

**THE INTRINSIC AND ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE
CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST, Week 4**

The Intrinsic Fellowship of the Churches for Their Organic Relationship

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

- Revelation 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 Corinthians 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 Corinthians 10:17 Seeing that there is **one bread**, we who are many are **one Body**; **for we all partake of the one bread**.
- 1 Corinthians 10:18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices those who have fellowship **with the altar**?
- 2 Corinthians 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.
- Philippians 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.

When we believed in the Lord Jesus, we were brought into this **fellowship**. When we called on the name of the Lord, we may say that the Spirit came into us, that God came into us, or that the **divine life came into us**. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, we received Him into us, and He is the Spirit. The Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God, and the Triune God is the divine life. The One who is now in us is the divine life, which is the Triune God, who is the Spirit and who is Jesus Christ. The divine, eternal life is a person, Jesus Christ. This One is the life-giving Spirit, and this life-giving Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God. The consummation of the Triune God is within us as the divine life, and **this divine life is flowing within us all the time**. He is flowing **within you, within me, and within all the members** of His great, universal Body. Within His universal Body is one flow, the flow of the divine life, the current of the water of life. The water is the divine life, and the divine life is the Triune God. The Triune God flows!

God is a flowing river who flows in all His chosen and redeemed believers. **This flow is the fellowship of the divine life**. According to 2 Corinthians 13:14, this is the fellowship within the Triune God. This verse says, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*" The Father is the source as love. Out of this love, grace comes forth through the Son. This grace through the Son reaches us as the fellowship of the Spirit, who is the consummation of the Triune God. The love of God in the grace of Christ becomes the fellowship, the flow, of the Holy Spirit. This fellowship has been neglected and even ignored by many Christians. Very few Christians know this flow. If you know this flow, you are greatly blessed. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 3*)

Day 1

1 John 1:2-3 (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); 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.

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.
- 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.

Day 2

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.

Revelation 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.

- 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:
 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:
 - a. **Teaching creates fellowship**, and fellowship comes from teaching—1 Cor. 4:17; 1:9; 10:16.
 - b. In the Lord's recovery today, we are under the apostles' teaching and in the apostles' fellowship—Acts 2:42.
 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.

Day 3

1 John 1:6-7 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; 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.

- 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.
 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.
 - 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.
 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.
- 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.

The **intrinsic fellowship of the churches** is the **unique fellowship of the apostles**, which is **uniquely and universally of all the members of the organic Body of Christ**. The flow was first the fellowship of the divine life of the Divine Trinity. Then this fellowship was passed on to the apostles, who were among the first group of believers on earth. Therefore, this flow became the fellowship of the apostles. All the early apostles were in the flow of the divine life. Furthermore, in those early days all the believers continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles. There was only one teaching and one fellowship. The apostles did a wonderful work to impart the divine life into people and bring them into the flow of this divine life. This flow, this fellowship, became the new believers' fellowship. **Their fellowship was the fellowship of the apostles, and the fellowship of the apostles is the fellowship of the Triune God.** (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 3*)

Day 4

- 1 Corinthians 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.
- Ephesians 1:22-23** And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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:
 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.

Day 5

- 1 Corinthians 12:24-25** But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked, That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

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:

- 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. 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. 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.
- 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.

Day 6

Revelation 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 Corinthians 16:19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the Great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath.

- 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.
- 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.

In relation to the church, the practice of **autonomy** is wrong, and the practice of **federation** is also wrong. The church is neither federated nor autonomous. We should care only to practice the **Body life of the church as the organism of the Triune God**. In the Lord's recovery we do not practice autonomy or federation. We only have a practice based upon the unique and universal fellowship in the Body of Christ. The church in one locality should not have the attitude that they have nothing to do with the church in another locality. We have to admit that such an intrinsic realization of the separate, autonomous relationship of the churches has been creeping into and, even to some extent, has been existing in the recovery. This realization is intrinsically wrong. The churches should not practice having a separate, autonomous relationship among them. It is also wrong for the churches to practice a federated relationship. We should practice the **unique relationship based upon the unique and universal fellowship of the Body of Christ**.

The **organic relationship** of the churches is based on the **unique and universal fellowship** among all the members of the organic Body of Christ. This organic relationship is practiced uniquely and universally among all the local churches as the unique, organic Body of Christ—the unique church in the universe. The churches should have no relationship limited in a local autonomy, and no federated relationship, but a **unique relationship among all the local churches in the unique and universal, organic Body of Christ**. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 3*)