The Incarnation of Jesus and the Body of Christ

What do the scriptures really teach about the Incarnation of Jesus? In the Church of God and Christ Mennonite, we are taught that Jesus did not receive His Humanity from Mary. Occasionally there is discussion about this, with most people saying, “Well, what does it really matter? It is not that important.” However in recent times it has become obvious that to question this teaching can create repercussions in the church, to the point of excommunication for not being in unity with the doctrines of the church. This then becomes a very serious and important issue. In this article we want to explore this teaching from the historical understanding of this church and compare it with the Word of God.

To simply accept a teaching because it is what the forefathers taught should not be sufficient for the true believer. We need to diligently search the scriptures to see if these things are really so. There is enough said about the divinity and humanity of Christ in the Bible to conclude that it is a matter of importance. I will quote a fair amount of scripture, and I urge the reader to carefully read each passage as you move through this article. If you skip the scriptures, you will miss the deep meaning. It is after all the scriptures that speak.

Here is some food for thought. The incarnation of Christ (Jesus coming to earth in the flesh) is the single most important happening in all the history of the world!

A deeper understanding of the incarnation will bring us to a renewed vision of the work of Christ for all mankind, so much so that we will come to see our shallow and unregenerate hearts in a new light. This theme is so central to the gospel, that we could say until we see how Christ came in the flesh, we will not fully understand the gospel. I would beg the reader not to ostracise these thoughts at the outset, but please give them your serious and open-minded consideration. What I present here is written in human weakness and I acknowledge at best, a very imperfect understanding of these very deep and important truths!

John 1:1-14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
There are some simple yet profound truths for us to consider in the above scripture. If we ponder these truths together with other clear scriptures we will see the following points:

1) The Word is Jesus.

2) The Word was made flesh.

3) The Word is our light.

4) The Light shines on every person born.

5) God marks His temple and dwelling place with Light.

6) If we receive Him the Light indwells us and we become sons and daughters of God.
   a. This makes us brothers and sister with each other and with Christ.
   b. This makes us part of the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Church of Christ, and the Kingdom of Christ by becoming partakers of the Divine Nature of Christ.

7) Jesus being made flesh is essential to our salvation. Our relationship with Him, and our relationships with each other, are deeply embodied in the incarnation.

First let’s look at the meaning of the word “incarnation.” The Free Dictionary has the following definition: (1) the doctrine that the Son of God was conceived in the womb of Mary and that Jesus is true God and true man. (2) A bodily manifestation of a supernatural being.

We all readily agree that Jesus is in fact the Son of God, sent down from heaven to live on earth in the form of a man. John 6:48-51, “I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” We do not question the fact that Jesus had the divine nature, the spiritual part of Him which was given by His Father. We also may be partakers of this divine nature.

2 Peter 1:4, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” We do not partake of the physical flesh and blood as some teach, but may partake of His spiritual nature, that part which came down from heaven. John 6:54, “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” By taking on Himself the flesh and nature of the human race, Jesus opened the door for us to experience His divine nature.

The title that is characteristic of Jesus in the New Testament is Son of Man; it occurs some eighty times in the Gospels, and was His Own accustomed title for Himself. In 1Timothy 2:5 we read, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Jesus was also the Son of God and
was miraculously and supernaturally conceived in the womb of Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost. He was both fully man and fully God.

Jesus had a very human body. Luke 24:39-43, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43 And he took it, and did eat before them.”

He suffered the same human feelings and needs as we do. Matthew 21:18, “Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.” Matthew 26:38, “Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.” John 12:27, “Now is my soul troubled.” John 11:33, “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.” John 11:35, “Jesus wept.”

Jesus was tempted and struggled with His flesh. Hebrews 4:15, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Matthew 26:39, “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Matthew 4:1, “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” Hebrews 5:8, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.”

What he went through in the garden of Gethsemane was similar, but really deeper and more profound, than what we go through in life when we get converted and at different times as we struggle with our flesh. Jesus had to give up His will, that deep desire to have His own way. He said, “nevertheless not my will but thine be done.” This shows us that the struggle he was facing was one of not wanting to do God’s will, but knowing he needed to be obedient. His temptations were also very real, in ALL points like ours. We can simply take God’s word at face value. A temptation by its very nature implies a desire to sin, or else it would not be a temptation. And if it were not possible for us to sin, how then could we be tempted to sin? Temptation by its very nature implies the possibility of DOING.

Mary was His mother. Here are a few of many scriptures that tell us this. Matthew 1:18, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” Matthew 1:16, “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” Matthew 2:11, “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” Acts 1:14, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”

Jesus was conceived by Mary and made of her flesh. Luke 1:31, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.” Galatians 4:4, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”
Conception is defined by the Free Dictionary as: (1) Formation of a viable zygote by the union of the male sperm and female ovum; fertilization. (2) The entity formed by the union of the male sperm and female ovum; an embryo or zygote.” We can simply take the scriptures at face value when they tell us that Mary conceived in her womb and that the Son of God was made OF her.

Jesus was the seed of Abraham and David according to the flesh. In Genesis 22:18, God told Abraham,

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” This blessing is eternal life for all who believe in Jesus, who was of the seed of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Galatians 3:16, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

Hebrews 2:16, “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

Romans 1:3, “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.”

Acts 2:29-30, “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.”

Here again we can take the scriptures for what they say. Jesus was a relative of Abraham and David ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, or in other words a blood relative. He could not have been a blood relative had he not received His humanity from His mother.

In Hebrews it is made even clearer that Jesus was human in the physical sense. Hebrews 2:14-18,

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

This scripture brings out a very profound and deep truth that we need to catch. Jesus PARDOOK of (shared) our human flesh and blood. Why? So that He could destroy the devil, and deliver us from bondage! We can live in victory now in OUR flesh because He set the example for us! This is made possible through the fact that He also possessed a human body, one that received true, human DNA from a true human mother. In fact we are His brethren. He did not take upon Himself the nature of angels, but He took on Himself the seed of Abraham, that is, Abraham’s flesh and blood, the same kind of human blood that you and I possess. Had He not possessed real human flesh, He could not have been the perfect sacrifice. We could not now say that he was made like us “IN ALL THINGS,” and that he truly understands what it is like to be us! Hebrews 2:11, “For both he that sanctifieth (Jesus) and they who are sanctified (us) are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Note that Jesus and us ARE ALL OF ONE, and this does not embarrass Him. He considers us brothers!
We need to look at the historical groundwork which was laid for the present belief. In the years 1554 – 1556, Menno Simons wrote extensively about the incarnation. As we move through his writings on the topic we can easily see that he based his views on faulty science. He did not have an understanding of how human conception worked. In the book “The Complete Writings of Menno Simons,” at least 160 pages are given to explaining his understanding of the incarnation from page 783 – 943. On page 784 in the publishers introduction we read, “As has been noted elsewhere, the Swiss Brethren never shared the view of Menno and the Dutch Mennonites on the Incarnation, and the Dutch Mennonites themselves did not long retain it.”

Menno very sincerely believed the scriptures taught that a mother did not contribute anything to her child. He taught very forcefully that human reproduction uses the same principle as sowing a kernel of grain in a field. The womb is the same as the soil in that it receives the seed and nourishes, feeds and protects it until birth. He maintained that all the properties of the new child are contained in the father’s seed. He bases his whole theory of the incarnation, on this principle. He also allows this understanding to color his belief of the church or mother of the believer.

We know today that his view is not correct and we give him the benefit of the doubt. If he had understood the process of conception correctly he no doubt would have formulated a different view. However we cannot excuse the fact that he very seriously misuses and misapplies scripture due to his faulty reasoning. In fact he used the scripture upon which to base his theory, and in so doing created a false teaching. The reader is urged to peruse Menno’s writings for his own learning, especially his Reply to Martin Micron on pages 834 – 913 in the volume “The Complete Writings of Menno Simons.” Here you will sense the spirit of Menno on the topic of the Incarnation. The publisher’s introduction on pages 836 and 837 has the following comment: “The whole discussion is tedious and tiresome. While no one can blame Menno for the primitive science in his day, yet one cannot but wish that he would have had more good sense then to waddle through the mire as he does in this monotonous and repetitious discussion. As a matter of plain fact, Menno was simply wrong scientifically in his central argument that human generation and inheritance rest with the father only. His aim to uphold a high view of the person of our Lord, was of course laudable. But his arguments are wearisome, and his style is less than courteous; there is no excuse for the sharp polemics of sixteenth-century authors. Section X is perhaps the only edifying section in the entire Reply. The average reader may turn to that, and omit the rest of the book, for it is unprofitable.” (End of quote)

This faulty reasoning created the basis for the early Mennonite statements of faith and the belief used today by the Holdeman people. On page 40 of “Bible Doctrine and Practice” we read, quote; “Menno Simons wrote, concerning the body of Jesus, “We say and teach according to the plain testimony of John, that the word was made flesh, not of Mary, but in Mary” (The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, p. 910). In other words, He did not take His flesh from Mary. The distinction of Christ’s body being formed in Mary, rather than being of her, points out the truth that while man is subject to inherent sin, Christ was not. Since Jesus was one of the Godhead, He could not sin. “He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim. 2:13). “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). In the “Thirty Three Articles of Faith” we read, “His flesh or body became flesh, not of Mary or of any created substance, but only of the Word of life which had come down from heaven” (Art. 14, p. 47).” (End of quote)
These statements stand in stark contrast to the scriptures that state that Jesus was in fact created “OF MARY.” Galatians 4:4, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.” Matthew 1:16, “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” Luke 1:26 – 42, “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. 39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; 40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: 42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”

Modern science has revealed to us what happens at conception, and how our physical bodies are formed. We know that we receive 23 chromosomes from our father and 23 from our mother. Our genetic code or DNA is shared equally by both parents. A fascinating bit of science relates to the mitochondrial DNA our cells contain. This DNA is passed to us maternally, and by using this DNA, forensic scientists are able to trace our parentage through our maternal bloodline. Although we readily admit the ability of God the Creator to create in any way He chooses, we clearly see by the above scriptures coupled with science that Jesus was OF Mary.

It should be noted here that the 18 articles of faith drawn up at Dordrecht, Holland in on April 21, 1632, more than 75 years AFTER Menno wrote his thesis, are less specific on this point, stating as follows: “But as to how and in what manner this precious body was prepared, and how the Word became flesh, and He Himself man, in regard to this we content ourselves with the statement pertaining to this matter which the worthy evangelists have left us in their accounts, according to which we confess with all the saints, that He is the Son of the living God, in whom alone consists all our hope, consolation, redemption, and salvation, which we neither may nor must seek in any other.”

We now come to the question of what is gained or lost by our understanding of the incarnation. Is it important? Much is said in scripture about Christ’s shared humanity and the fact that we can share of
the divine nature. Therefore we must conclude it is of great importance. Although this article does not spend much time with how the divine nature is imparted to us, we want to look at a profound truth.

God was present in His son in a spiritual sense. John 14:10, “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” We want to consider the dwelling place of God. This is important to the incarnation because we see a supernatural being (God) dwelling in a physical or human body (Jesus). To understand this better we will look at how God has manifested or shown His presence throughout history. He has always clearly showed His dwelling place to His people.

In the Garden of Eden God walked in the garden in the cool of the day and spoke with Adam and Eve. He spoke with the patriarchs like Noah, Abraham and Moses so that there was no doubt of His presence. He showed Himself to them in a way they could perceive and understand. He spoke to Moses from a burning bush and from Mount Sinai in a cloud and in a fire. God revealing Himself through fire, cloud and light is referred to by ancient Hebrew writers as “Shekinah.” In Hebrew Shekinah means "Divine Manifestation," "Divine Presence," "Divine Power," "Glory," and "Grace."

He revealed Himself to the Children of Israel in a special and continual way. In Exodus 13:21-22 we read “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: 22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

The pillar of fire and cloud was so prominent that even their neighbors were aware of the fact that God was with them. Numbers 14:14, “And they will tell /it/ to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.”

God’s presence was with His people continually throughout their sojourn in the wilderness. Nehemiah 9:19, “Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.”

When Moses completed the wilderness tabernacle God moved His presence there, where he remained in a visible form throughout all their travels. Exodus 40:33-38, “And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. 34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: 37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”
When Solomon finished building the new temple in Jerusalem, God moved His presence there. 1 Kings 8:10 – 11, “And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.”

Several ancient writers including Eusebius and Josephus refer to the Shekinah leaving the Jewish temple in the years 66 – 70 A.D. during the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and moving to the mount of Olives where it resided for 3 ½ years before eventually disappearing.

We again see the light marking God’s presence reappearing over the stable in Bethlehem. Matthew 2:9, “When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.” God marked the coming of His Son with signs and wonders so that those who were awaiting His coming would recognize the event.

Jesus was filled with the presence of His Father God from birth and in this way was a restoration of the relationship God had with Adam in the garden. Adam was able to personally communicate with God before he sinned. Sin ruined this relationship. God restored it in Jesus who is called the second Adam, and Jesus overcame sin in order to restore the relationship with God for us. This would not have been possible if Christ had not had the same flesh as Adam.

God incarnate! The melding of human flesh with the divine nature! The great and beautiful work that Christ accomplished for us is that through his victory he opened the way for us to also be restored to this relationship with God! God has clearly marked the new temple, our fleshly bodies, as the place of His dwelling in the new Dispensation of Grace.

It has often been said among the Holdeman people that “Our church has the Candlestick of God. It is the only church in the world that does. When John Holdeman left the old church he took the candlestick with him.” We must ask in a spirit of candor where the scriptural basis is for this idea?

To be sure the scriptures speak of a candlestick and candlesticks, which were part of worship in the Old Testament temple. The seven candle sticks used in the Jewish temple were a symbol of the presence of God. Revelation speaks of seven golden candlesticks and in chapter 2 verses 1 – 5 tells the Angel of the church in Ephesus that unless he repents the candlestick will be removed out of its place. We note that this candlestick is one of seven and the warning is to the angel of the church. No where do we find that there is one candlestick of God that represents the blessing, favor, or dwelling of God upon one group or church in the New Testament. We do however find that God clearly indicated His place of dwelling with light and fire in the new dispensation.

Acts 2:1-4, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
Our bodies are God’s temple as we read in 1 Corinthians 6:19, “What? know ye not that your body is the
temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” The church,
the kingdom, the temple, the bride and body of Christ are now to be found within us, as stated in Luke
17:21, “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” 2
Corinthians 4:6-7, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our
hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have
this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

To be sure there is a collective aspect to the church as we see in Acts 2: 1-4. The Holy Spirit came upon
them as they were together in one accord in one place, but the light or marker was not given as one
light above the whole group as previously done in the old dispensation. It was given to EACH ONE
INDIVIDUALLY. This is very significant! The kingdom, church, and temple of God cannot be found in a
nation or group. It is given individually and is so marked and described by scripture. The collective
experience of fellowship is accomplished by those upon whom this mark has fallen, those who have
been indwelled by the Holy Spirit. And we have this promise in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three
are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Our collective experience does not
need an entire organized conference with boundaries drawn to fulfill God’s plan. We do however need
each other and are instructed not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. In Matthew 18:18-19
we read, “Verily I say unto you, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN:
and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, THAT IF TWO OF
YOU SHALL AGREE ON EARTH AS TOUCHING ANYTHING THAT THEY SHALL ASK, IT SHALL BE DONE FOR THEM OF MY FATHER
WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.” This brings the corporate experience, together with the accompanied blessing,
down to as few as two individuals agreeing together to ask direction of God.

So you may ask, “What does all this have to do with the incarnation?” Much every way! Remember that
the incarnation is “a bodily manifestation of a supernatural being.” The incarnation was not finished
with the earthly body of Jesus, but is made manifest in His brethren, all those who possess the mark of
the Spirit of God! 2 Corinthians 4:6-7, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,
hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus
Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God,
and not of us!” We personally share in in the incarnation of Christ in our flesh! 2 Corinthians 4:10 – 11,
“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made
manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life
also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”

My friends! A true understanding of the incarnation will open the scriptures to us in a wonderful way!
There are numerous references to the mysteries of the gospel, kingdom, God, Christ, godliness, and
faith. A proper understanding of the incarnation will help to unlock these mysteries for us. The New
Testament writers declare these mysteries to us with the intent that these mysteries will be solved, and
that we will understand!

Here are some of the scriptures that reference the mysteries:

Mark 4:11, “And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.”
Romans 11:25, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery.”

1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

Colossians 1:26 – 27, “Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Romans 16:25 – 26, “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”

1 Corinthians 2:7 – 11, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

Friends, what wonderful and beautiful truths are revealed to us by God, through Jesus by His Spirit! As it says in Colossians 1:27, we can know the riches of the glory of this mystery, CHRIST IN US, the hope of glory!

This makes clear the scripture in 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

It is clear that we must reject any system that does not put Christ clearly at the head. The agenda of a misplaced view of the incarnation is power, because it detracts from the individual connection with Christ and gives it to a corporate body instead. You need to keep Christ at arms-length from humanity in order to maintain control. This was the error of the Jewish leaders in Christ’s day. God’s dwelling place is no longer a corporate body or nation but in the INDIVIDUAL heart. We do not access Christ through the church or an earthly priest because Christ is now our personal high priest forever. This is more easily understood when we contemplate our personal desire to change things in the lives of our children or fellow believers. We have a tendency to want them to conform to the church and to do it right now. The pressure is from "us" and is legal in nature as opposed to spiritual. We don’t experience this pressure from God.
If you elevate Christ by giving him a divine body only, instead of melding the divine with the human, you have nullified the work of Christ in showing us mortals that we indeed can overcome sin if we are indwelt by His Spirit. He set the example. He had a human body that was indwelt from birth by the Spirit of His Father, and we have a human body that is indwelt by the same Spirit after our new birth. This phenomenon began on the day of Pentecost. The Old Testament required the corporate body with all its rituals, and an individual had to access God through the very human priesthood. If you place the light (candle stick) over the corporate body instead of over the individual, you create a double headed creature. You now have to find Christ twice, once in yourself, and once in the church, to experience the assumed blessing of completeness. You now have to align two dwelling places for God. In essence you are combining the Old Testament with the new.

This does not negate finding Christ in fellowship, rather it enhances and brings more glory to the corporate experience! Keeping the sacraments and blending our lives becomes a natural out-pouring of the inner light. We cannot help but speak and act on those things we have seen and heard!

In 1st and 2nd John we read that he who says Christ is not come in the flesh is antichrist. It seems organised religion in general (organized by man) has at least some element of antichrist. Organized religion wishes to assume the role of Christ for the individual believer by saying it needs to prove whether or not an individual is saved. The scriptures teach us in Romans 8:16, “The SPIRIT ITSELF beareth witness with OUR spirit, that we are the children of God.” The tongue of fire sits on the individual, not on the corporate body. We do not need to be proved by men to see if we are God’s children. This proving is given by the Spirit Itself and is manifested by the Spirit to each other in the kingdom of God by the LIGHT possessed by the individual! The light in a church is only as bright as that light which the individual members possess. Galatians 1:10, “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

1 John 2:20 – 28, “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. 24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

Romans 8:1 – 18, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,
God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: ⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. ⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. ¹⁰ And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. ¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. ¹³ For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

But antichrist will hear of no such hope of glory. His hope does not rest wholly in the Christ within, but partially in his own works, or faithfulness, or endurance. He focuses on laws, regulations, creeds, ordinances, observances, lineages, traditions and religious exercises, all of which are designed to assure his right standing with God. He is thus denying the Father and the Son, for God's order is, "You are kept by the POWER OF GOD, through FAITH." ¹ Peter 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Anything added to the anointing within to try and fill some place or function in our lives not fulfilled BY THE ANOINTING ALONE - is antichrist!

It is entirely possible to make a god of “unity.” This is a spirit of antichrist because it detracts from finding our way with our Saviour and places our faith and trust instead in a brotherhood. Instead of being united by the simple light of the gospel, we are required to be united by embracing a system. The mark of this error shows itself by seeking submission to a brotherhood rather than to Christ, and believing this is submission to Christ. A dear brother summed it up very succinctly in an email which I here quote with his permission.

“I have come to realize that the Truth of God is clear and alive on earth from creation to the end times. It was, is, and will be. In this dispensation it is written in the hearts of men, and as such we are each personally in possession of the possibility of being connected to it. Where the Holdeman church may be in error is that we have made more of unity then personal commitment. We are like a branch on the tree of Truth with a book and a way of life between us and the tree itself. We filter everything we get
from the tree by the book. We have a generation now that finds themselves unable to go ahead on their own conviction because they personally don't have any on a lot of issues. They are scared to search for fear of deception. If they read the Word and try to find a way they run into things that don't add up and are then confused with no were to turn. When we commit to finding conviction from God and His Word we will find a way. This is possible to do in the Holdeman fellowship or out of it. I do think that either way, each individual will need to make some choices on doctrinal matters and choose how they will follow their consciences.” (End of Quote)

There are brethren who are under church discipline for “asking their questions.” God will judge these situations in His own good way. May we each individually find our way with our Lord and be a temple with the visible sign of His Spirit indwelling. We will be safe from the antichrist and will be in spiritual unity with those disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, as well as those believers past and present who have the inner light. No other way will be sufficient.