

The first of these current unity forums took place at Ozark College in Missouri in 1984. Those who planned it called it a "Summit" on unity. The following is an article I wrote at the time.

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE KIND OF UNITY

Jim E. Waldron

A lanky snake got in touch with a fairly fat frog. The frog was flattered by the attention of the snake, yet he was a bit apprehensive as to what was on the snake's mind.

"Unity is on my mind," declared the lanky, lean snake.

"Unity?" asked the fairly fat frog. "What is the benefit of unity between makes and frogs?"

"Oh, many things!" exclaimed the lanky, lean snake. I, for example, envision close communion between snakes and frogs. It will provide warmth and energy, especially when snakes and frogs get together at meal time. I mean close communion. Yes, sir, real close communion."

"But how could the two of us ever get together to talk about unity?" asked the fairly fat frog.

"We could have a Summit," declared the lanky, lean snake.

"A Summit?" gulped the friendly, fat frog. "A Summit? Do you mean a Summit like the Russians and Americans have? What would we do at a Summit?"

"Eat ... er, I mean plan programs where we can work together," said the snake.

"Where could we have such a Summit?"

"At my place, of course."

"But what would we talk about?"

"There are many things to talk about. But we must discuss ways snakes can get together with frogs. We have been kept apart too long."

"Will we discuss the evenly spaced row of ivory teeth you have?" asked the thintly fearful frog.

"Oh, of course not" exclaimed the lanky, lean snake. Only knuckleheads bring up such subjects. If anyone wants to press that subject, we will not invite him."

"Now I wouldn't want to be classified as a knucklehead," said the fairly festive frog. "But there are many who are concerned about your evenly spaced row of ivory teeth."

"Well, I certainly have no intentions of giving up my teeth. I have had this evenly spaced row of ivory teeth for over 100 years and I am joined to them."

"Speaking of 100 years ago, didn't a lot of your ancestors take away a number of our congregating places?" said the fairly fat frog who with flaccid fervor sought to stem the failing of his fleeting faith. "In fact," he continued, "as I recall, many faithful friends were forced from their property because of that evenly spaced row of ivory teeth."

Flashing a toothy smile, the lanky, lean snake sighed, "that's negative. We will make this Summit meeting positive. Negatives like the loss of property will not be discussed. Everything must be on the upbeat. We must not dwell on the differences between snakes and frogs. That would be detrimental to our goal. Remember the goal is for snakes to unite with frogs. There are con-artists who want to keep frogs at enmity with snakes.

"People who point out differences between snakes and frogs are erecting walls instead

of building bridges. When they dwell on my evenly spaced row of ivory teeth or my wide mouth for swallowing things, they become architects of anarchy and masons of mutiny. It cannot be expected that snakes will be transformed into frogs. We will just have to accept unity in diversity. Untold harm has been done to the cause of snake and frog unity by stressing differences. Things argued into prominence would long since have died if not given artificial respiration through debate. Snakes do not like to debate; they would rather eat."

"What will we discuss then?" asked the fairly fat frog whose feeble faith had finally fizzled.

"We will discuss cooperation in meetings and missions. We can talk about your coming to my den for dinner and I to your pad for plate lunch. We must emphasize the importance of togetherness between snakes and frogs. In fact, snakes and frogs must unite."

"Jolly," said the fairly fat frog as he gushingly invited the snake to tadpole school to lecture on the urgency of snake and frog unity.

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