### **STICK TOGETHER *McGuffey’s Story of the 7 Sticks***

Oh for the days when children in our public school system were required to read *McGuffey’s Readers* instead of the revisionist history now being promoted.

William Holmes McGuffey (1800-1873) helped mold and make America during its early years through his very popular set of six books he called *Eclectic Readers*. Children would learn to read while also learning history and great Biblical lessons of morals and ethics. Eclectic means to use various sources and not be confined to just one source or one philosophy of learning. Just as an eclectic music lover would have a wide range of tastes (folk, bluegrass, country, pop, rock, classical), so an eclectic reader reads widely from various sources, including the Bible, something now forbidden in our schools by the narrow-minded secular humanists.

I wrote an article on Mr. McGuffey a few months ago, telling you I have a set of the *McGuffey’s Readers* in my library. These *Readers* were used throughout the school systems of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of America. I want to pull just one such story in order to show you what children used to learn in the public school system.

“An old man had seven sons who always quarreled. The good old man called his sons around him. He laid before them seven sticks, which were bound together. He said, “I will pay one-hundred dollars to the one who can break this bundle.” Each son strained every nerve to break the bundle. After a long but vain trial, they all said that it could not be done. The father said, “My boys, nothing is easier to do.” He then untied the bundle and broke the sticks one by one with perfect ease. “Ah!” said the sons, “it is easy enough to do it that way, anybody could do it.” The father replied, “As it is with these sticks, so is it with you, my sons. So long as you hold fast together and aid each other, and not quarrel among yourselves, you will prosper. But if the bond of union is broken by your fighting, it will happen to you just as it has to these seven sticks which lie here broken on the ground.”

Then, at the end of the story it said, “Now Read I Cor. 12:12-26.”

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ… 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

The lesson is obvious, both to the children of McGuffey’s Readers, and to all of us who read our Bible and seek to be “*doers of the word*” (Jam. 1:22-24).

The lesson those children learned, and we must learn, is that every single member of this church has a story to tell. We are all a vital part of the body of Christ, and even “*those members of the body which seem to be weaker*” are in fact critical to the health and success of the whole body. **No one is unimportant**! **All are needed**!

The church in Corinth had, like the old man with seven quarreling sons, become a fractured body with everyone going their own way. They were not united (I Cor. 1:10-13). “*I am of Paul*” shouted some. “*I am of Peter*” shouted others. “*I am of Apollos*” said another group. “*I am of Christ*” cried only a few. It was bedlam. It was chaos. It was breaking Paul’s heart. It was breaking Christ’s too.

Jesus had come to the end of His earthly ministry and the last parting words He gave to, not seven sons, but twelve (and in fact to all of us) were these:

“*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*” (Jn. 13:34-35).

And to that end He then bowed and prayed,

*“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me*” (Jn. 17:20-21).

Take a lesson from McGuffey’s story and realize that if we all stick together not even Satan can break us.

“Love one another.” - Rick