

2021 International Chinese-speaking Conference

**The Intrinsic and Organic Building Up
of the Church as the Body of Christ**

Outline & Scriptures

KEY STATEMENTS

- ① We must walk in the way of life to live by the tree of life according to the spirit, not in the way of death to live by the tree of the knowledge of right and wrong according to the self.
- ② The organic function of the church is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- ③ We need to imitate the apostle to bring the local churches into the fellowship of the Body of Christ and follow the apostle's footsteps to bring all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ.
- ④ The crucial point of the apostles' teaching concerns the Triune God processed to dispense Himself as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit into His chosen ones so that they may be brought into an organic union to receive the divine transfusion and thereby become sons of God and members of Christ; as a result, they become the Body of Christ to express Christ.

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The Intrinsic and Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ

Message One

The Intrinsic Essence of the Church for Its Organic Existence

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:2; John 1:12-13; 3:29-30;

12:24; Gen. 2:21-23; 1 Cor. 12:12, 28

- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- Gen. 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen. 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken.
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Outline

I. The intrinsic essence of the church is the divine life, which generates the church—1 John 1:2; 5:1:

- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
- 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God, and everyone who loves Him who has begotten loves him also who has been begotten of Him.

- A. The intrinsic essence of the church is the divine life, the indestructible life, which the processed Triune God has dispensed into us and is now dispensing into us; this divine life is actually the processed and now-dispensing Triune God—John 14:6; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:4:

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

2 Cor. 5:4 For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

1. The divine life generates us by the regeneration of the Spirit in our spirit; the divine Spirit begets the human spirit, and these two spirits are mingled as one—John 3:3, 5-6; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

2. When we are regenerated, we are made the children of God as the bride of Christ, who is the Bridegroom, for His increase, as typified by Eve as the counterpart to Adam—John 1:12-13; 3:29-30; Gen. 2:21-23:

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Gen. 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.

Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

Gen. 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken.

- a. Before Eve came into existence, she was a rib of Adam, a part of Adam; according to this revelation, we can say that before the church came into existence, she was a part of Christ; just as the members of our physical body are parts of us, the members of Christ

are parts of Christ—vv. 21-23; Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 12:5; cf. Acts 9:5.

- Gen. 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen. 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken.
- Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,
- Eph. 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph. 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph. 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Acts 9:5 And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

b. Just as Adam's rib imparted life into Eve to make her Adam's counterpart, so Christ's eternal, divine, indestructible life imparts life into us to make us His counterpart—Gen. 2:22; Heb. 7:16; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2.

- Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Heb. 7:16 Who has been appointed not according to the law of a fleshy commandment but according to the power of an indestructible life.
- 1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
- Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

B. Christ became the intrinsic essence of the church through the release of His divine life as the one grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying there for His multiplication—John 12:24; Luke 12:49-50.

- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!
- Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!

C. Christ became the intrinsic essence of the church through the impartation of His divine life as the firstborn Son of God in His resurrection, that God may have many sons as the many brothers of Christ—1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11-12.

- 1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- Rom. 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Heb. 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- Heb. 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."

- D. The many brothers of Christ are His many branches grafted into Him, the true vine in the universe, to bear much fruit for His enlargement in His spreading so that they might express the Triune God as His organism; when the branches of the vine receive a sufficient supply of the life-giving Spirit as the life-juice of Christ, they bear fruit as the overflow of the inner life supply—John 15:1, 4-5, 16, 8; Rom. 11:17, 24.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

John 15:8 In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so you will become My disciples.

Rom. 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a fellow partaker of the root of fatness of the olive tree,

Rom. 11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree!

- E. This organism of the Triune God is the organic Body of Christ, constituted with His many brothers as the many members of His organic Body—Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 12:5.

Eph. 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

II. We need to see and experience the organic existence of the church—Eph. 1:17:

Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

- A. The church exists in the universe as the one universal church of God for His universal expression, the fullness of God—1 Cor. 10:32; 12:28; Eph. 3:19b.

1 Cor. 10:32 Do not become a stumbling block, both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God;

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Eph. 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

- B. The church is spreading in many localities on the earth as the many local churches to be His local expressions—Rev. 1:4, 11:

Rev. 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

1. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul puts apostles (who are universal), prophets and teachers (who are both universal and local), and deacons and elders (who are local) all together; this

means that the word church in this verse implies the universal church and all the local churches.

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

2. In the eyes of God the universal church and all the local churches are just “the church”; the processed and now-dispensing Triune God is one, and He is the very essence of the church; therefore, this church, in both its universal and local aspects, is one church.

C. When we come back to the intrinsic essence of the church for its organic existence, we will not talk wrongly about the erroneous teaching that the local churches could be different from one another; all the churches are the unique, one organism of the processed and dispensing Triune God.

D. According to the Scriptures, the practical, sevenfold oneness is for us to be (1) one in teaching (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 16:1; Acts 2:42; Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3; Eph. 4:13-14), (2) one in practice (1 Cor. 11:16; 14:33b-34), (3) one in thinking (Phil. 2:2, 5-8; 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:10), (4) one in speaking (Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10), and (5), (6), & (7) one in essence, appearance, and expression (Rev. 1:11-12).

1 Cor. 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Cor. 7:17 However as the Lord has apportioned to each one, as God has called each one, so let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.

1 Cor. 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, just as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also do.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Rom. 16:17 Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.

1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness,

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

1 Cor. 11:16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we do not have such a custom of being so, neither the churches of God.

1 Cor. 14:33b ...As in all the churches of the saints,

1 Cor. 14:34 The women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they should be subject, even as the law also says.

Phil. 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

Phil. 2:6 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped,

Phil. 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

- Phil. 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.
- Phil. 4:2 I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.
- 1 Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.
- Rom. 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.
- Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- Rev. 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

III. We must continuously exercise our spirit (1 Tim. 4:7) and turn our heart to the Lord (2 Cor. 3:16-18) in order to stay on the way of life in the reality of the intrinsic essence of the church for its organic existence:

- 1 Tim. 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
- 2 Cor. 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Cor. 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
- 2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- A. We must walk in the way of life to live by the tree of life according to the spirit, not in the way of death to live by the tree of the knowledge of right and wrong according to the self—Gen. 2:9; Rom. 8:4, 6; 2 Cor. 2:13; Matt. 16:24.
- Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
- 2 Cor. 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.
- Matt. 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
- B. We stay on the way of life by loving the Lord to the uttermost; to believe in the Lord is to receive Him as life; to love the Lord is to enjoy Him as life—Mark 12:30; S. S. 1:4a.
- Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
- S.S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you - The king has brought me into his chambers - / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love you.
- C. The love between us and the Lord depends on our thoughts:
1. In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul says that he betrothed us to one husband to present us as a pure virgin to Christ with a proper love toward Him in order to enjoy Him; then in verse 3 Paul tells us that it is possible for our thoughts to be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity

toward Christ.

2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

2. The following symptoms of problems with man's thoughts are all hindrances to the enjoyment of Christ as life:

a. The first symptom of problems with man's thoughts is having hardened thoughts—3:14.

2 Cor. 3:14 But their thoughts were hardened; for until the present day the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant, it not being unveiled to them that the veil is being done away with in Christ.

b. The second symptom of problems with man's thoughts is being blinded by Satan—4:4.

2 Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.

c. The third symptom of problems with man's thoughts is rebellion—10:4-5.

2 Cor. 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds,

2 Cor. 10:5 As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.

d. The fourth symptom of problems with man's thoughts is corruption—11:3.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

3. We should pray, "O Lord, search my thoughts, and rescue my thoughts so that they can focus solely and entirely on You"—Rom. 8:6; Psa. 139:23-24.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Psa. 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me, and know my anxious thoughts;

Psa. 139:24 And see if there is some harmful way in me, / And lead me on the eternal way.

4. To enjoy Christ as the intrinsic essence of the church, we must have a burning love toward Him by giving Him the first place in all things—Rev. 2:4-5, 7; Col. 1:18b; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Rom. 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.

2 Tim. 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

2 Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

D. May we continuously receive the merciful compassions of our God (Heb. 4:16; Luke 1:78-79) so that we may remain on the way of life, the line of life, and in the maintenance of life by enjoying Christ as the tree of life in the flow of life for God's building in life by our growth in life; this is for us to remain in the intrinsic essence of the church for its organic existence (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1-2; Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; John 6:57, 63; 7:38-39; 20:22).

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Luke 1:78 Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high,

Luke 1:79 To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

The Intrinsic and Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ

Message Two

The Intrinsic Growth of the Church for Its Organic Increase

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:13, 15-16;

1 Cor. 3:6-7; 12:12; John 3:29-30a, 34

- Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- 1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
- 1 Cor. 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
- John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

Outline

I. The intrinsic growth, the organic growth, of the church is the growth in the divine life, which is the processed and dispensing Triune God—Eph. 4:15-16; 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14:

- Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

- A. The church grows in this life, by this life, with this life, and through this life; we were born of the divine life, which is God Himself, and now God is causing us to grow—John 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 3:6c.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

- B. Colossians 2:19 speaks of the growth of the Body, which is the growth of God within us:

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

1. To grow is to have Christ added into us—1 Cor. 3:6-7; Gal. 4:19.

1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

1 Cor. 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

Gal. 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

2. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head—Eph. 4:15-16:

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

- a. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

- b. The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head—Eph. 4:15-16.

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

3. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Col. 2:19:

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

- a. God is not growing in Himself, because He is complete and perfect; He is growing within us.

- b. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way.

- c. The more God is added into us, the more growth He gives to us; this is the way that God gives the growth—1 Cor. 3:6-7.

1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

1 Cor. 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

d. Only God can give growth; only God can give us Himself, and without Him we cannot have growth—vv. 6-7:

1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

1 Cor. 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

(1) The addition of God into us is the growth He gives.

(2) For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—Rom. 8:11.

Rom. 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

(3) For God to give us the growth in life means that He is increasing Himself within us.

4. How much God grows within us depends on how much room we give Him to grow—Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:16:

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Col. 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

a. When we give God room in us, He expands and increases within us; this increase is His growth in us.

b. God's growth in us becomes our growth because He and we are one—1 Cor. 6:17.

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

5. The growth of the church as the Body of Christ is the growth of God in the church—Col. 2:19.

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

C. The church grows until it reaches maturity—"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"—Eph. 4:13:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

1. Christ has a fullness, the fullness has a stature, and the stature has a measure.

2. The Body of Christ is His fullness, His expression—1:23:

Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

a. Christ, who is the infinite God without any limitation, is so great that He fills all things in all things.

b. Such a great Christ needs the church to be His fullness for His complete expression—vv. 22-23.

Eph. 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

c. Through the enjoyment of the riches of Christ (3:8), we become His fullness for His

complete expression.

Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

3. The fullness of Christ, which is His Body, has a stature; the stature of the fullness of Christ is the stature of the Body of Christ—4:13; 1:23.

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

4. The fullness of Christ has a stature, and this stature has a measure—4:13:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

a. Because the stature of the church, the Body of Christ, grows, Paul speaks of its measure; this measure is the full-grown man—v. 13.

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

b. We are on the way toward a full-grown man, toward the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

(1) To have the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is not a matter for individuals; it is a matter of a corporate Body.

(2) As Christ grows within us, we will gradually arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

(3) We need to press on until we all arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; this is our goal, and we must diligently press toward it until we all reach it together—Phil. 3:12-14.

Phil. 3:12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Phil. 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,

Phil. 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.

II. The organic increase of the church is the increase of Christ in His organic Body as His bride—John 3:29-30a:

John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

A. The fullness of Christ is His Body, and the Body of Christ is His counterpart, His bride—Eph. 4:12-13, 16; 5:25-27.

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her
- Eph. 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- Eph. 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

B. “He who has the bride is the bridegroom...He must increase”—John 3:29-30a:

- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

1. The increase in John 3:30a is the bride in verse 29, and the bride is a composition of all the regenerated people.

- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

2. Regeneration not only brings the divine life into the believers, but it also makes them the corporate bride for Christ's increase—vv. 3, 5-6, 29-30a.

- John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

3. Christ increases by regenerating the redeemed sinners, making them His bride—v. 29.

- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

C. Chapter 3 of the Gospel of John reveals the increasing Christ, the One who speaks the words of God and who gives the Spirit not by measure—v. 34:

- John 3:1 But there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.
- John 3:2 This one came to Him by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.
- John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- John 3:4 Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?
- John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- John 3:7 Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born anew.

John 3:8 The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it goes; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

John 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, How can these things be?

John 3:10 Jesus answered and said to him, You are a teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things?

John 3:11 Truly, truly, I say to you, We speak that which we know and testify of that which we have seen, and yet you do not receive our testimony.

John 3:12 If I told you of the things on earth and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you of the things in heaven?

John 3:13 And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

John 3:17 For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

John 3:18 He who believes into Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed into the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil.

John 3:20 For everyone who practices evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his works be reproved.

John 3:21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be manifested that they are wrought in God.

John 3:22 After these things, Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He spent some time with them and baptized.

John 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people came and were baptized;

John 3:24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

John 3:25 There arose therefore a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification.

John 3:26 And they came to John and said to him, Rabbi, He who was with you across the Jordan, of whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him.

John 3:27 John answered and said, A man cannot receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven.

John 3:28 You yourselves testify of me that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him.

John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks out of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

John 3:32 What He has seen and heard, of this He testifies, and no one receives His testimony.

John 3:33 He who receives His testimony has sealed that God is true.

John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

John 3:35 The Father loves the Son and has given all into His hand.

John 3:36 He who believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

1. When someone receives His words, the Spirit follows to be the reality of what is spoken.
2. Christ increases Himself by speaking God's word to spread God and by giving the Spirit of God to be the reality of what He spoke in order to dispense eternal life into people, making them the children of God to be Christ's increase; this is how Christ becomes the increasing Christ—6:63; 3:30a, 34.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

- D. The increase of Christ is the multiplication and reproduction of Christ; the regenerated part of our being is a part of Christ's increase, His bride—v. 6.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

- E. The bride as the increase of Christ is Christ Himself because the Body of Christ—"the Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12)—is the corporate Christ, composed of Christ as the Head and the church as His Body with all the believers as members.

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

The Intrinsic and Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ

Message Three

The Intrinsic Building Up of the Church for Its Organic Function

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:11-16; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28

- Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Rom. 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Rom. 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
- Rom. 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
- Rom. 12:8 Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.
- 1 Cor. 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
- 1 Cor. 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord;
- 1 Cor. 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.
- 1 Cor. 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for what is profitable.
- 1 Cor. 12:8 For to one through the Spirit a word of wisdom is given, and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;
- 1 Cor. 12:9 To a different one faith in the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit,
- 1 Cor. 12:10 And to another operations of works of power, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits; to a different one various kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues.
- 1 Cor. 12:11 But the one and the same Spirit operates all these things, distributing to each one respectively even as He purposes.
- 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Outline

I. The intrinsic building up of the church is through all the perfected members of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16:

- Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- A. Christ, the ascended Head, has given gifts—the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers—for the perfecting of the saints in the local churches—vv. 11-12; 1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 13:1.
- Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.
- Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
- B. The perfecting of the saints is “unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ”—Eph. 4:12:
- Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
1. The word unto in Ephesians 4:12 means “resulting in,” “for the purpose of,” or “with a view to.”
- Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
2. The many gifted persons have only one ministry, that is, to minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ, the church; this is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy—2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12.
- 2 Cor. 4:1 Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;
- 1 Tim. 1:12 I give thanks to Him who empowers me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He has counted me faithful, appointing me to the ministry,
3. According to the grammatical construction of Ephesians 4:12, the building up of the Body of Christ is the work of the ministry:

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

a. Whatever the gifted persons do as the work of the ministry must be for the building up of the Body of Christ—vv. 12, 16.

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

b. This building up is not accomplished directly by the gifted ones but by the saints who have been perfected by the gifted ones; the work of the gifts is indirect, but the work of the saints is direct—vv. 11-12.

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

c. The gifts are joined together in coordination to perfect the saints in the church to bring out their function, each doing the work of the ministry—v. 12.

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

d. In this way, through the perfecting by the gifted ones, all the saints will do the work of the ministry, and in the end the Body of Christ will be built up—vv. 12, 16.

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

C. Eventually, all the members of the Body of Christ will “arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man”—v. 13:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

1. The oneness of the Spirit in verse 3 is the oneness of the divine life in reality, and the oneness in verse 13 is the oneness of our living in practicality:

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

a. The oneness of reality needs to be practiced and thereby become the oneness in practicality—vv. 3, 13.

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

b. The word arrive in verse 13 indicates that a process is required for us to arrive at the oneness of our living in practicality; the oneness of reality is the beginning, and the oneness in practicality is the destination.

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

2. The oneness in practicality is the oneness of the faith—v. 13:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

a. The faith refers not to our act of believing but to the things in which we believe, such as the divine person of Christ and His redemptive work accomplished for our salvation—1 Tim. 1:19; 6:10, 12, 21; Jude 3.

1 Tim. 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

1 Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all evils, because of which some, aspiring after money, have been led away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains.

1 Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

1 Tim. 6:21 Because of which some, professing this, have misaimed regarding the faith. Grace be with you.

Jude 3 Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

b. In the church life we have only one thing that is special—the faith; to insist upon anything besides the faith for receiving the believers is to be divisive—Rom. 14:1; 15:7.

Rom. 14:1 Now him who is weak in faith receive, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his considerations.

Rom. 15:7 Therefore receive one another, as Christ also received you to the glory of God.

3. The oneness in practicality is also the oneness of the full knowledge of the Son of God—Eph. 4:13:

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

a. The full knowledge of the Son of God is the apprehension of the revelation concerning the Son of God as life for our experience—Matt. 16:16.

Matt. 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

b. The oneness of the faith altogether depends on the full knowledge of the Son of God; only when we take Christ as the center and focus on Him can we arrive at the oneness of the faith, for only in the Son of God can our faith be one—John 20:31; Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:4, 6; 1 Cor. 2:2.

John 20:31 But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name.

Gal. 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Gal. 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- Gal. 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law,
- Gal. 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!
- 1 Cor. 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

4. To arrive at “a full-grown man” is to arrive at maturity in life; maturity is needed for the practical oneness—Eph. 4:13.

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

D. For the building up of the Body of Christ we need to hold to the truth in love so that we may “grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ”—v. 15:

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

1. To grow up into Christ is to have Christ increase in us in all things until we attain to a full-grown man.

2. Head in Ephesians 4:15 indicates that our growth in life by the increase of Christ should be the growth of the members in the Body under the Head.

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

E. To grow in life is to grow into the Head, Christ, but to operate in the Body is to operate out from Him—vv. 15-16:

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

1. First, we grow up into the Head; then we have something that is out from the Head for the building up of the Body—v. 16.

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

2. Through the growth in life and the development of the gifts, each member of the Body of Christ has its own measure, which operates for the growth of the Body.

3. The growth of the Body of Christ is the increase of Christ in the church, which results in the building up of the Body by the Body itself—v. 16.

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

II. The organic function of the church is in the organic Body of Christ and in the local expressions of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27-28; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11:

1 Cor. 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every

place, who is theirs and ours:

- 1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.
- Rom. 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Rom. 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
- Rom. 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
- Rom. 12:8 Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.
- 1 Cor. 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
- 1 Cor. 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord;
- 1 Cor. 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.
- 1 Cor. 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for what is profitable.
- 1 Cor. 12:8 For to one through the Spirit a word of wisdom is given, and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;
- 1 Cor. 12:9 To a different one faith in the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit,
- 1 Cor. 12:10 And to another operations of works of power, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits; to a different one various kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues.
- 1 Cor. 12:11 But the one and the same Spirit operates all these things, distributing to each one respectively even as He purposes.

A. Because we are this organic Body, we should be organic and function organically in the church life—Rom. 12:4-5:

Rom. 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1. When the grace of God in Christ as the divine element comes into our being to be our life for our enjoyment, it brings with it the element of certain spiritual skills and abilities, which, accompanying our growth in life, develop into the gifts in life that we may be able to function in the Body of Christ—vv. 6-8.

Rom. 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Rom. 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;

Rom. 12:8 Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.

2. When the entire Body is operating, the Body causes the growth of itself, resulting in the Body being built up in love—Eph. 4:16.

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

B. The organic function of the organic Body of Christ is in the local expressions of the Body and by the move of the Triune God in the operations of God, through the ministries of the Lord, and through the gifts of the Spirit in His manifestations to the members of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28:

- 1 Cor. 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
 1 Cor. 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord;
 1 Cor. 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.
 1 Cor. 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for what is profitable.
 1 Cor. 12:8 For to one through the Spirit a word of wisdom is given, and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;
 1 Cor. 12:9 To a different one faith in the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit,
 1 Cor. 12:10 And to another operations of works of power, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits; to a different one various kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues.
 1 Cor. 12:11 But the one and the same Spirit operates all these things, distributing to each one respectively even as He purposes.
 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

1. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 there are God the Father's operations, God the Son's ministries, and God the Spirit's gifts.

- 1 Cor. 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
 1 Cor. 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord;
 1 Cor. 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.

2. The gifts of the Spirit are to carry out the ministries of the Lord, and the ministries of the Lord are to accomplish the operations of God the Father—vv. 4-6.

- 1 Cor. 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
 1 Cor. 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord;
 1 Cor. 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.

3. While we are functioning organically, the Triune God, who is within us, moves together with us.

4. The Triune God does not move apart from us; when we move, He moves—Eph. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 12:4-6.

- Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
 Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
 1 Cor. 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
 1 Cor. 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord;
 1 Cor. 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.

C. The organic function of the church is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ, the fullness of the all-inclusive One who fills all in all—Eph. 1:23.

- Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

The Intrinsic and Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ

Message Four

The Intrinsic Fellowship of the Churches for Their Organic Relationship

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Rev. 22:1; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16-18;

2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1; 1 John 1:3, 7

- Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- 1 Cor. 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?
- 1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.
- 1 Cor. 10:18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices those who have fellowship with the altar?
- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- Phil. 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

Outline

I. We need to see and enter into the intrinsic fellowship of the churches:

- A. The fellowship is the flow of the eternal life within, through, and among all the members of the organic Body of Christ; it is illustrated by the flow of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem—Rev. 22:1.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

- B. Just as there is the circulation of blood in the human body, so there is a circulation in the Body of Christ that the New Testament calls fellowship—1 John 1:3, 7.

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

C. The fellowship of the Body of Christ, which is the fellowship among the churches, is the fellowship of the apostles—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1. Fellowship comes from teaching; if we teach wrongly and differently from the apostles' teaching, the teaching of God's economy, our teaching will produce a sectarian, divisive fellowship—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-6; 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 5:18:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim. 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;

1 Tim. 1:6 From which things some, having misaimed, have turned aside to vain talking,

1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness,

1 Tim. 6:4 He is blinded with pride, understanding nothing, but is diseased with questionings and contentions of words, out of which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions,

2 Cor. 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?

2 Cor. 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

2 Cor. 5:18 But all things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

a. Teaching creates fellowship, and fellowship comes from teaching—1 Cor. 4:17; 1:9; 10:16.

1 Cor. 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor. 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

b. In the Lord's recovery today, we are under the apostles' teaching and in the apostles' fellowship—Acts 2:42.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

2. To have fellowship with the Triune God in the apostles' fellowship is to put aside our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God's purpose—Phil. 4:14; 2:1; Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:9; 3:6, 12.

Phil. 4:14 Nevertheless you did well to have fellowship with me in my affliction.

- Phil. 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,
- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 1 Cor. 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
- 1 Cor. 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

D. The one divine fellowship is an interwoven fellowship—the horizontal fellowship is interwoven with the vertical fellowship:

1. The initial experience of the apostles was the vertical fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, but when the apostles reported the eternal life to others, they experienced the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship—1 John 1:2-3; cf. Acts 2:42.

- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

2. Our horizontal fellowship with the saints brings us into vertical fellowship with the Lord; then our vertical fellowship with the Lord brings us into horizontal fellowship with the saints:

a. We enter into the vertical aspect of the divine fellowship by the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit; this aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with the Triune God in our loving Him—2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3, 6; Mark 12:30.

- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;
- Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

b. We enter into the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship by the human spirit; this aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with one another by the exercise of our spirit in our loving one another—Phil. 2:1; Rev. 1:10; 1 John 1:2-3, 7; 1 Cor. 16:18; Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-15.

- Phil. 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,
- Rev. 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,
- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

- 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
- 1 Cor. 16:18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Acknowledge therefore such ones.
- Mark 12:31 The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.
- Rom. 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the law.
- Rom. 13:9 For, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- Rom. 13:10 Love does not work evil to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
- Gal. 5:13 For you were called for freedom, brothers; only do not turn this freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- Gal. 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- Gal. 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another.

3. In this divine fellowship God is interwoven with us; this interweaving is the mingling of God and man to bring the divine constituent into our spiritual being for our growth and transformation in life—Lev. 2:4-5.

Lev. 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

Lev. 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.

E. The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life:

1. Just as the current of electricity is the electricity itself, the fellowship of the divine life, the flow of the divine life, is the divine life itself.

2. When fellowship disappears, God also disappears; God comes as the fellowship—2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 22:1.

2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

II. We need to see and enter into the organic relationship of the churches; this is the unique relationship of the unique church (the universal church composed of all the local churches); “the church” in 1 Corinthians 12:28 refers to the church in both its universal and local aspects:

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

A. This organic relationship is practiced uniquely and universally among all the local churches as the unique, organic Body of Christ—2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3, 7.

- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
- B. All the local churches are one church; their organic relationship is based upon the organic fellowship of the divine life; among all the churches that compose the one universal Body of Christ, there is no organization, but there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Phil. 1:5; cf. Acts 9:31.
- Phil. 1:5 For your fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now,
Acts 9:31 So then the church throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it was multiplied.
- C. The church in one locality should not have the attitude that they have nothing to do with the church in another locality; an intrinsically wrong realization and different teaching of the separate, autonomous relationship of the churches has been existing among us; this wrong and different teaching causes division after division.
- D. The Lord's recovery is based upon the truth that Christ has only one Body, which is expressed in many localities as the local churches; because there is one Spirit, there is only one Body, and there is only one circulation of life in the Body; this circulation is the fellowship of the Body of Christ, which is the fellowship among the churches—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6; 1 John 1:3, 7; Rev. 1:11.
- Eph. 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
Eph. 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
Eph. 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
Eph. 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- E. A local church is a part of the unique Body of Christ, and the fellowship of the Body is universally one; in the divine fellowship there is no separation—v. 11; 2:7a:
- Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
1. No church or region should isolate itself from the fellowship of the Body; the result of a church or a region isolating itself from the fellowship of the Body of Christ is darkness, confusion, division, and death.
 2. If we isolate ourselves from the fellowship of the Body, we are not qualified to partake of

the Lord's supper, because the loaf on the table in the Lord's supper signifies the entire Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:25-28.

1 Cor. 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor. 11:25 Similarly also the cup after they had dined, saying, This cup is the new covenant established in My blood; this do, as often as you drink it, unto the remembrance of Me.

1 Cor. 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you declare the Lord's death until He comes.

1 Cor. 11:27 So then whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord.

1 Cor. 11:28 But let a man prove himself, and in this way let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

III. The divine fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ in the oneness of the Spirit—1:9; 10:16-18; 12:12-13, 27; Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:3:

1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor. 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor. 10:18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices those who have fellowship with the altar?

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

A. The divine fellowship blends us; that is, it adjusts, harmonizes, tempers, and mingles us together into one Body—1 Cor. 10:17; 12:24-25:

1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor. 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,

1 Cor. 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

1. To be blended together is to go through the cross and do everything by the Spirit to dispense Christ into others for the sake of the Body of Christ—cf. 2 Chron. 1:10.

2 Chron. 1:10 Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?

2. We should not do anything without fellowshiping with the other saints who are coordinating with us; fellowship requires us to stop when we are about to do something—

cf. Ezek. 1:11b-14.

Ezek. 1:11 And thus their faces were. And their wings were spread out upward; two wings of each were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

Ezek. 1:12 And each went straight forward; wherever the Spirit was to go, they went; they did not turn as they went.

Ezek. 1:13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches; the fire went to and fro among the living creatures, and the fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightning.

Ezek. 1:14 And the living creatures ran to and fro like the appearance of a lightning bolt.

- B. By being restricted in the divine fellowship, the Body of Christ is kept in oneness, and the work of the ministry continues to go on; the thing that makes everything alive is fellowship—Eph. 4:11-12; cf. Ezek. 47:9.

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Ezek. 47:9 And every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes shall live, and there will be very many fish when this water comes there. And the water of the sea shall be healed, and everything shall live wherever the river comes.

- C. We need to imitate the apostle to bring the local churches into the fellowship of the Body of Christ and follow the apostle's footsteps to bring all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ—Rom. 14:3; 15:7-9, 25-33; ch. 16.

Rom. 14:3 He who eats, let him not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for God has received him.

Rom. 15:7 Therefore receive one another, as Christ also received you to the glory of God.

Rom. 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's truthfulness, to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

Rom. 15:9 And that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy, as it is written, "Therefore I will extol You among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name."

Rom. 15:25 But now I am going to Jerusalem, ministering to the saints.

Rom. 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

Rom. 15:27 For they were pleased to do it, and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they ought also to do service to them in material things.

Rom. 15:28 When therefore I have finished this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

Rom. 15:29 And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Rom. 15:30 Now I exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,

Rom. 15:31 That I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

Rom. 15:32 So that coming to you in joy through the will of God, I may refresh myself and rest with you.

Rom. 15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Rom. 16:1 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea,

Rom. 16:2 That you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been the patroness of many, of myself as well.

Rom. 16:3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

- Rom. 16:4 Who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;
- Rom. 16:5 And greet the church, which is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.
- Rom. 16:6 Greet Mary, one who has labored much for you.
- Rom. 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
- Rom. 16:8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
- Rom. 16:9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.
- Rom. 16:10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those of the household of Aristobulus.
- Rom. 16:11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
- Rom. 16:12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved sister, one who has labored much in the Lord.
- Rom. 16:13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as mine.
- Rom. 16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them.
- Rom. 16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.
- Rom. 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.
- Rom. 16:17 Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.
- Rom. 16:18 For such men do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach, and through smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.
- Rom. 16:19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil.
- Rom. 16:20 Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
- Rom. 16:21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, as well as Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.
- Rom. 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this epistle, greet you in the Lord.
- Rom. 16:23 Gaius, my host and host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother.
- Rom. 16:24 See note 1. (Some ancient MSS add v. 24, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.)
- Rom. 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages
- Rom. 16:26 But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;
- Rom. 16:27 To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- D. We must have the reality of the fellowship and blending of the Body of Christ; otherwise, regardless of how much we pursue and how simple and humble we are, sooner or later there will be problems, even divisions, among us.
- E. The purpose of the blending is to usher us all into the reality of the Body of Christ; we treasure the local churches for a purpose—we need to be in the local churches as the procedure to usher us into the reality of the Body of Christ.

The Intrinsic and Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ

Message Five

The Intrinsic Factor of the Winds of Teaching for Their Evil Purpose

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:13-15; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-4;

Titus 1:9; 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 12:12-13, 27

- Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- 1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
- 1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.
- 1 Cor. 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
- 1 Cor. 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
- 1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Outline

I. The teaching of the apostles is the unique and healthy teaching of God's eternal economy—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1:

- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- 1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

- 1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness,
- Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.
- Titus 2:1 But you, speak the things which are fitting to the healthy teaching.
- A. The teaching of the apostles is the entire teaching of the New Testament as God's speaking in the Son to His New Testament people—Heb. 1:1-2.
- Heb. 1:1 God, having spoken of old in many portions and in many ways to the fathers in the prophets,
- Heb. 1:2 Has at the last of these days spoken to us in the Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things, through whom also He made the universe;
- B. The teaching of the apostles is the unique, divine revelation of God's New Testament economy from the incarnation of God to the consummation of the New Jerusalem—John 1:14; Rev. 21:2.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- Rev. 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- C. The teaching of the apostles is the holding factor of the one accord, causing us to have one heart, one way, and one goal—Acts 1:14; 2:42a, 46a; Jer. 32:39.
- Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,
- Jer. 32:39 And I will give them one heart and one way, to fear Me all the days, for their own good and for the good of their children after them.
- D. We must be those who are "holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the apostles"—Titus 1:9:
- Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.
1. The churches were established according to the apostles' teaching and followed their teaching, and the order of the churches was maintained by the faithful word, which was given according to the apostles' teaching.
 2. We must speak the things that are fitting to the healthy teaching of the apostles, the teaching of God's economy—2:1, 7-8; 1 Tim. 1:4.
- Titus 2:1 But you, speak the things which are fitting to the healthy teaching.
- Titus 2:7 Concerning all things presenting yourself as a pattern of good works: in your teaching showing incorruption, gravity,
- Titus 2:8 Healthy speech that cannot be condemned, that he who opposes may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.
- 1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

E. Any teaching that was different from the apostles' teaching was not allowed by the apostles; teaching "different things" was prohibited—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-4:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1. Differing teachings refers to teachings that are not in line with the economy of God—6:3.

1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness,

2. The disorder in the church is due mainly to deviation from the apostles' teaching—Acts 2:42:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

a. To counter this, we must hold to the faithful word taught in the churches according to the apostles' teaching—Titus 1:9.

Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.

b. In a darkened and confused situation, we need to cleave to the enlightening and ordering word in the New Testament—the apostles' teaching—Acts 2:42.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

3. We must avoid differing teachings and concentrate on God's economy concerning Christ and the church—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:9; 5:32.

1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

Eph. 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Eph. 5:32 This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

F. The apostle Paul taught the same thing in all the churches; we also must teach the same thing in all the churches in every country throughout the earth—1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; cf. Col. 4:16.

1 Cor. 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Cor. 7:17 However as the Lord has apportioned to each one, as God has called each one, so let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.

Col. 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.

G. The crucial point of the healthy teaching of the apostolic ministry concerns the Triune God processed to dispense Himself as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit into His chosen ones so that they may be brought into an organic union to receive the divine transfusion and thereby become sons of God and members of Christ; as a result, they can become the Body of Christ

to express Christ, the One in whom the fullness of God dwells—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; 12:12-13, 27.

1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

H. All teachings that are different from the unique revelation of God's New Testament economy are considered by the apostles as winds of teaching—Eph. 4:14.

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

II. As members of the Body, we should no longer be "little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error"—v. 14:

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

A. Little children refers to those believers who are young in Christ, lacking maturity in life—1 Cor. 3:1; Eph. 4:13, 15.

1 Cor. 3:1 And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshy, as to infants in Christ.

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

B. The waves are stirred up by winds of different teaching, doctrines, concepts, and opinions sent by Satan to entice the believers in order to carry them away from Christ and the church—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 4:14:

1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

1. It is difficult for infants in Christ to discern these; the only way to escape from the waves that are stirred up by the winds of teaching is to grow in life, and the safe way to grow in life is to stay in the proper church life with Christ and the church as the safeguard—vv. 13-15.

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

2. Any teaching, even a scriptural one, that distracts believers from Christ and the church is a

wind that carries them away from God's eternal purpose—v. 14.

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

C. We need to see the intrinsic factor of the winds of teaching—v. 14:

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

1. An intrinsic factor is a hidden factor, a factor that is not apparent.
2. To see this intrinsic factor, we need a proper and sharp understanding that can penetrate into the whole situation.
3. These teachings are different from the New Testament teaching concerning the economy of God for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3:

1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness,

a. Apparently, every wind of teaching is good; however, within the winds of teaching, intrinsically, is something different from the apostles' teaching and is not good.

b. The winds of teaching overthrow the believers' faith and devastate the church life—2 Tim. 2:18.

2 Tim. 2:18 Who concerning the truth have misaimed, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and overthrow the faith of some.

D. The teachings that become winds, carrying the believers away from the central lane of Christ and the church, are deceptions instigated by Satan in his subtlety, with the sleight of men, in order to frustrate God's eternal economy, which is to build up the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:10; 3:9-11; 4:14, 16:

Eph. 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

Eph. 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Eph. 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

Eph. 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

1. The dividing teachings are organized and systematized by Satan to cause serious error and thus damage the practical oneness of the Body life—v. 3.

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

2. The sleight is of men, but the system of error is of Satan and is related to deceitful teachings that are designed by the evil one to distract the saints from Christ and the church life—v. 14; 5:32.

- Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Eph. 5:32 This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.
- E. The purpose of the winds of teaching—the evil purpose of the enemy Satan—is to frustrate the building up of the organic Body of Christ and to divide the members of the organic Body of Christ, causing endless divisions instead of keeping the oneness of the Body of Christ in love and kindness—1 Cor. 1:10-11; Jude 19.
- 1 Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.
- 1 Cor. 1:11 For it has been made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by those of the household of Chloe, that there are strifes among you.
- Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit.
- F. The erroneous teaching concerning the absolute autonomy of a local church has crept into the Lord's recovery:
1. To teach that the local churches are absolutely autonomous is to divide the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:5; 16:17.

Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Rom. 16:17 Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.
 2. The teaching concerning autonomy has corrupted, misled, and deceived Christians and has created many divisions—Jude 19.

Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit.
 3. The church is the Body of Christ, and as the Body of Christ, no part of the church can be autonomous—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13.

1 Cor. 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
 4. The local churches are for the expression of the Body of Christ; they are the manifestation of the Body of Christ in various localities—1:2; 12:27.

1 Cor. 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
 5. In our consideration the Body should be first, and the local churches should be second—Eph. 2:21-22.

Eph. 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Eph. 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 6. If we know the Body and are conscious of the Body, we will realize that the church as the

organic Body of Christ has nothing to do with autonomy.