

2021 International Chinese-speaking Conference

#2: The Intrinsic Growth of the Church

for Its Organic Increase 5/17-23 **OL Summary:**

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:

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.

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

1. To grow is to have Christ added into us.

2. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head:

a. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God.

b. The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head.

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

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.

d. Only God can give growth; only God can give us Himself, and without Him we cannot have 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.

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:

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.

5. The growth of the church as the Body of Christ is the growth of God in the church.]

C. The church grows until it reaches maturity—"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:

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.

c. Through the enjoyment of the riches of Christ, we become His fullness for His complete expression.

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

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

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 of 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.]

II. The Organic increase of the church is the increase of Christ in His organic Body as His bride:

A. The fullness of Christ is His Body, and the Body of Christ is His counterpart, His bride.

B. "He who has the bride is the bridegroom...He must increase (John 3:29a-30a)":

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

2. Regeneration not only brings the divine life into the believers, but it also makes them the corporate bride for Christ's increase.

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

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:

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.

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.

E. The bride as the increase of Christ is Christ Himself because the Body of Christ—"the Christ"—is the corporate Christ, composed of Christ as the Head and the church as His Body with all the believers as members.

CP1: All the members grow into Christ and function with what comes out from Christ for the building up

OL1: The intrinsic growth, the organic growth, of the church is the growth in the divine life, which is the processed and dispensing Triune God. The church grows in this life, by this life, with this life, and through this life.

OL2: 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. 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ.

If we have too much of the element of our self, we need to be shined upon and judged so that the element of our self may be killed and so that the element of God may increase. We must take care of this principle in all our service in the church. In our prayer with others, visitation of others, or fellowship with others after the meeting, our natural element must gradually decrease so that the divine element of God may gradually increase.

If there is not the element of God in a prayer meeting, there is a problem with that meeting. If our ways of visitation are the same year after year, it indicates that we are not growing.... In order to have service that builds up the church, we must learn to reject our natural element and let the element of God increase so that the divine life in us may grow. Only then can we manifest the function that joins us together and knits us together with others for the building up of the church.

OL3: The church grows until it reaches maturity—"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

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

The intrinsic growth of the church is through the giving of growth in life to the members of Christ by God. The gifted ones may do the planting and the watering, but it is God who gives the growth in life. This is why I must always take some time to pray before I come to speak in a meeting. I pray that the Lord would be one with me and infuse me with Himself so that whatever I speak would be in Him. I believe that He has richly answered these prayers because quite often, as I am speaking, I feel supplied within to speak with new light and instant utterance.

We need the feeding from the Bible directly, and we need the watering from the ones who know the Bible more. God goes along with our reading of the Word and with the speaking of the gifted members to give us the growth....When we get into the Word, we are feeding.

Application to new ones, Youth and College Students

The newly saved and young people have believed in the name of the Lord, and when they were baptized,

their spirits were regenerated and became children of God. The children of God are also the members of the Body of Christ. Colossians 2:19 FN **Out from whom (the Head)** indicates that the Body of Christ grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head.

Joints are for the supply of the Body. **Sinews** are for the knitting together of the members of the Body.

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

The main points of Colossians 2:19 and Ephesians 4:15-16 are as follows: **1 Join to the Head and grow** All the saints should hold to Christ the Head, fellowship with the Head directly, and grow into Christ the Head in all things. There is a need to build up personal fellowship with the Lord. Personal fellowship is necessary even when you are being perfected by gifts. **2 Through the joints** The joints are members with special gifts. Their function is to supply and perfect the saints. The saints are perfected and functioning through their help. **3 By the sinews** They are joined together by sinews. **4 All members function** The whole Body builds itself up. All the members grow into Christ and function with what comes out from Christ. At this time, the Body will be built, the bride will be ready, and the return of the Lord can be brought about.

For example, in a company meeting, you told a small lie to protect yourself, or you got emotional and spoke inaccurately (also a lie) right away. But God is righteous God, and God cannot do anything without the basis of righteousness. Also, Satan is the father of lies, and in many cases, once you tell a lie, you cannot stop but keep on telling lies. With this knowledge about God and Satan, you call upon the Lord's name, "Lord Jesus, I must not lie. If I do, I will become one with Satan and lose the presence and the blessings of God. Lord Jesus, strengthen my inner man." If you have already lied, pray briefly, "Lord Jesus, I confess my sin of lying. Please forgive my sins." Praying short prayers like this in your practical life, is to let you grow into Christ. Furthermore, it will be nice for you to fellowship these experiences with the saints in your small group and ask them to intercede for you. This is the experience of being supplied and joined together by joints and sinews. We then can move forward and supply others with the Christ we have experienced.

Prayer: Oh, Lord Jesus. Allow me to grow into Christ and function with what comes out from Christ. In order to be joined together with the Head and grow, I pray short prayers in my fellowship with the Lord. In the church life, I open myself to the members with gifts, receive their supply, join together and coordinate with the brothers and sisters, and build the Body of Christ.

CP2: Need to pursue diligently to arrive at the goal of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

OL1: The church grows until it reaches maturity—"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". Christ, who is the infinite God without any limitation, is so great that He fills all things in all things. **OL2:** Through the enjoyment of the riches of Christ, we become His fullness for His complete expression. Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all. 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. I have eaten a great amount of the riches of Taiwan, and these riches have been assimilated into me and have become me. Now, therefore, I can stand here full of life and energy. This is the fullness. The church is the fullness of Christ.

When He was on earth as Jesus the Nazarene, He could not be in Judea at the same time that He was in Galilee, nor could He be in Jerusalem when He was in Samaria. This was because He was a small Jesus,... limited by His flesh... Today He has risen from the dead and ascended to the heavens, so He fills all things. He can be in the heavens and on the earth simultaneously; He can be in one place in the heavens, and at the same time He can be in millions of places on the earth. He is such a One who fills all things, so He needs a great Body as His fullness. Thus, today we can say that because He has such a great Body on earth, He is in heaven and He is also in Taipei, in Hong Kong, in Manila, in Singapore, in London, in Germany, in the United States, in Africa, in North America, and in South America. His Body is everywhere.

The Body is the fullness of Christ. In doctrine the church is the Body, but as to reality there is still a question of how much element of the Body is there. Brothers and sisters, we should not condemn others; we must see our own condition. At this time we all must confess in the light of the Lord that even we ourselves up to this day may live only thirty percent by the Spirit, leaving seventy percent that we live by ourselves.

OL3: 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. 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,

Those who are evil surely need Christ. But those who are very good need Christ just as much. No matter what kind of disposition we may have, our natural being needs to be swallowed up and even consumed by the indwelling Christ. Then in reality we shall be the Body of Christ, His fullness.

Application to businessperson/graduate students

It is said that diversity (tolerance of diverse cultures) and the utilization of women are important for the development of a company. However, it is very difficult to

put these into practice. This is because people cannot change their old habits if their thoughts remain old.

Col. 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his practices 10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all. 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. 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.

The church is the Body of Christ, one new man. In the church, all members should function according to the measure of Christ, regardless of race, nationality, or social status. The important things to do are as follows:

1 Enjoyment Pray read the Word of God every morning, and eat, drink, and enjoy Christ. Participate in meetings and enjoy Christ corporately. First, build up a life of enjoying Christ. **2 Growth** Pray for the application of the truth in the bible into the practical living and grow into Christ through application. **3 Renewing of the mind and putting off of the old man** Only when the prejudices and stereotypes about race and gender in our mind are crucified and permeated by the mind of Christ, and our minds are renewed, can we put off the old man. **4 Function** Fulfill your function in the Body and help others to function. When every believer grows and functions, we reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

For example, some foreign students come to Japan, but gather with people from the same country, and graduate from university with little or no Japanese language skills. In the church life, you should not follow the old man and gather only with Japanese people or only with people you are comfortable with. When the old man with the prejudice comes up, please pray "Lord Jesus, I put off the old man, who is full of prejudice, along with its deeds. When there is a language problem, I will not be reluctant to fellowship with the saints who speak foreign languages, even if I need an interpreter. And even if we are from different generations or social classes, I will learn to fellowship with each other according to the sense of the Head Christ and the sense of the Body. I want to grow into Christ and function with Him for the building." and experience the reality of the Body of Christ. If you do this, you will be blessed for being a great example of how to implement diversity and women in your company.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I eat, drink and enjoy Christ every morning in order to function in the Body of Christ, the church. I open to the mind of the Lord so that my mind may be renewed in daily life. I learn to function in the Body and help others to function. I move forward diligently toward the goal of attaining the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

CP3: To live the reality of the Body of Christ, God-man living, put self on the cross and listen to the rhema word and speak them

OL1: The organic increase of the church is the increase of Christ in His organic Body as His bride. John 3:29-30 He who has the bride is the bridegroom;...He must increase, but I must decrease. 34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words (rhema) of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure. **OL2:** 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. When someone receives His words, the Spirit follows to be the reality of what is spoken. John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 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.

In John 6:63...the Greek word rhema is used. The Spirit is living and real but rather mysterious and intangible and difficult for us to comprehend. But the Lord's words are substantial. First, the Lord indicated that for giving life, He would become the Spirit. Then He said that the words He speaks are spirit and life. This shows that His spoken words are the embodiment of the life-giving Spirit. He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we receive the Spirit who is life.

All the New Testament ministers of the Word are part of God's speaking in the Son. Paul's speaking in his ministry, for example, was part of this speaking of God in His Son. In our speaking we desire to be one spirit with Christ, the Son of God. Often before I minister the Word, I pray, "Lord, be one spirit with me in my speaking. Lord, I want to practice being one spirit with You in the speaking of Your word." If I do not have the assurance that I am one spirit with the Lord, I do not have any desire to speak. To be one spirit with the Lord in our speaking of the word means that we are truly in the Son of God. All the genuine speakers of the divine word of the New Testament are part of God's speaking in the Son. Today God the Father speaks in the Son, and the Son includes all the New Testament ministers of the Word

What are we doing as we carry on the ministry of the Word? We are speaking God into people. We are speaking the divine essence into others. Many of us can testify that as a result of listening to the genuine ministry of the Word, we receive the essence of God....Then after the word has been received by us, it becomes spirit and life in us. The Spirit is actually the essence of God becoming the very life within us....The word in our ministry must be the very essence of our God.

The unique way for us to become the universal increase of the unlimited Christ is to receive the Spirit and be filled with the Spirit. The more we have of the Spirit, the more we will be Christ's increase. This increase begins with our regeneration, and it consummates with our being filled with the immeasurable Spirit.

Application to the serving ones

Please read the excerpt from the collected works of Witness Lee, 1994-97 Vol. 1: **1** Simply, the reality of the Body of Christ is the living of a God-man life by a group of God-redeemed people together with the God-man Christ. **2** We all need to consider this matter. We have the term and we have the doctrine, but practically, we do not have the reality. **3** I am speaking not of the revelation, not even of the vision, but of the reality of the Body of Christ. **4** We surely need to be desperate to pray at any cost and to pay the cost just as the apostle Paul did. We should not have the attitude that we are safe in the Lord because we have sacrificed our future and do not love the world. That is not adequate. ...There is no other way to reach this high peak except by praying. **5** I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing (2 Tim. 4:7-8). I hope that when we end this life, we could say that we have done the same thing. Otherwise, we will be a dropout in the school of the church life. ... If we are not perfected in this age, the Lord will spend one thousand years to perfect us. The Lord would even use the second death, which is the fire of the lake of fire, to discipline us.

You must realize that the purpose of the Lord's recovery is to build up the Body of Christ, to prepare the Bride, and to bring about His return. The Lord's recovery is to produce a group of overcomers as the reality of the Body of Christ. In order for the bride to be prepared, it is required that **1** the self should decrease within you through the cross and the Lord should increase; **2** listen to the timely rhema word, receive the immeasurable supply of His spirit, speak His words and supply them to the new ones; **3** live a life of waiting for the Lord's return. Rev. 22:20 He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! For example, when you are doing house chores or serving, or working in an office, you hate restrictions because you want to do whatever you want, or you are happy that you can do whatever you want. This does not have the reality of "I must decrease, and Christ must increase". You should pray "Lord, I have the doctrine of the preparation of the bride of Christ, but not the reality. Lord, I repent. Please have mercy on me. I will get out of the church life that is just theories. I call on the name of the Lord and apply it to my practical life, that I may decrease and the Lord may increase inwardly. Furthermore, I will listen to the Word of God, be filled with the Spirit, and dispense Christ through speaking the Word of God to others by exercising my spirit. Lord Jesus, Come!"

Prayer: Lord Jesus, the reality of the Body of Christ is that a group of God's redeemed people live the life of God-men with Christ as the God-man. But I repent that I have little of the reality of the God-man living. Let me deny myself, pray unceasingly, and move forward to the highest peak.