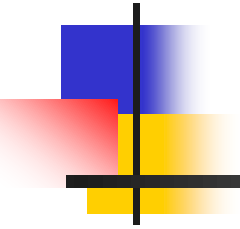


**Behold, How  
(Do) They  
Love One  
Another?**





**ARISTIDES  
OF ATHENS  
B? – D 134  
AD**

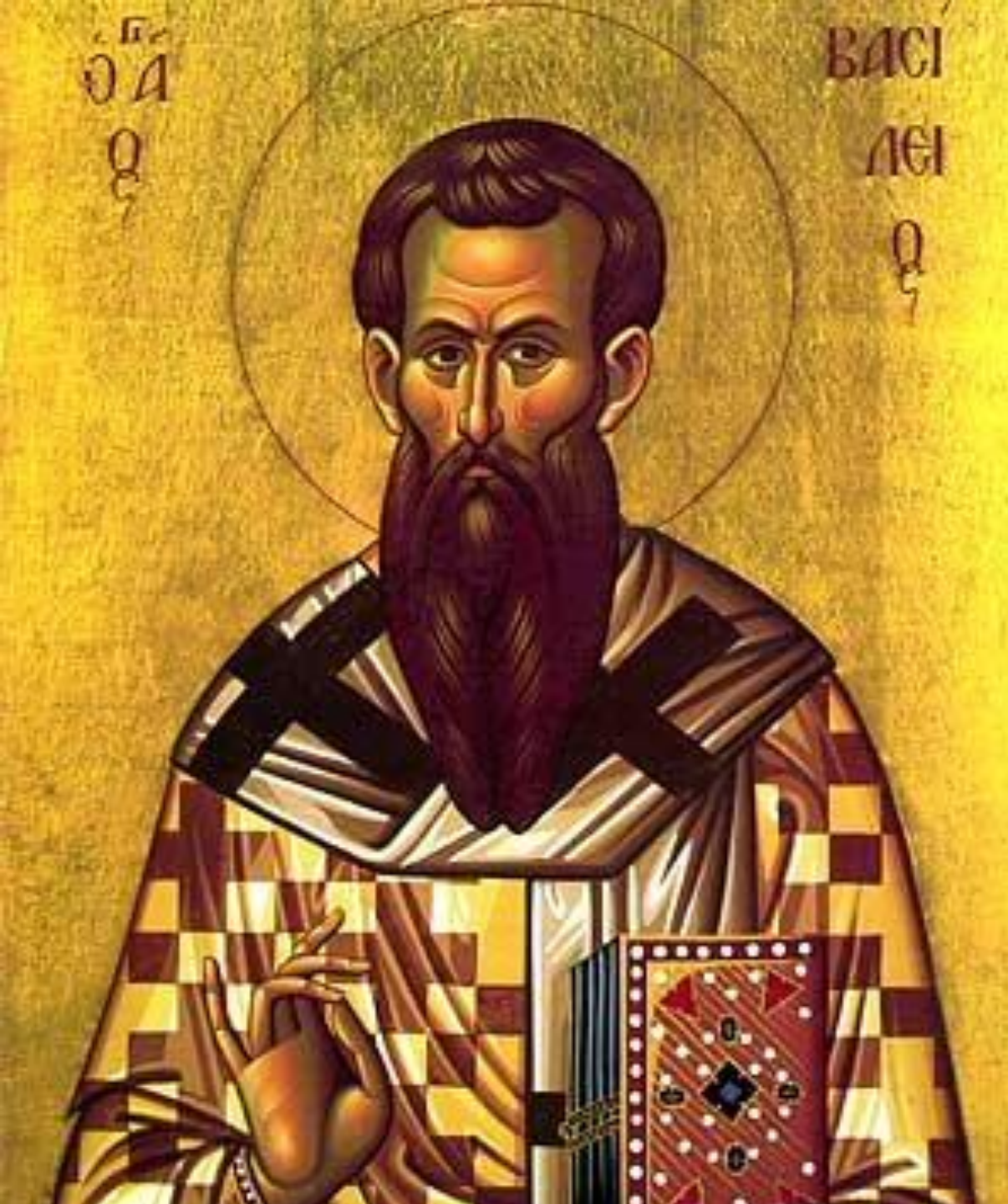
**AUTHOR OF  
*APOLOGY*,  
WHICH HE  
PRESENTED  
TO  
EMPEROR  
HADRIAN**



## Which Says in Part:

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**they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food.**



**TERTULLIAN**  
**AD 160-225**

**BISHOP Of**  
**NORTH**  
**AFRICA**

**WROTE HIS**  
**OWN**  
***APOLOGY* IN**  
**AD 197**

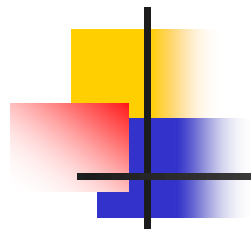


# Sound Familiar??

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if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are . . . not spent on feasts, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines or banished to the islands or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession. But it is **mainly the deeds of a love** so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us.....

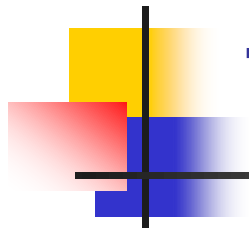




# From the Mouths of Pagans

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..... **“Behold, (they say,) how they love one another,”** for they themselves are animated by mutual hatred. **“Behold, (they say about us,) how they are ready even to die for one another,”** for they themselves would sooner kill.



# The Original Church Brand

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- These days there is an arms race among churches to build a better brand to attract attention and grow attendance
- Things like ... ?
- The early church was identified by friends and enemies alike as people who were completely sold out to loving and caring for each other, and the local community, NO MATTER WHAT 24-7-365
- According to Tertullian, the original brand



# Francis Chan Letters to the Church

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One of the main things that we questioned was the level of love we had for one another. Cornerstone was by most standards a pretty loving church. But next to the example of the early church and the New Testament, it just fell flat. Jesus said the world should know us by our love. As elders we came to the painful conclusion that when unbelievers came to our services, they weren't observing anything supernatural about the way we loved one another.





# Original Church Brand Acts 2

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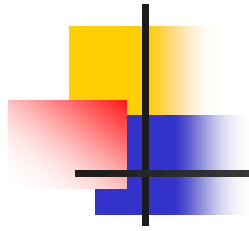
- 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and [ao]to prayer.
- 43 [ap]Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and [aq]signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.



# Life Together

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- **46 Day by day** continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from **house to house, they were taking their [at] meals together with gladness and [au] sincerity of heart,** **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding [av] to their number day by day those who were being saved.
- Behold, how they LOVE one another!!



# How is This Possible???

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“The Church is not a religious community of worshippers *of* Christ, but **is Christ himself** who has taken form among men.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer,

**Ethics** (ed. Simon and Schuster, 2012) -  
ISBN: 9781451688504



# Really? How Does that Work?

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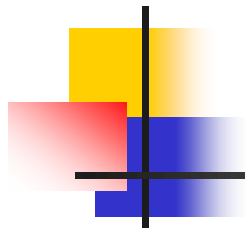
- **1 Corinthians 12:7** But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. *[insert long list of gifts here.]*
- **12** For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, **so also is Christ.** **13** For [a] by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.



# Let Me Remind You...

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- So, when you “get saved,” you don’t become a saved **but still individual** free moral agent, **still independent** but now better equipped to live your life with more blessings throughout eternity ....
- NO, no, no, no ... when we are born again and the Holy Spirit takes residence within us, it is for the express purpose of becoming a part of HIS BODY, filled with His life and gifted with supernatural abilities from Him so He can LOVE the world through us

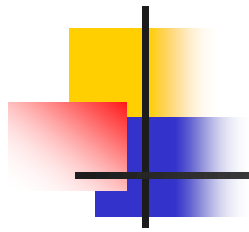


# Bonhoeffer in Life Together

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“God himself has undertaken to teach brotherly love; All that men can add to it is to remember this divine instruction and the admonition to excel in it more and more. When God was merciful, when he revealed Jesus Christ to us as our brother, when he won our hearts by his love, this was the **beginning of our instruction in divine love....**”

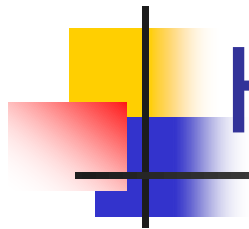




# Safety in Community

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- **Hebrews 3:12** Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.
- **13** But encourage one another **day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,”** so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.



# Hold On To Each Other

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- **Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
- <sup>24</sup> and let us consider how to **stimulate** one another **to love** and good deeds,
- <sup>25</sup> not **forsaking our own assembling together**, as is the habit of some, **but encouraging *one another*, and all the more** as you see the day drawing near.



# The Tie That Binds

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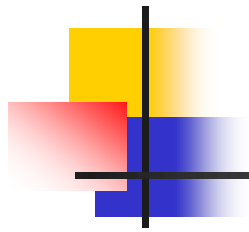
- Col 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved,
- put on a heart of compassion, kindness humility, gentleness and [k]patience;
- <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. <sup>14</sup> Beyond all these things **put on love, which is [l]the perfect bond of unity.**



# What Say the Pagans Today?

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- About the church in general?
- About our fellowship?
- About my life, your life?
- Does anyone ever say, “WOW, I have never encountered love like that in my life!
- To be perfectly clear, this is absolutely supernatural. It rises up as we completely surrender to the Holy Spirit
- What would happen if we made this the focus of our fervent, united prayer?



# Good News!, YOU Are

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- deeply loved by God,
- fully accepted by God,
- completely and permanently forgiven by God,
- lavishly blessed by God,
- and eternally, perfectly embraced by God as his child; a child who brings Him unspeakable JOY