

WEEK 7 — OUTLINE

The Oneness of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: John 17:21-22; Eph. 4:1-6; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 12:15-22; 2 Cor. 10:13-15

« DAY 1 »

I. Because it is difficult for us to understand the oneness unfolded in the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17 about the oneness instead of speaking about it as the continuation of His discourse to His disciples:

- A. The Father and the Son are one (vv. 11, 21), and this oneness implies, or includes, the Spirit.
- B. The Lord used the plural pronouns We (v. 11) and Us (v. 21) to signify the Triune God.
- C. The Triune God is one, and that oneness is a model of the oneness of the Body of Christ.
- D. The oneness of the Body of Christ is the enlarged oneness of the Divine Trinity (v. 21).
- E. The base of our oneness is the oneness for which the Lord prayed:
 - 1. This oneness is in the Father's name by the eternal life (vv. 2, 6, 11).

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- 2. This oneness is in the Triune God through sanctification by the holy word (vv. 14-21).
 - 3. This oneness is in the divine glory for the expression of the Triune God (vv. 22-24).
 - F. The Lord prayed to the Father for the oneness among all His believers that it may merge with the genuine oneness of the Divine Trinity (vv. 21-23).
- #### **II. We need to see the uniqueness of the Body of Christ—there is one Body in the universe (Eph. 4:1-6; 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 5:23-25; 2:15; Col. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:12).**
- #### **III. The practice of the oneness is the one accord; the one accord is the master key to every blessing in the New Testament (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Rom. 15:6).**

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IV. Five phrases in Ephesians 4:1-3 give us a practical way to keep the

oneness of the Spirit (the oneness of the Body of Christ), which is to practice the one accord: lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, bearing one another in love, and the uniting bond of peace; these five items are a test to us in the practice of the church life; by this test we can see whether or not we are practically in the church life:

A. We should not set up a high standard for others, but in lowliness we should love the weaker ones:

1. As long as we take something other than Christ Himself as our standard, we do not have lowliness; if we put forth a high standard, we are not lowly in our mind and attitude.
2. Regardless of how good, heavenly, or spiritual something is, as long as it is something other than Christ Himself, it will cause division.
3. The weaker ones, the younger ones, and the backsliders need more love in the Lord; to love them will solve most of their problems; otherwise, we will set up a high standard out of pride and not lowliness.

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B. We must sacrifice ourselves to be meek in our attitude (Num. 12:3; Matt. 5:5):

1. The Greek word for meekness implies mildness, gentleness, and unselfishness.
2. Meekness is a matter of an unselfish attitude that is mild and gentle, never argues for oneself, and never makes an excuse for oneself (2 Chron. 1:10; Col. 2:2-3; Phil. 4:5).
3. In order to be meek, we must sacrifice ourselves, regardless of how we are treated; in the church life we must not have a harsh, hard, or cruel attitude.
4. In order to have the proper attitude, we must not be selfish; unselfishness produces meekness, mildness, and gentleness.
5. In many local churches the problems come mostly from wrong, careless, cold, and harsh attitudes; Satan always uses careless attitudes to attack the church (Eph. 6:16).
6. In order to have the church life, we need to learn that it is very fine, not rough; according to the type, the church is a corporate meal offering, a cake, made of fine flour (Lev. 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 10:17).

<< DAY 5 >>

C. To be long-suffering is to endure mistreatment; to be long-suffering is mainly related to our spoken word:

1. A brother may wrong us, but for the Lord's glory and for the sake of the church life, we should not speak a word about it; to utter, express, and talk about

everything that happens to us requires no long-suffering or patience.

2. If we see the leading brothers quarreling, we may immediately go and relate this to another brother; but if we have learned the lesson, for the Lord's glory and for the sake of His church, we will not say a word.
 3. If we learn to keep our words in such a proper way, we will realize the true meaning of the word suffering in the church life.
 4. Immediately after a message is given, we may begin to criticize the speaker, but if we have learned the lesson, we will say nothing negative about the ministry, despite what we feel about it, for the sake of the practice of the church life; our mouths will be under the control of the Holy Spirit.
 5. Our speech and our conversation damage the church more than anything else; once a story is secondhand, it begins to change, and eventually it can become a great exaggeration; this is always the case with rumors.
 6. In order to learn the lesson of long-suffering, we need to experience the suffering of restricting our mouth and stopping our tongue; we may see and hear many things, but we should not speak a word without the anointing and leading of the Holy Spirit so that the church life will be kept from damage.
- D. In order to bear one another in love, we need to fight against suspicion and fear in the church life:**
1. Instead of suspicion and fear, we should have only love; love should prevail in the church life; love is the most excellent way for us to be anything or do anything in the church life (12:31b).
 2. To have suspicion toward a brother means that our love is gone; then after suspicion, fear will follow; 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."
 3. It is always a temptation to know others' attitude toward us, how they consider us, and what is being said about us; in order to realize the church life, we must reject this temptation (cf. Eccl. 7:21-22).
- E. We need to be diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:**
1. If we have peace only with God and not with all the brothers, we have lost the church life; the church life is tested by the peace we have, not only vertically with God but also horizontally with all the brothers.
 2. We should not be over-related or under-related to anyone; the uniting bond of peace is the balanced relatedness in the church.

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V. If we hold Christ as the Head (acknowledging that only He is the Head and coming absolutely under His authority), we cannot have

different interpretations of Scripture (1 Tim. 1:3-4; Col. 2:19):

- A. Differences arise when someone is not holding the Head, because He cannot possibly say one thing to one member and something else to another.
- B. Christ is the unique authority in the Body; the place of all the members is to hold the Head and to acknowledge Him as the unique and supreme authority in all things.

VI. We should always consider the Body, care for the Body, honor the Body, and do what is best for the Body (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

VII. “When Brother Nee taught about the Body, he said that with whatever we do, we have to consider how the churches would feel about it” (The Problems Causing the Turmoils in the Church Life, pp. 28-29).

VIII. In the Body there can be no independence or individualism, for we are members, and members cannot live in detachment from the Body (v. 27; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 5:30):

- A. Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individualistic thought and action are ruled out.
- B. What I do not know, another member of the Body will know; what I cannot see, another member of the Body will see; what I cannot do, another member of the Body will do (1 Cor. 12:17-22).
- C. If we refuse the help of our fellow members, we are refusing the help of Christ; sooner or later all individualistic Christians will dry up (v. 12).

IX. As members of the Body, we must allow ourselves to be limited by the other members, not going beyond our measure:

- A. God has placed all the members in the Body, even as He willed (v. 18):
 - 1. The Head sets us in our special place in the Body and points us to our special function (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:15-17).
 - 2. Each one of us members has our own place in the Body of Christ; it is assigned by God and should be accepted by us.
 - 3. Since such an assignment is according to God’s will, every member is necessary; every member has a definite place, a definite assignment, and a particular portion with which he serves the Body of Christ (vv. 18-22).
 - 4. Each member has his own characteristics, and his own capability; these characteristics constitute the place, position, or ministry of each member (Rom. 12:4-8).

- B. A basic requirement for the growth and development of the Body is that we recognize our measure and do not go beyond it (Eph. 4:7, 16):
1. When we go beyond our measure, we interfere with the order of the Body.
 2. To think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, without a sober mind, is to annul the proper order of the Body life (Rom. 12:3).
- C. Like Paul, we should move and act according to how much God has measured to us in the Body of Christ, staying within the limits of God's ruling, God's measuring (2 Cor. 10:13-15; Eph. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:5).

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Morning Nourishment

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

The truth of oneness is great and profound. The full meaning of the genuine oneness revealed in the Bible is far beyond our apprehension. Because it is difficult for us to understand the oneness unfolded in the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus prayed about oneness in John 17 instead of speaking about it as the continuation of His discourse to His disciples. I believe that the Lord Jesus realized that His disciples were not able to understand the matter of oneness. Therefore, He offered a prayer regarding it. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," p. 291)

Today's Reading

The genuine oneness is not merely a matter of our meeting together...Our oneness is the oneness of the organic Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is a mingling of the Triune God with His redeemed and transformed people. Because it is such a mingling, the Body itself is the oneness. The three of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—are three divine factors of this oneness, and these three divine factors are mingled with one human factor, consummating in the Body. This Body is the genuine oneness.

First, this oneness was something in the Lord's desire. This desire of the Lord's became His aspiration, and this aspiration was expressed in the prayer offered by the Lord in John 17 (vv. 2, 6, 11, 14-24). The subject of the Lord's prayer in John 17 is oneness. The Lord uttered this prayer out of the divine aspiration. At that time this oneness was not yet a reality; however, a model of this oneness—the oneness among the three of the Divine Trinity—was there. The Father and the Son are one (vv. 11, 21), and this oneness implies or includes the Spirit. In John 17 the Lord used the plural pronouns We (v. 11) and Us (v. 21) to signify the Triune God. The Triune God is one, and that oneness is a model of the oneness of the Body of Christ. Because the oneness of the Body has the oneness among the three of the Trinity as a model, John 17 tells us that this oneness is altogether wrapped up with the Triune God (v. 21). The oneness of the Body of Christ is just the enlarged oneness of the Divine Trinity. The model was there at the time the Lord prayed, but the enlargement was still to come. This enlarged oneness came on the day of Pentecost. Through the outpouring of the Spirit, the Body of Christ was produced (1 Cor. 12:13). That Body is the solid oneness.

The oneness of the Body is the oneness of all the believers in Christ in the Father's name (John 17:2, 6, 11). To be in the Father's name is to be in the Father's person, for in the New Testament, the name always denotes the person. Thus, to be in the Father's name is to be in the Father Himself. In the sense of the New Testament, the Father always bears the denotation of the source of life. The father of a family is the source of the life of that family. In John 17:11 the Lord prayed that the believers would be one in the name of the Father. To be one in the Father's name is to be one in the very source of the Divine Trinity.

This oneness is also by the Father's divine life and with the Father's divine nature. Since we have the Father's life, we also have the Father's nature, for the nature always goes along with the life. We have the Father's person as the source of the genuine oneness, and we have the Father's divine life with His divine nature as the very element of this oneness. These are the intrinsic contents of the oneness of the Body. (The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, pp. 10-11)

Further Reading: The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, chs. 1-2

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Morning Nourishment

John 17:21-23 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

The oneness of all the believers in Christ is in the Triune God through sanctification by the reality of the word (John 17:14-21). In the portion of His prayer in verses 14-21, the Lord referred to the word and to the truth. The word sanctifies, and the truth sanctifies. Thus, the word and the truth are one. The word contains and bears the truth. This word, which is the truth, sanctifies God's redeemed people from the world (v. 17) and keeps them from the ruler of the world, the evil one (v. 15). (The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, pp. 11-12)

Today's Reading

To be in the Triune God as our oneness, we need to be sanctified, that is, we need to be separated from being mixed with the world. If we would practice the genuine oneness, we must realize that the world must go. We cannot be mingled with the Triune God and at the same time remain in a mixture with the world. Therefore, we must be separated from being mixed with the world, so that we can be holy unto the Triune God to have a pure mingling with Him. This pure mingling is the oneness. If we desire to realize the genuine oneness, we must be separated from the mixing world unto the sanctifying God through the reality of His sanctifying word.

The genuine oneness, which is the mingling of the Triune God with the redeemed humanity, has three aspects. The first aspect is the oneness in the Father's name by His divine life, and the second is the oneness in the Triune God by His sanctifying word. The first aspect concerns the source and the element of the oneness, and the second concerns the standing of the oneness. If we are in the world and under Satan's hand, we cannot practice the oneness. To practice the oneness, we must be separated from the world and kept away from Satan's hand.

The third aspect of the genuine oneness is the oneness of the believers in Christ in the divine glory (John 17:22-24). After many years of studying the New Testament, we have found out that God's glory is His divine life with His divine nature to express Him. If we did not have the Father's life with the Father's nature, it would be impossible for us to express the Father. The expression of the Father comes from the Father's life with the Father's nature. This expression of the Father is the glory. (The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, pp. 12-13)

The Body of Christ is unique. In the whole universe there is just one Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4a). The church as the Body of Christ is also God's family, God's house (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15). As God's family, as the house of God, the church is uniquely one. Furthermore, the church as the Body of Christ is the wife of Christ (Eph. 5:23-25). For a man to have two wives or two families is a shame. Our Lord has only one Body, one family, one household, which is His home, and one wife.

There is one Body in the universe, and this Body is the new man (Eph. 2:15). This truth abolishes all the differences among us, making us one in Christ. In Christ and in the Body life, there are no racial differences. Instead, Christ is all the members and in all the members (Col. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:12).

The oneness of the Body of Christ is kept and expressed by each local church in its locality. In the practice of the church life, there is only one church in one city (Acts 8:1a; 13:1a; Rev. 1:11). The local churches are the local expressions of the one Body of Christ in the universe. There should not be more than one local expression of the one Body of Christ in a locality. (Messages to the Trainees in Fall 1990, pp. 117-118)

Further Reading: Messages to the Trainees in Fall 1990, ch. 17

<< WEEK 7 — DAY 3 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:1-3 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

Five phrases in Ephesians 4:1-3 give us the practical way to keep the oneness: lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, bearing one another in love, and the uniting bond of peace. We should not quickly think that we know what all these terms mean. We may know the meaning of these phrases from the dictionary, but we may not know their reality. We can know mainly from our experience what these matters are. According to my experience and learning in the past, these five items are a test to us in the practice of the church life. By this test we can see whether or not we are practically in the church life. (The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ, p. 161)

Today's Reading

First, we should never set up a high standard for others. To not set up a standard is the real practice of lowliness....It is difficult to find any [Christian groups] that do not raise up a high standard. Some claim the cross as their standard, and others say that holiness, the inner life, or spirituality is their standard. I met a small group of persons who even claimed that their standard is the fullness of Christ. Even the fullness of Christ can be a high standard that we set up. As long as we take something other than Christ as our standard, we do not have lowliness. If we put forth a high standard, we are not lowly in our mind and attitude.

Neither the subjective experience of the cross, the resurrection life of Christ, the gift of speaking in tongues, healing, or mission work is our standard. To have a mission work is not wrong. Likewise, to speak in tongues, to have healing, to preach the cross, to have the resurrection life, and to practice holiness are not wrong. What is wrong is to make these a standard. Regardless of how good, heavenly, or spiritual something is, as long as it is something other than Christ Himself, it will cause division....Even if a group does not denominate itself based on a standard, in principle it is still a division. We should not even claim that Christ is our standard in a divisive way.

Claiming a spiritual standard has caused much damage in the past among all the Christians. The more spiritual Christians are, the more they kill others spiritually, because once someone becomes spiritual to a certain extent, he sets up that spirituality as a standard for others.

Whether or not someone is spiritual and whether or not he loves the Lord much, we must treat him as we do others. By the Lord's mercy we should treat those who do not love the Lord even better than we treat those who do....If we love [a poor backslider], he may no longer be a backslider. He will be brought back by our love. Many times it is simply our cold attitude that makes someone more of a backslider. He may not come back to the church simply because he cannot bear the cold faces. The weaker ones, the younger ones, and the backsliders need more love. From my past experience I have learned that in the church we should not overly appreciate the spiritual ones. Rather, to love the weaker ones, the fleshly and soulish ones, and the ones with problems will solve most of their problems. Otherwise, we will set up a high standard out of pride and not lowliness.

According to the four Gospels, when the Lord was on this earth, He showed more love to the sinners and tax collectors than He did to the good ones. This was true lowliness and humility. To have real humility is to set up no standard among us. This is the practical way to have the church life. The church life is very spiritual, but there are also many backsliders in the church....We must love everyone, even the worst ones. (The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ, pp. 161-163)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1965, vol. 1, "The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ," ch. 13

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Morning Nourishment

Num. 12:3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than anyone else who was on the face of the earth.

Matt. 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Ephesians 4:2 next mentions meekness. To not have a high standard is a test of our motive concerning lowliness. Our motive must be to love everyone in lowliness regardless of a standard. Meekness, however, is a matter of attitude. Our attitude must be one of meekness. The Greek word for meekness implies mildness, gentleness, and unselfishness. Our attitude in the church must be mild and meek. Therefore, we have no excuse; we all need to be broken. If we are selfish, we can never be genuinely meek. Rather, our meekness will be false. Only unselfish people have genuine meekness. In order to be meek, we must sacrifice ourselves. The more we sacrifice ourselves, the meeker we will be. If someone takes our Bible and does not return it, for example, it will be difficult to be meek in our attitude toward him. However, if we have a sacrificing spirit, we will be willing to sacrifice a Bible for our brother. We will say, "Never mind. Praise the Lord! Please use it." This is to be meek in our attitude. (The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ, pp. 163-164)

Today's Reading

If two brothers sit next to each other, one may be careless and kick the other one. Similarly, if two sisters sit together on a small bench, one may take up too much room, and the other will struggle to get back her half of the bench. These are tests in small matters, but they involve a big principle. We must be willing to sacrifice ourselves regardless of how we are treated.

Our attitude comes out of what we are. If we are selfish, we will have a hard, harsh attitude. If we are unselfish, we will always be mild, meek, and gentle in a genuine way, not in a false way. In the church life we need this attitude, not a harsh, hard, or cruel attitude. Once in a certain restaurant a waiter spilled a cup of soup on my back. If I had loved my jacket, I would have said harshly, "What are you doing?" Instead, by the Lord's mercy I was able to be meek. I told the ones with me, "Be at peace. Do not be bothered." Unselfishness produces meekness, mildness, and gentleness. In order to have the proper attitude, we must not be selfish.

We must learn to have the proper attitude. We should not claim that our heart is sincere and our motive is right. That is not good enough. Only the Lord knows our motive. We are not the Lord; we are human, and we cannot see someone's motive. We can only see his face and attitude. It is not possible to speak harshly to a brother while claiming to have a good heart and motive. Therefore, in order to keep the proper church life, we must all learn to be adjusted in our attitude. In this matter we need true brokenness.

In many local churches the problems come mostly from wrong, careless, cold, and harsh attitudes. To have a right attitude is not a small matter. Satan, the subtle one, will utilize even a little carelessness in the way one brother greets another. He will fire a flaming dart into the brother's mind (Eph. 6:16), and when the brother is in bed that night, he will have troubled thoughts about the other brother's attitude.

In order to have the church life, we need to learn that it is something very fine, not rough. According to the type, the church is a cake made of fine flour (Lev. 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 10:17).

Almost all the misunderstandings come out of careless attitudes. Satan always utilizes careless attitudes to attack the church. This is why we must be careful with others, not for their sake only but even more because of the subtle one. The subtle one is here among us, so we need to be careful. We must not have carelessness in our attitude that can be taken advantage of and used for an attack by the enemy.

Meekness is a matter of an unselfish attitude that is mild and gentle, never argues for oneself, and never makes an excuse for oneself. (The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ," pp. 164-165)

Further Reading: Vital Factors for the Recovery of the Church Life, ch. 6; CWWL, 1965, vol. 3, "The Heavenly Vision," chs. 3-4

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Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:2-3 ...With long-suffering, bearing one another in love, being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.

According to my experience, long-suffering is related to our spoken word. In the church we must be careful concerning our speech and conversation....A brother may wrong us, but for the Lord's glory and for the sake of the church life, we should not speak a word about it....To utter, express, and talk about everything that happens to us requires no long-suffering or patience. (The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ, p. 166)

Today's Reading

If we see the leading brothers quarreling, we may immediately go to relate this to another brother....However, if we have learned the lesson, for the Lord's glory and for the sake of His church we will not say a word. Instead, we will go to the Lord with tears....There is no need to say something to others. Rather, we should have long-suffering. If we learn to keep our words in such a proper way, we will realize the true meaning of the word suffering in the church life.

On the contrary, though, we often do not suffer because we prefer to speak. We like to talk about whatever we see and whatever happens. There is no burden or yoke to bear in this improper practice. Immediately after a message is given, we may begin to criticize the speaker....If we have learned the lesson, we will say nothing negative about the ministry, despite what we feel about it, for the sake of the practice of the church life. Our mouths will be under the control of the Holy Spirit....Our speech and conversation damage the church more than anything else.

Once a story is secondhand, it begins to change, and eventually it can become a great exaggeration. This is always the case with rumors. In order to learn the lesson of long-suffering, we need to experience the suffering of restricting our mouth and stopping our tongue. We may see and hear many things, but we should not speak a word without the anointing and leading of the Holy Spirit. We must not let the enemy use our tongue for his purpose....If a brother wrongs us, we should not say a word....It is better to choose long-suffering. Then we will be saved from the wrong kind of suffering, and the church life will be kept from damage.

In order to bear one another in love, we need to fight against suspicion and fear in the church life. Instead of these two things, we should have only love. To have suspicion toward a brother means that our love is gone. Then after suspicion, fear will follow. If two brothers are suspicious of each other, they will be like spies to one another. This will produce a mutual fear between them.

We must give no ground to suspicion and fear. We love our brothers; we do not fear them. First John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."

It is always a temptation to know others' attitude toward us, how they consider us, and what they have said about us. In order to realize the church life, we must reject this temptation. We must have no suspicion. We believe in the Lord and consider that all the brothers are good. Therefore, there is no need to know too much. Regardless of how others consider us and talk about us, we are in the hand of the Lord. If we practice in this way, the door will be closed to the enemy.

If we have peace only with God and not with all the brothers, we have lost the church life. The church life is tested by the peace we have, not only vertically with God but also horizontally with all the brothers. We need this kind of peace. We should not be over-related or under-related to anyone. The uniting bond of peace [in Ephesians 4:3] is the balanced relatedness in the church. (The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ, pp. 166-170)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1965, vol. 1, "The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ," ch. 14

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Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 12:17-20 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed. And if all were one member, where would the body be? But now the members are many, but the body one.

When Brother Nee taught about the Body, he said that with whatever we do, we have to consider how the churches would feel about it. When we do something, we must not forget that we are members of the Body, and the Body is not only a local church. The local church is not a “local body”; if it is, it becomes a local sect. The Body is the Body of Christ, constituted by the Triune God with all the believers on this earth, with all the local churches. (The Problems Causing the Turmoils in the Church Life, pp. 28-29)

Today's Reading

Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individual thought and action are automatically ruled out. Seeing Christ results in deliverance from sin; seeing the Body results in deliverance from individualism.

What are the eyes, ears, hands, and feet? They are Christ Himself. The Head is Christ, and the Body is also Christ. Each member is a part of the life of Christ. If I refuse the help of my fellow members, I am refusing the help of Christ. If I am not willing to acknowledge my need of them, I am not willing to acknowledge my need of Christ. Just as I cannot be independent from the Head, I cannot be independent from the Body...What I do not know, another member of the Body will know; what I cannot see, another member of the Body will see; what I cannot do, another member of the Body will do. Therefore, I must allow the other members of the Body to minister to my needs. We must avail ourselves constantly of the fellowship of the Body, for it is our very life.

Everything that Christ has is in His Body. He is a foolish man who claims that he can be a Christian alone...As long as we live in the Body, we will receive the supply of the Body, no matter what our condition is. Every member should learn to treasure the supply of the Body and to treasure every member.

We supply the Body with the life that we have received from Christ the Head. Yet when we function, we have to be proper and in order. Order in the Body is essential to growth and ministry...In the meeting...you have to speak according to your measure of faith and according to the leading of the Spirit. You have to know whether there is any overstepping in your speaking, and you have to know whether your speaking is too long...When we truly come under the authority of the Head, He sets us in our special place in the Body and appoints us to our special function.

We must be willing to be limited to our measure. As soon as we go beyond it, we go beyond the authority of the Head and move out from under the anointing. When we go beyond our measure, we interfere with the order of the Body. The Body of Christ is an organic life; it operates without any human arrangement. All the members must receive life from the Head and function in proper order. If our relationship with the Head is proper, we will keep our place in the Body spontaneously. (CWWN, vol. 44, “The Mystery of Christ,” pp. 796-797, 801-802, 822-823)

Each one of us members has our own place in the Body of Christ. It is assigned by God, and should be accepted by us. Since such an assignment is according to God's will, every member is necessary (1 Cor. 12:21). (The Oneness and the One Accord according to the Lord's Aspiration and the Body Life and Service according to His Pleasure, p. 28)

There is One who is ruling and measuring. This One is the God of measure, the God who rules. Therefore, we must stay within the limits of God's ruling, of God's measuring [2 Cor. 10:13]. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, p. 447)

Further Reading: One Body and One Spirit, ch. 1; The Practical Points concerning Blending, ch. 1; Life-study of Colossians, msg. 56; Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans, msg. 10

<< WEEK 7 — HYMN

Hymns, #840

1

Freed from self and Adam's nature,
Lord, I would be built by Thee
With the saints into Thy temple,
Where Thy glory we shall see.
From peculiar traits deliver,
From my independent ways,
That a dwelling place for Thee, Lord,
We will be thru all our days.

2

By Thy life and by its flowing
I can grow and be transformed,
With the saints coordinated,
Builded up, to Thee conformed;
Keep the order in the Body,
There to function in Thy will,
Ever serving, helping others,
All Thy purpose to fulfill.

3

In my knowledge and experience
I would not exalted be,
But submitting and accepting
Let the Body balance me;
Holding fast the Head, and growing
With His increase, in His way,
By the joints and bands supplying,
Knit together day by day.

4

By Thy Spirit daily strengthened
In the inner man with might,
I would know Thy love surpassing,
Know Thy breadth and length and height;
Ever of Thy riches taking,
Unto all Thy fulness filled,
Ever growing into manhood,
That Thy Body Thou may build.

5

In God's house and in Thy Body
Builded up I long to be,
That within this corporate vessel
All shall then Thy glory see;
That Thy Bride, the glorious city,
May appear upon the earth,
As a lampstand brightly beaming
To express to all Thy worth.