

John 17:11; Lord's Day 21

THE CHURCH'S UNITY

1. Its meaning.

1. It is a spiritual unity.

1. Thus it does not consist in external organizations (grand ecumenical movement).

2. The one Church consists of all of the elect from the beginning to the end of the world.

3. The Church is united by:

1. The unity of the Church is something for which Jesus prayed (John 17:11b).

- The basis and character of the church's unity.

1. Its basis is not found in the Church itself, but outside of it, in Jesus.

1. It is the unity of election in Christ, the one and only Head of the Church.

2. It is a unity of life: the one life of the risen Lord pulsates in every member.

3. It is a unity accomplished by the one Spirit (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:3).

- This unity is characterized by a beautiful diversity, not monotonous identity.

1. The members are not identical.

2. The diversity is created by Christ and emphasizes the unity (for each member needs the other members).

- This spiritual unity is established by Christ alone and not by humans.

- We are called to manifest the Church's unity.

1. It is to be manifested through God's name (John 17:11), i.e., with a unity of truth (objective faith).

2. We are to "endeavor to keep the unity" (Eph. 4:3), i.e., exert every effort.

1. We are explicitly commanded not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25).

2. We keep the unity of the Spirit by...

