

Message Four

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

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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

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.
- 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.