

Oneness and spiritual healing and growth in winthrops a model of christian charit...

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3 October Oneness and Spiritual Healing and Growth in Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" The Body of Christ is not Christ's literal body because it represents His ultimate sacrifice for humanity. John Winthrop asserts in "A Model of Christian Charity" that God's sacrifice emanates His love, and His love should be the people's model in their interactions and deeds. How does Winthrop use the Body of Christ as a model of how his people should feel about and behave towards one another? Winthrop uses the Body of Christ as a model for perceiving others and treating one another through connecting the Body with the role of oneness in dealing with several human issues, through linking the Body with spiritual healing, and through asserting spiritual growth and its effects of happiness and faith. Winthrop uses the Body of Christ as a model for perceiving others by answering questions that help them understand human oneness through their oneness with God. The context of Winthrop's sermon is Christian charity and he answers several questions about charity and lending. The Body of Christ is shared for all, and the same goes for the giving nature of Christians, where Winthrop says: "If the time and occasion be ordinary he is to give out of his abundance. Let him lay aside as God hath blessed him." Winthrop believes that every person belongs to one Body, and so it is only right to help one another in times of need. Furthermore, in answering questions about lending and forgiving debt, Winthrop underlines compassion as an important Christian virtue. He says: "Christ and his Church make one body," and so people must act with "more enlargement towards others and less respect towards ourselves and our own right." The meaning of this statement is that the more that people give and understand each other, the more that they show their oneness in God

through caring for one another. If Christ gave His own body, it is only right for people to help one another as one Body, one Church. Moreover, the Body is a model that shows the connection of people to each other, in that their goodness goes back to them in a spiritual sense. Winthrop uses the Body as the metaphor of innate human bonds: “ Love is the bond of perfection. First it is a bond or ligament. Secondly, it makes the work perfect.” The Body is love and love binds people. Winthrop is saying that if people do not help each other, one bond breaks, and the whole breaks apart too, but if they help each other, they enhance their human connection. Every human being in society has a purpose and for that, people should always see one another as worthy of love, respect, and compassion. Aside from answering important social questions, Winthrop connects the Body of Christ with people’s spiritual healing. Winthrop argues that people should see each other as parts of a whole, and any person in need is a broken part that needs the help of others who are in better condition. He underlines that everyone are “ members” of the Body of Christ, wherein: “ If one member suffers, all suffer with it, if one be in honor, all rejoice with it.” Winthrop’s point is that everyone undergoes problems every now and then. If they need social and/or financial support and other members of the community can provide the latter, then they should do so, first, because it is the Godly thing to do, and second, it benefits them also because it heals their community. As one Body, people have a holy obligation to preserving their community. Winthrop says that the mission of Christians is “ to improve our lives to do more service to the Lord... and work out our salvation under the power and purity of his holy ordinances.” If someone needs anything, the Christian thing to do is to help

that person with the best of their abilities because to serve others is to serve the Lord, and to serve the Lord, they are all saved. Whatever sins their births have given them, they can heal them through faith and good deeds. Finally, Winthrop asserts that if people behave towards each other as one through seeing everyone as the Body of Christ, the more that they would grow in happiness and faith. Winthrop repeats several times that people are one in Body through Christ's body. He says that love binds people into one body and this connection brings out love: "...the ligaments of this body which knit together are love." With love, people can do more as Christians, and doing more, they become closer in love and closer to God. Winthrop says: " this love is a divine, spiritual, nature...undervaluing all things beneath its proper object and of all the graces, this makes us nearer to resemble the virtues of our heavenly father." Loving one another connects people to God, and this holy connection makes them happy. Apart from becoming happy through charity, their faith makes them stronger and gives them happiness too. The Body of Christ is a model for faith that grows: "...till Christ be formed in them and they in him, all in each other, knit together by this bond of love" (Winthrop). Winthrop explains through the Body model that Christian charity has its material and spiritual benefits. The Body gives inner and outer happiness, which in turn, strengthens their faith. The Body of Christ is a powerful metaphor for Christian unity and faith. Winthrop uses logical connections to evoke emotional values and promote behaviors that are based on Christian values and beliefs. He uses the Body of Christ as a model for Christians to see one another as elements of the whole, so that they can heal in times of need and they can develop as a community and as

Christians. Winthrop underlines that the model that God provides is holistic and intensive. The model satisfies both material and spiritual needs, answering both material and spiritual questions. Winthrop leaves the message that whenever people want to know how to treat their fellow human beings, they should always think about their oneness with God because it means that they must be one and equal in love and compassion as Christians too. Work Cited Winthrop, John. "A Model of Christian Charity." 1630.