

## My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 69

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MFT was a grinding but necessary course in "Mind Body Unity." Each day, surrendering our own will, we rose, usually sleep deprived and tired from the day before. To rouse ourselves out of our sleeping bags and off the floor, we died to the desire for rest and comfort. We then stumbled into crowded bathrooms to prepare to meet the public, sacrificing privacy while trying to maintain at least a veneer of basic decorum. Morning service provided the theme for the day's work and the sacred space to connect our hearts to God. It is here we found our spiritual renewal and sense of purpose. Through repentance and a fresh determination we could harmonize our minds and bodies around a providential purpose. Driving to our area, eating McDonald's or a cold breakfast, we set our goals and put on the armor of a determined mindset. Once dropped off, we continued to push our physical bodies as living sacrifices, making our faithful effort an offering to move the spiritual world. We endured rain, snow, cold, and heat, negativity and abuse, persecution and anger. But daily, we pushed our bodies through it all. Through our MFT life, Father trained us in Mind Body Unity.

Mind Body Unity is the foundation of every good thing. On a very practical and individual level, we cannot possibly live an ethical or loving existence without training our bodies to follow our minds. Of course, both ethics and love exist as relational dynamics, and therefore, within the family, the Mind Body Unity of its individual members will determine the harmony and happiness of the family. As the "school for love," the family serves as the training ground for our lives in the community, nation, and world.

This gives us a window into the very nature of "goodness." That is, what aids us in the realization of our original purpose is "good." That which obstructs or prevents the realization of our essential goodness is "evil." We can see this in the book of Genesis: as God created and realized His original purpose, He saw that the result of His effort was "good." Which brings the discussion back around to Mind Body Unity: we cannot bring our individual purpose to fruition, until we harmonize the personal foundation of our mind and our body. Any internal and personal failure will be manifest within the subsequent and higher realms of activity: the family, community, nation, and world.

The world has never known true peace. What the world calls "peace," the occasional absence of kinetic violence, in fact, is not peace at all. Because we fallen humans remain incapable of fully harmonizing our minds and bodies, our families, communities, and nations exist in a state of constant conflict and the experience of peace is episodic. Thus, the dream of "world peace" will continuously elude us until we resolve the fundamental problem of Mind Body Unity centered on God. As we resurrect ourselves and establish individual and familial harmony, we can expand the realms of God's grace and scattered oases of peace will come into existence. In this manner, our action on the most local and individualized scale gains a transcendent and universal value. We can steadily advance the providence of God by bringing harmony and peace into our own families and communities.

The feeling of peace is tangible and unusual. When others enter our homes, they should note the spiritual difference and comment, "Your house is so peaceful." Our spiritual environment must be distinctive.

To achieve Mind Body Unity as we age, requires a different form of discipline than the one we endured on MFT. For me, maintaining a daily schedule that includes meditation, exercise, and immersion in nature have proven essential in cultivating a healthy unity between my mind and body. I rise before dawn each morning, usually around 0400. I have found that preserving the early morning for prayer, study, and meditation, keeps me from staying up late at night and enforces a more productive regimen. The traditional monastic practice of "lectio divina" has been my chosen discipline: begin by reading God's word, which leads to vocalized prayer, then sit in meditation which flowers into a contemplative union with God (described in the words of John Henry Newman, "Cor ad cor loquitur").

Swimming follows prayer. Exercise has replaced other forms of asceticism in my life. Whether we run, lift weights, row, swim, walk briskly, or simply stretch, some form of physical discipline that fits with our age, health, and temperament should be part of our day. My 96 year old father, ever the Marine, still does his PT in the morning. When I turned 50, I stopped running because of knee and back issues. At that point, I joined the Santa Rosa Masters Swim Team and subjected myself to the tender mercies of a coach, Hermine Terhorst. Hermine is a tall, beautiful woman of Scandanavian descent, so while she was still coaching, I was always motivated to show up and dive into the cold water at 0545 each morning. Now, it is a well established habit. Our team pool is outdoors, and we swim through all the elements and seasonal changes. The water in the pool is kept between 78F to 80F. There have been winter mornings here in Northern California when the deck will ice over while we swim. There is an asceticism intrinsic to our swimming practice.

Speaking of asceticism, I also belong to the South End Rowing Club in San Francisco, where I swim in the Bay. The Bay water ranges from 49F to 65F at the warmest, and can vary significantly in spots depending on the currents. I generally swim without a wetsuit, so diving into those waters requires an act of self-denial equal to any cold shower condition I have ever done. The initial 200 yards are always difficult as my body adjusts to the frigid and brackish water. However, after acclimating, the swim is always a natural high. To be out in the San Francisco Bay, looking at the Golden Gate Bridge to the West, the Bay Bridge to the East, and the City skyline to the South is breathtaking. We always work against the current going out and with the current coming back in, so the direction of a swim is determined by the action of the tides.

Hiking and backpacking through the Coastal Range or the Sierra, provide another avenue to mind and body unity in harmony with nature. The most beautiful vistas are only accessible through extraordinary effort. But, if a person is willing to endure the hours of pain and assume the discomforts of life on the trail, then a hidden world will open to his or her heart.

Suffering can be a gateway to the experience of beauty. Whether the beauty is seen in a sunrise after a hard swim, the pelicans gliding over the Bay, or a magnificent expanse from a summited peak, we become especially susceptible to a feeling of oneness and awe in the midst of nature, when the mind and body have been harmonized through strenuous effort. In those moments, from deep within our original nature, we can resonate with the beauty of creation and say together with God, "It is Good!"