### ***NO VESTIGIAL ORGANS***

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

A few months ago I wrote an article I had learned from the old set of school books written in the eighteenth century called *The McGuffey Readers*. These were a set of six books used in the public school system of America to not only teach children how to read, but more importantly how to live. They were filled with great moral stories that encouraged our youth to live before God in reverence, and before their fellow men with respect. Sadly, they have long ago been replaced by books which have no moral fabric based on absolute truth, but are based on the new morality called “relative truth” in which, as in the days of the Judges, “*everyone did what was right in his own eyes*” (Judg. 17:6; 21:25).

Reading again from the McGuffey Readers I recently found this fascinating story that generations from the past in American history had to read and learn. I thought to myself as I read it, “Wouldn’t this be great if our children were taught this in our schools?” Please read it for yourself and see what you think:

“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. Now Read I Cor. 12:12-26.”

As Paul would say, “I’m telling you the truth, I’m not lying” (I Tim. 2:7) when I say, this book used throughout America in our public schools asked the children to consider this moral story by inserting, “***Now read I Corinthians 12:12-26***.” Our Bible has been outlawed from any inclusion in the education of our children today. But former generations were instructed to pull out their family Bible and see Paul’s words that were the basis for learning how to get along with others, including brothers who fought with each other. Here is what they would have read:

*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.*

After reading this text from the Bible I can picture the children asking their parents, or their school teacher, the meaning of this scripture, trying to relate it to the story of the father with his seven sons who couldn’t get along.

Every single member of this church has a story to tell. We are all a vital part of this 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! We learn from Paul, as those kids learned from that wise father, that just as there are no parts of the physical body that are “vestigial organs” (i.e. useless, unimportant, non-functional), so it is in the church body. From the shepherds of the flock to the 12-year old who was recently baptized, there are no “vestigial” parts to Christ’s body.

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

You are important to Christ, and to me. – Rick