

1 Corinthians 12:12-26: One Body with Many Members

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “**Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,**” that would not make it any less a part of **the body**. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

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.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honourable we bestow the greater honour, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

Hymn of the day is LSB 645: “Built on the rock...” (Nikolai Fredrik Severin Grundtvig 1793-1872 translated by Carl Dövig)¹ Here is the melody too:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIIX_KCxoQ

¹ *Built on the Rock the Church shall stand
Even when steeples are falling.
Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;
Bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest,
But above all the soul distressed,
Longing for rest everlasting.
2 Surely in temples made with hands
God, the Most High, is not dwelling;
High above earth His temple stands,
All earthly temples excelling.
Yet He who dwells in heav'n above
Chooses to live with us in love,
Making our bodies His temple.
3 We are God's house of living stones,
Built for His own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns
Heirs of His wondrous salvation.
Were we but two His name to tell,
Yet He would deign with us to dwell,
With all His grace and His favour.
4 Here stands the font before our eyes,*

"I am a rock..." (Paul Simon)²

- Individualism – retreat into your own shell and comfort zone – island and rock (Buddhism)
- Socialisation: Fraternities and sororities
- Families and tribes: Markings, signs, badges, emblems and coat of arms.
 - Hair style, dress code and traditional weapons (Zulu shield/knobkirries)

*Telling how God has received us;
Th' altar recalls Christ's sacrifice
And what His Supper here gives us.
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim
Christ yesterday, today, the same,
And evermore, our Redeemer.
5 Grant then, O God, Your will be done,
That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come
Where Christ His message is bringing:
"I know mine own, My own know Me,
You, not the world, My face shall see.
My peace I leave with you. Amen."*

- ² A winter's day
In a deep and dark December
I am alone
Gazing from my window to the streets below
On a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow
I am a rock
I am an island
- I've built walls
A fortress deep and mighty
That none may penetrate
I have no need of friendship, friendship causes pain
It's laughter and it's loving I disdain
I am a rock
I am an island
 - Don't talk of love
But I've heard the words before
It's sleeping in my memory
I won't disturb the slumber of feelings that have died
If I never loved I never would have cried
I am a rock
I am an island
 - I have my books
And my poetry to protect me
I am shielded in my armour
Hiding in my room, safe within my womb
I touch no one and no one touches me
I am a rock
I am an island
 - ***And a rock feels no pain
And an island never cries***
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- Names – umbonga.
- Complex personalities – the longer the list of names, the more complicated the dress and style.
- ID: Who are we? A number, a bar code or what?
- Babel was mix-up of our straightforward language and of identities too. Dialect, tribes and nations. Differentiation. Apartheid.
- Tatoos
 - Slaves, prisoners (Concentration camps: Jews), soldiers (SS) and mercenaries, mafia and syndicates (Russia, China and Japan).
 - Christians too: Coptic (Egypt) and Orthodox (Bulgaria, Hungary etc)
 - Aggressive snakes or peaceful doves? Snorting dragon to intimidate, frighten and empower oneself – (military uniform)? Feathers to make oneself tall and imposing, huge tusks and quills and spikes to put off the opponent – something like the All Black Haka (Maori War dance)³: Bullala amathagathi!
 - Leviticus 19:28: “Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.”

We're not an island and not a rock either. God himself has given us his HS to change our hearts of stone into living hearts pumping with his love, grace and mercy. He in us brings forth good fruit to his honour and glory and to the benefit of our brothers and sisters, our neighbours and fellow countrymen. This does not come naturally, but because we belong to God's family, to the brotherhood of IX, to the fraternity and sorority of Christians in the one holy Christian church and as such we're called to “*Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.*” (3:8f) As members of the holy Christian Church – we're members of the body of Christ born and brought forth by the most precious mother of all true believers: ***ecclessiam sanctam***.

1. Point of Entry: **Grave of Baptism** (Death & Resurrection: Easter!)
2. Sustainability: Drinking of the spiritual font, river and ocean of **God's living fountain** the H.S.
3. **Communion & fellowship of Saints**, who all together partake and share the holy things – the true treasures of God (95 Theses): Word and sacrament, God's richest gifts of the gospel (SA).
4. *Extra ecclessiam nulla salus!* (Cyprian)
 - 4.1. Contra sectarianism and splintering of the church into factions and parties – individualism, congregationalism, racism and nationalism.
 - 4.2. Honour and care, protection and nurturing the weaknesses and shamefulness of the lesser parts.
 - 4.2.1. Suffering – all suffer together
 - 4.2.2. Honour – rejoicing together.
5. How to stay together: Hope – Faith – Love. (1. Corinthians 13) Amen.

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haka>