



Lesson Guide

Lesson 8 - *Unio Mystica*: Am I Alone?

Introduction

Lesson 8 takes us to the southeast sector of the Truth compass for a tour of the *social sphere* that Dr. Tackett characterizes as the heart and soul of Christianity: the *Mystical Union* (Latin, *Unio Mystica*) between God and man. Here, in the most intimate and profoundly mysterious sphere of the “Intimate Three” (family, church, and the God-man relationship), we have the privilege of pondering exactly what it is that Christ has purchased for us at the price of His precious blood shed on the cross for our sins: not simply salvation from hell, but an invitation into the Godhead itself, where we may experience the incomprehensible wonder of oneness with the Creator of the universe.

Themes

In our discussion of the family, we saw that the apostle Paul likens the bond between Christ and the church to the oneness shared between husband and wife (Ephesians 5:31-32). This oneness, he concludes, is a “profound *mystery*” –a concept that is difficult to fully grasp. On this tour, we proceed to examine an even deeper and *more* mysterious aspect of this bond: namely, that it is experienced *not only* within marriage and the corporate context of the body of Christ, *but also* on an intimate, personal level by the individual believer. This, says Dr. Tackett, is the greatest of all the wonders we will contemplate during the course of our study: that the God of the universe has come to make His dwelling both *with* us and *in* us.

Dr. Tackett marshals an impressive array of scriptural passages and biblical images to illustrate both facets of this glorious truth. On the *corporate* side, he draws our attention to Jesus’ discourse on the vine and the branches and the importance of “abiding” in Him (John 15:5); the high priestly prayer of John 17, in which Christ speaks again and again of the oneness shared between the Father, the Son, and the body of believers (“I in them and You in Me”); the several passages in which Paul emphasizes the importance of unity in the church and the mutual edification of the various members of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 2:19-22, 4:11-16; Galatians 3:28-29); and the many “one another” commandments with which Jesus and the apostles set forth their vision for our common life as Christians, including John 13:34-35, Romans 12:10, Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:16, and 1 Peter 1:22. On the *personal, individual* side, he cites Jesus’ statement to Nicodemus about being “born again” (John 3:7); His promise of the indwelling Spirit (John 14:16-17); Paul’s declaration that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17); and the apostle’s astounding claim that “Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). In connection with this discussion, Dr. Tackett points out that we must be careful not to “blur the spheres” by applying the unique and particular social laws of one realm to another realm – for example, by assuming that we can meet our need for Christian fellowship

by worshiping God individually, or that we can enter into the wonder of the *Unio Mystica* simply by attending services at the local church.

As in all of the social spheres, there is potential here for the emergence of dysfunctions and pathologies as the effects of the *Cosmic Battle* make themselves felt at the very core of man's relationship with God. Interestingly enough, marital imagery arises again in this connection: the Lord warns His people many times in Scripture against the danger of "prostituting" themselves or "going a-whoring" after other gods and idols (see Numbers 15:38-39). Just as spouses are to seek fulfillment of the *sexual* drive exclusively within the bonds of the marriage covenant, so we as believers are to confine our quest for *significance* to the covenant relationship with the Creator. For it is this powerful human hunger for significance, says Dr. Tackett, when directed outside of God's covenant relationships, that constitutes the single most formidable barrier to intimacy, communion, and oneness. All too often, we forsake the Lord and cut ourselves off from others in attempt to puff up our own sense of self-importance.

Points to Watch For

Especially important to the overall message of this lesson is the idea that *oneness with God* represents the heart of the Christian Gospel; in other words, that Christianity is not primarily a moral, philosophical, or religious system, but rather a deep, intimate, and living *relationship* with a *personal* Creator. This, to return to a point made in Lesson 4, is the essence of "eternal life" – i.e., *knowing God* just as intimately as Adam knew Eve. It is important to help students come to the place where they can not only begin to *understand* this concept rationally – something we can never fully achieve – but also *feel* the wonder of it in a profoundly affecting way. *This* is the point at which the *transformational* aspect of this tour will come home to participants most tellingly. Some students may also need to wrestle with the implications of Dr. Tackett's warning about the danger of "blurring the spheres."

Discussion Questions (Pick 3 or 4 for your discussion time.)

(Make these questions your own. That is, don't just "read" them, but become familiar with them so that they don't appear as simply an item to get through. Go through them yourself before your group meets and ponder them.)

1) Opening Question: (this may be the only question you need to ask).

A. Ask your guests to list what they saw on the tour. Here are some of the key items: Social systems; the divine imprint; unio mystica; divine intimacy with man; the mystical union within the Trinity, between husband and wife, between Christ and the church; between God and man; intimacy, union, oneness; the wonder of God dwelling within me; unique and particular social laws; blurring of social spheres; the oneness of the body of Christ; the one-another commands; tassels and phylacteries; "everything they do is done for men to see"; the hunger for significance; Saul's jealousy of David; Jesus teaching from Matthew 6 about giving alms, praying or fasting to be seen by men versus being seen by God; buyer's remorse; hungering for God.

B. Ask your guests to point out the ones that were particularly interesting or striking to them and why.

C. Ask if this particular area struck anyone else as well.

D. Ask if there were other items that they saw that stood out to them. (You may want to read back through the list if you need to.)

- 2) **How would you define Christianity? What definition does Dr. Tackett propose during the course of this lesson? Why does he see this definition as being of central importance to our understanding of the Gospel and our overall grasp of truth?**

(Dr. Tackett defines Christianity specifically in terms of the *Mystical Union*. Through faith in Christ, he says, we are not simply “saved” or “delivered from hell,” but actually introduced into the inner sanctum of the Godhead itself and united in a personal, intimate, and relational way with our Creator. This is what it means to “know God” and thus possess “eternal life.”)

- 3) **What do we mean when we speak of our union with God as a *mystery*? Why is it so important to affirm and embrace the *mysterious* aspects of this reality rather than trying to reduce it to a simple statement of fact?**

(The incredible essence of the Christian message is *Immanuel* – God *with* us and *in* us. The thought that the infinite Creator of all things has come to dwell not only in the church as His body, but also in *you* and *me* individually – not just a “piece” of Him, but His complete and entire *infinite self* – is a mind-boggling concept that inspires joy, fear, and wonder, and which should have the effect of driving us to worship and adoration, with an ever increasing hunger to enjoy that intimacy with Him. To be content with a simple, clinical affirmation of this truth is to walk away from the most incredible wonder that God has ever granted. The relational aspect of our faith cannot be replaced with a set of cold philosophical and religious propositions.)

- 4) **Contemplate, for a moment, the *reality* of God dwelling within us. How deeply do we believe this to be real? Does our life and thinking characterize this profound reality?**

(If we are honest, most of us will confess that we think of God as more “external” than actually dwelling within; more “out there” than “in here”. That is why our thoughts and actions are sometimes carried out as if nobody sees or knows.)

- 5) **Cite some examples of ways in which we can “blur the spheres” and thus miss out on the fullness of what God intends us to experience in the realm of our social relationships. Can you think of personal instances in which you have unwittingly fallen prey to this tendency?**

(Review the examples provided in the lesson: a man says “I can’t work for a female employer” [confusing *labor* and *church*]; another asserts, “I don’t need church, I can worship God on my own” [confusing the *Unio Mystica* with the church as the body of Christ]. Encourage participants to engage in an honest examination of their own hearts and lives in this respect.)

- 6) **What insight into the heart of man can we glean from King Saul’s reaction to the women’s celebration of David’s victory over Goliath? From the Pharisees and their “long tassels” and “wide phylacteries”? How can this insight help us fight the pathologies that confront us in *all* of the various social spheres?**

(Saul was angered by the women’s song – “Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands” – because it threatened his sense of personal *significance*. The jealousy he felt toward David as a result actually became the occasion of his falling under demonic influence. Similarly, the hypocritical Pharisees lengthened their tassels solely “to be seen of men” – in other words, all their so-called “religious” behavior was aimed at a single goal: to build up their own sense of self-significance as contrasted with the significance of others. These are just two examples, says Dr. Tackett, of the many ways in which our human hunger for significance drives us away from God, cuts us off from other people, and makes us incapable of entering into intimate relationships. If we can bridle this impulse and direct it back to its true source of satisfaction – the sense of fulfillment we can find in a close and “secret” relationship with our Father in heaven – we will have struck a major blow against all types of social pathology.)

- 7) **How should this discussion of the *Unio Mystica* impact our attitude toward that relationship and the price that was paid to make it available to us?**

(Wonder, love, and praise are the only appropriate reactions to the miracle of intimacy with God that has been offered to us in Christ. When we begin to grasp what it means to rest in Him and find all our needs for fulfillment and significance satisfied in His love, we will be filled with an ever deeper appreciation for the precious wounds of Jesus and a deep hunger to walk closer with Him and experience more of His truth and love.)

- 8) **How do we enter into a deep and intimate relationship with the infinite-personal God?**

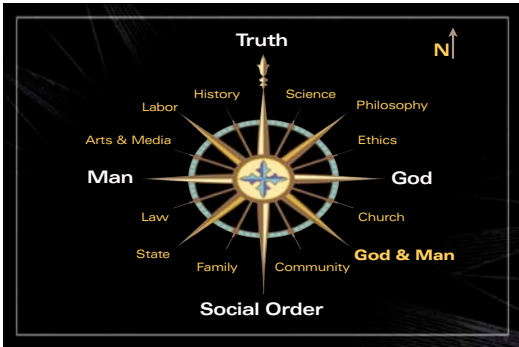
(Through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, who was “wounded for our transgressions” [Isaiah 53:5]. *Note to the host*: if you think your group is ready for this, have someone share their testimony of when they came to Christ. *Also note*, this could be the time when someone in your group may realize that they are not really a Christian. Be ready to lead them in that step, either privately or in the group if they openly confess their need.)

UNIO MYSTICA
am i **Alone?**

1

"UNIO MYSTICA"
Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and **you are in me, and I am in you.**
John 14:19-20

2



3

GOD & MAN
divine **Intimacy**
with man

4

THE 'UNIO MYSTICA'
"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."
This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
Ephesians 5:31-32 (ESV)

5

THE INTIMATE THREE

Family

Church

Trinity

God & Man

6

UNIO MYSTICA

Intimacy

Union

Oneness

7

THE 'UNIO MYSTICA'

...the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27

8

THE 'MYSTICAL UNION'

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and **I in him**, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

9

THE 'MYSTICAL UNION'

Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ**, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!


2 Corinthians 5:17

10

THE 'MYSTICAL UNION'

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but **Christ lives in me.**

Galatians 2:20



11

THE 'MYSTICAL UNION'

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, **for he lives with you and will be in you...**

John 14:16-17

12

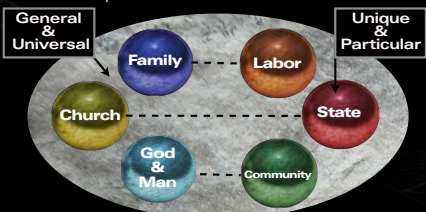
DESCRIPTIONS & NAMES OF THE NEW MAN

The redeemed	Children of God
Saints	Sons of God
Priests	Beloved
Called out ones	Wear white robes
The people of God	Born from above
A holy nation	

13


SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Unique & Particular Social Laws



Blurring the Spheres...

14




15

MAKING THE MANY ONE

Now you are the **body of Christ**, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27




16

MAKING THE MANY ONE

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ **we who are many form one body**, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:4-5




17

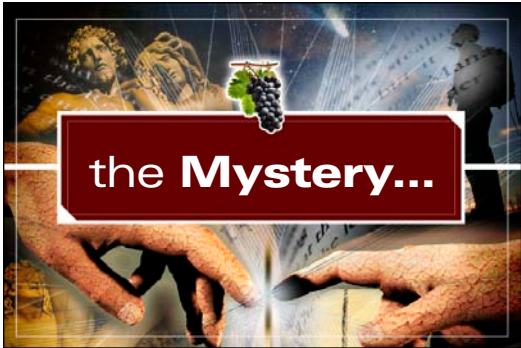
MAKING THE MANY ONE

...we, who are many, are one body...


1 Corinthians 10:17



18



the Mystery...



19

THE 'MYSTERY' OF CHRIST

...the **mystery** hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God...

Romans 16:25-26

20

THE 'MYSTERY' OF CHRIST

And he made known to us the **mystery** of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Ephesians 1:9-10

21

what is this Mystery?

22

THE 'MYSTERY' OF CHRIST

This **mystery** is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of **one body**, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:6

23

THE 'MYSTERY' OF CHRIST

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3:28-29

24

THE 'MYSTERY' OF CHRIST

"Jew nor Greek"
no racial barriers

"Slave nor free"
no economic class barriers

"Male nor female"
no gender barriers

25

THE CHURCH

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Ephesians 2:19-22

26

THE CHURCH

In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being **built together** to become a **dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**

Ephesians 2:19-22

27

JESUS' VISION FOR THE CHURCH

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, **just as you are in me and I am in you.** May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me..."

John 17:20-23

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JESUS' VISION FOR THE CHURCH

I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me.** May they be brought to complete **unity** to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

John 17:20-23

29

BACK TO UNITY

Oneness

Union Intimacy

Intimate Fellowship

30

UNITY, ONENESS...AGAIN

Make every effort to keep the **unity** of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Ephesians 4:3-5

31

THE FLOCK

Love one another (1 Pet 1:22)
 Bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2)
 Pray for one another (Jam 5:16)
 Forebear one another (Eph 4:2)
 Be kind to one another (Eph 4:32)
 Admonish one another (Col 3:16)
 Build one another up (Rom 14:19)
 Give preference to one another (Rom 12:10)
 Live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16)

32

THE FLOCK

Encourage one another (1 Thess 5:11)
 Submit to one another (Eph 5:21)
 Serve one another (Gal 5:13)
 Accept one another (Rom 15:7)
 Be devoted to one another (Rom 12:10)
 Teach one another (Col 3:16)
 Comfort one another (1 Thess 4:18)
 Forgive one another (Eph 4:32)
 Be of the same mind with one another (Rom 15:5)
 Regard one another as more important (Phil 2:3)

33

JESUS' VISION FOR THE CHURCH

"A new command I give you: **Love** one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:34-35

34

Pathologies

35

WHY TASSELS?

"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel.

Numbers 15:38-39

36

WHY TASSELS?

You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes."

Numbers 15:38-39

37

JESUS AND "TASSELS"

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them..."

Matthew 23:1-7

38

JESUS AND "TASSELS"

Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their **phylacteries** wide and the **tassels** on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

Deut 6:8 Matthew 23:1-7

39

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

"Prostitution"

The Post-Game Party
David & Saul: 1 Sam 18:6-10

Jesus teaching 'Sigies'
Matthew 6

40

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

1 Samuel 18:6-10

41

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

1 Samuel 18:6-10

42

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul.

1 Samuel 18:6-10

43

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

Matthew 6:1-4

44

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:1-4

45

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:5-6

46

HUNGER FOR SIGNIFICANCE

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18

47

BUYER'S REMORSE

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Isaiah 55:1-2

48

BUYER'S REMORSE

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

Isaiah 55:1-2

49

revisiting the **simple** question...

what is

ETERNAL LIFE?

...that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

John 17:3

50



Outline

Lesson 8 - Unio Mystica: Am I Alone?

- I. Introduction – What is a mystery?
 - A. Sphere design - review of the family and church
 - B. Scriptural themes of intimacy, union, & oneness
- II. The Mystical Union
 - A. Between a husband and wife
 - B. Between Christ and His church
 - C. Between God and man – the Unio Mystica
 - 1. Colossians 1:27 "Christ in you"
 - 2. John 15:5 "If a man remains in me and I in him"
 - 3. John 14:16-17 "for he lives with you and will be in you"
 - 4. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 "God's Spirit lives in you"
 - D. Unique and particular social laws and the blurring of spheres
- III. Unity - The Body of Christ - Making many One
 - A. Many members – we form one body with unique gifts and roles
 - B. The Mystery of Christ – "...for you are all one in Christ Jesus"
 - C. Jesus' vision for the church
 - 1. John 17: 20-23 "...that all of them may be one ...so the world may believe that you have sent me ...may they be brought to complete unity ..."
 - 2. Oneness – the many reciprocal or "one-another" commands
- IV. Hunger for significance
 - A. Tassels – Numbers 15 - "...so you will ...not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes" Also see Deuteronomy 22 and Matthew 23

- B. Jesus' teaching - "everything they do is for men to see" - We want to be noticed and gain recognition from others – Matthew 6 "They have received their reward in full"
- C. Source of significance drive - from God and should be fulfilled through His covenant relationships; ultimately fulfilled only by Him
- D. Post Game Party – Saul's jealousy of David after the victory over Goliath
- V. Conclusion – "God has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Him" – Psalm 42:1-2 "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God"



Key Terms

Lesson 8 – Unio Mystica: Am I Alone?

Buyer's Remorse: A strong feeling of guilt or regret when one has made a purchase of something that would deeply satisfy, but it does not.

Hunger for Significance: A God-given, inherent drive within humans that desires recognition and relational significance. Dr. Tackett compares our significance drive to our sexual drive—holy and divine when fulfilled within God's design. We often distort this drive and attempt to find our significance in material possessions, our career, our spouse, etc.

Phylacteries: Small boxes containing slips of paper with scripture written on them that were fastened on the foreheads of scribes (see Numbers 15:38, Deuteronomy 22:12)]. Jesus references phylacteries in Matthew 23:1-7.

Prostitute: Somebody who receives money in return for sexual acts or a person who sells their abilities, talent, or skills for an unworthy purpose. When we look to other means of fulfilling our drive for significance, God says we are "prostituting ourselves."

Tassels: God commanded the children of Israel to tie tassels on their robes in order help the remember the commands of the Lord. See Numbers 15:38-39.

Unio Mystica: The mystical union that exists between God and man. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God has invited us into an intimate, personal relationship with Him. In a larger sense, this mystery extends to the intimate union found within marriage and the church.



Scripture References
Lesson 8 – Unio Mystica: Am I Alone?

John 14:16-20	Eph 5:31-32	Titus 1:5	Eph 4:11-13, 14
1 Tim 3:15	Col 1:27	John 15:5	2 Cor 5:17
Gal 2:20	1 Cor 3:16-17	1 Cor 6:19	1 Cor 12:27
Rom 12:4-5	1 Cor 10:17	Rom 16:25-26	Eph 1:9-10
Eph 3:6	Gal 3:28-29	Eph 2:19-22	John 17:20-23
Eph 4:3-5	1 Pet 1:22	Gal 6:2	James 5:16
Eph 4:21	Eph 4:32	Col 3:16	Rom 14:19
Rom 12:10, 16	1 Thess 5:11	Eph 5:21	Gal 5:13
Rom 15:7	1 Thess 4:18	Rom 15:5	Phil 2:3
John 13:34-35	Deut 22:11-13	Deut 15:38-39	Matt 23:1-7
1 Sam 18:6-10	Matt 6:1-18	Isa 55:1-2	John 17:3
Isa 53:5	Psa 42:1-2		



Recommended Reading

Lesson 8 – Unio Mystica: Am I Alone?

Please note that not everything in these suggested resources should be considered endorsed by Focus on the Family. Nevertheless, Dr. Tackett has found this material helpful. Scripture should be your first and primary resource.

- Colson, Charles. 2003. *Being the Body*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing Group.
- Getz, Gene A. 1976. *Building Up One Another*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- St. Augustine. 426, translated, edited and reprinted 1958. *City of God*. New York, NY: Image Books.