message of love and justice to the neighbouring countries, to the Gentiles, they soon learned that if, **WE ARE ONE**, they would have to change or adapt some of their own cultural and religious ways. To have unity, they might have to find the middle ground, and acknowledge new practices of being in this world.

The films that we watched for the services leading up to Easter, all, to some extent, are about being united. Unity of purpose, through communication and community makes it much more possible to reach a goal. When we are **One** in purpose we can do miraculous things.

An example of such a purpose is 59 years of UCW. Another example is when we sponsored the Etmeh family in 2016. Can we be **One** again? Can we work with heart and hand and faith in 2021 and the years to come to bring another family to safety? I heard just at the end of March that Syria has now had 10 years of Civil War. How fortunate we are to be Canadians. Can you write lyrics , a Psalm of Praise for that ?

We Are One... is really all about right relationships. Right relationships with our environment; the land, the flora and fauna. Right relationships with our work, how we make a living. And right relationships with our human connections. We need to examine how we live our lives. Covid has brought this fact of

interconnectedness of the entire Cosmos into close focus. It is up to each of us to find a way that we can make our **voice** heard. It is up to each of us to **act** in some way that will make a difference so that future generations will have a sustainable life here on planet earth.

Covid has plainly shown us that we do not know what tomorrow will bring. We do not even know if we will have a tomorrow. The one thing we can make sure of is, that we do not have regrets. Regrets for what we needed to do, but didn't. Regrets, for waiting for someone else, to make the first move. If you have unfinished business with family, friends or acquaintances, then look after it now."

The Enneagram Institute informs me that "Happiness usually comes indirectly, as a by-product of giving yourself to something worthwhile. When people are actively engaged with their present experience and have their priorities right, they easily become happy without seeking happiness as their primary goal."

Then let's take note of the UCW mission statement and Follow the Way that Jesus preached about so that all the world **Can Be One**.

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