

## **Dwelling in Unity**

By Ardell G. Gould

R.W. Ardell G. Gould, Grand Chaplain, wrote this article in summer 1995 for the Empire State (New York) Mason

**In Psalm 133, there are words that we, as Masons, are very familiar with. They are as follows:**

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like precious oil upon the head, running down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, life for evermore.

I wonder if we are able to catch all that the writer is trying to impart! These are words that are filled with deep meaning. They are words that need to be heard in the society in which we live. Today our society and our world are in desperate need of the message that is given in these three short verses. The profound message that is here, should go deep within the inner recesses of our being and help us to come to a better understanding of what unity is all about.

The Psalmist begins with a very simple statement: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" As we begin, let it be understood that when the Psalmist uses the word "brothers," we must insert "sisters," or any combination where two or three are involved. And, we will want to explore the implications when we expand this idea to encompass the world.

Can we bring ourselves to experience what the Psalmist is talking? Do you know the feeling of what life is like when there is harmony, understanding and acceptance? In far too many cases, this is the exception, rather than the norm. Most of the time our experience in life tends to be a life where there is everything but harmony. Our fast pace more or less demands that we seek to achieve or climb a ladder. When this becomes the norm in life, there are too many occasions when we do not take the time to understand what others are thinking or feeling. We are always looking over our shoulder wondering who is creeping up to us, trying to bypass us, or perhaps trying to push us out of line for something we seek.

It is important that, when we come to this point in life, that we take time to know who we are and what we are. We must examine our lives and feel the goodness that can be there when all is harmonious. I am sure there have been times in our lives when we have known this feeling of tranquility, peace or calm. Perhaps it has come when the kids are finally in bed and settled down. All is quiet, and for a few moments you can sit back and enjoy the peace of life. The Psalmist is saying that it is this kind of feeling that is great and should be the norm of our lives. How good and pleasant it is when we can dwell in unity.

In my ministry, I have witnessed all too often that when people disagree on issues, it is not just a difference of opinion, but it is like a wedge that separates and divides. People state their side of an issue and then immediately shut off their hearing as to what the other person is trying to say. There does not seem to be a willingness to try to hear what the other person has to say. Nor, is there an effort made to try to find a way wherein things can be worked out in agreement between the parties. Somehow there must come

that moment when we take the initiative, and become the person who is willing to listen and seek to dwell in unity.

We can begin the practice of living together in unity within our own families. Then we can move to other areas of our lives. We are living in a time when there is great discord in our society. People are running here and there doing their own thing, not mindful of others, and bound and determined to be there first. Somehow, there must come that moment when people begin to stop and realize that others are involved. Someone needs to put forth those expressions of life that indicate that dwelling in unity produces far better feelings than can otherwise be experienced.

Are we willing to take that risk, and begin the process of turning things around? Each of us has the ability to be that one person to step forth and begin to truly dwell in unity. If we seek to give expression to dwelling in unity, in all aspects of our lives, it will make a profound impact upon those around us. It will reach out into the far corners of the earth.

**-- Behold, how good and pleasant it is when we dwell together in unity --**