

**Overview:** The recovery of the church life in the Lord's recovery is to recover the church back to its original state according to God's eternal purpose. Satan who is the enemy of God destroyed the church especially using the clergy-laity system. However, God has come into it and been recovering the church gradually. In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther recovered justification by faith. In the eighteenth century, Zinzendorf recovered the church life and in the nineteenth century the Brethren recovered many of the truths because of their absoluteness, and went further to recover the church life. From 1933, we recovered the administration in the local church and the fellowship of the universal church and we are building up of the Body of Christ in life.

### **I. Our history in the Lord's recovery is not that of an organization or of a movement; it is a history of recovery:**

- A. In Matthew 19:8 we see the principle of recovery: "From the beginning it has not been so": **1.** Recovery means to go back to the beginning; we need to go back to the beginning, receiving the Lord's grace to go back to God's original intention, to what God ordained in the beginning. **2.** The word recovery means that something was there originally and then was degraded, damaged, or lost; thus, there is a need to bring that thing back to its original state and to its normal condition.
- B. When we speak of the recovery of the church, we mean that the church was there originally, that it became degraded, and that there is the need to bring the church back to its original state.
- C. The Lord's recovery of the church brings us back to the beginning for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose and original intention.

### **II. We need to understand the recovery of the church in relation to God's intention and accomplishment and Satan's work of destruction:**

- A. The New Testament reveals that regarding the church, God has a definite intention, purpose, and goal; first, God purposed, and then He came in to accomplish His purpose
- B. The New Testament also gives us a clear record of how God's enemy came in to destroy what God had accomplished: **1.** The satanic way to destroy God's accomplishment has an inward aspect and an outward aspect: **a.** The inward aspect is to damage and corrupt God's people. **b.** The outward aspect is to destroy God's accomplishment. **2.** Satan produced many substitutes for Christ, divided the Body of Christ, and killed the function of the members of the Body by the clergy-laity system.
- C. Because God is a purposeful God with an eternal purpose and because once He has determined to do something, nothing can change His mind or stop Him; after Satan's destruction God comes in to redo the things that He had done before.
- D. God's redoing of what He has accomplished is His recovery; this is to bring back whatever has been lost and destroyed by Satan and to recover the church according to His eternal purpose and original intention.]]

### **III. In order to recognize the need for the recovery of the church, we need to know the original condition of the church and the degradation of the church:**

- A. The original condition of the church had the following characteristics:
- 1.** In the original church there was no hierarchy among the believers: **a.** The believers were all brothers without distinction in rank. **b.** As members of the Body, the believers coordinated with one another on an equal level, and each one fulfilled his particular function. **c.** The believers were all priests to God, without an intermediary class or the distinctions between clergy and laity.
- 2.** The early church was completely separated from the world; it was in the world but not of the world.
- 3.** The original church forsook idols and fully allowed God to speak.]]
- 4.** There was only one church, one expression of the Body of Christ, in a locality.
- 5.** The churches were one in fellowship, but each one was independent in administration, and there was no head church or federation.
- 6.** The churches honored Christ as the Head and allowed the Holy Spirit to have authority.
- B. The degradation of the church involved hierarchy, union with the world, idols, divisions, not allowing God to speak, having organization for unification, and usurping the headship of Christ and encroaching on the authority of the Holy Spirit.]]

### **IV. The recovery of the church has been gradual and progressive:**

- A. Before the end of the first century, the Lord's recovery began, and century by century the recovery has continued on.
- B. In the sixteenth century Martin Luther rose up to begin the Reformation, and the sealed Bible was unlocked; based upon the Bible, he recovered justification by faith, but the proper church life was not recovered:
- 1.** The Protestant churches were not separated from the world, and they did not eliminate the intermediary class.
- 2.** Among the Protestant churches there were more divisions, and the various denominations did not put away organization for unification.
- 3.** The denominations did not allow Christ to have the absolute position and did not allow the Holy Spirit to have absolute authority.
- C. In the eighteenth century Zinzendorf was raised up by the Lord to lead the Moravian brothers to a recovery of the church life; they were separated from the world, removed distinctions of rank, emphasized fellowship and coordination, endeavored to keep the oneness, removed formal organization for unification, and allowed Christ to be the Head and the Holy Spirit to rule among them.
- D. In the nineteenth century the Lord raised up a group of brothers in England, who went further in the recovery of the church life:
- 1.** In the hands of the Brethren, the Bible was truly an opened book, a shining book, for they absolutely obeyed the Lord's word; many important truths were released through them.
- 2.** They absolutely eliminated hierarchy and were brothers together and members one of another with an emphasis on mutual love and fellowship.
- 3.** However, in certain aspects they were a failure, and because of this the Lord could not go on at that time anywhere in the Western world.
- E. We need to see the crucial points of the recovery of the church in the Far East: **1.** In 1933 and 1934 we clearly saw a crucial matter—the principle of the church taking a locality as its boundary: **a.** On the one hand, this prevents division and confusion; on the other hand, it also prevents "extra-local" unions. **b.** According to the teaching of the Bible, the church in each locality should live directly before the Lord and be responsible to the Head, Christ. **2.** We kept the principle of the administration of the church being local and the fellowship of the church being universal: **a.** The church in each locality has its own administration, and the administration of the church cannot go beyond the local boundary. **b.** The fellowship of the church should not only be local; rather, it should be universal because it is the fellowship of the Body of Christ. **3.** We clearly saw that churches in different localities should not have an organization for unification, for all churches should be directly under the ruling of Christ, the Head, and should directly obey the authority of the Holy Spirit. **4.** We emphasized the universal priesthood; that is, we stressed the fact that every believer is a priest. **5.** We also emphasized the Body's coordination in service, exhorting all the saints to keep the principle of the Body by serving together in coordination. **6.** We emphasized the practical service in the church.]]

### **V. The Lord's recovery is different from today's Christianity; it is impossible for there to be reconciliation between the recovery and Christianity:**

- A. The recovery of the church is for bringing us out of the unscriptural system of clergy-laity back to the beginning for the pure practice of the church life according to the divine revelation.
- B. The history among us has been one of coming completely out of Christianity without compromise.
- C. There should be no bridge between the local churches and Christianity; we should be what we are without compromise or pretense, maintaining the gap between us and Christianity.]]

**Day 1:** [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.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,<sup>11</sup> According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

**Day 2:** [Rom.12:4](#) For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

[Matt.23:8](#) But you, do not be called Rabbi, for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.

[Rom.12:2](#) And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

**Day 3:** [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:

[Acts13:1](#) 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.

**Day 4:** [Rom.1:17](#) For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith, as it is written, "But the righteous shall have life and live by faith."

[Rev.3:8](#) I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

[1Tim.2:3-4](#) This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God, Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

**Day 5:**

[Acts13:2](#) And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

[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?<sup>17</sup> Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

**Day 6:** [Matt.13:33](#) Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.

[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;

[Rev.18:4](#) And I heard another voice out of heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that you do not participate in her sins and that you do not receive her plagues;

### Experience ① : The church is the Body of Christ and not the human organization

One of the characteristics of the original church was that there was no hierarchy among the saved ones. They were all members one of another, coordinating mutually and serving together.

First, all the saved ones are brothers without any distinctions in rank. When the Lord was on the earth, He told the disciples clearly, "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you [that is, in the church]; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave" (Matt. 20:25-27; 23:8-11).... All the believers are brothers on the same level; there are no distinctions involving some who are higher and some who are lower.

Second, all the believers are members of the Body of Christ; as such, they coordinate with each other on an equal level, and each of them fulfills his particular function. This is shown very clearly in Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, and Ephesians 4:16. Without exception, every saved one is a member of the Body of Christ.... As long as a person is saved, he is a member with a particular function in the church and should serve the Lord in coordination with all the saints.

Third, all the believers are priests to God. In the Old Testament, among the people of Israel there was a group who served as priests, and the rest of the Israelites were common people.... But in the New Testament, in the church, there is no longer such an intermediary class; rather, all the believers are priests to God, without any distinctions between the so-called clergy and laity. The normal condition is for all the people of God to be priests to Him.

Whereas idols are adversaries of God, the church is the testimony of God. If the church has idols, the nature of the church has been changed. This is a certain fact. From Acts 15:29 we can see that the original church forsook idols in a very thorough way.

In the original church there was no human opinion and no human system; instead, the believers completely allowed the Spirit to speak through the Scriptures. They allowed the Holy Scriptures of God to have their position, and they also allowed the Holy Spirit of God to have His position.

#### For junior high and senior high school students

Please understand the following three items regarding the church.

- i) All the saved ones are brothers or sisters without any distinctions in rank.
- ii) All the believers are members of the Body of Christ and coordinate with each other, and each of them fulfills his particular function.
- iii) All the believers are the priests of the gospel of the New Testament.

May you see these three regarding the church so that your church life will be adjusted and be uplifted! You are a brother/sister in the family of God. There may be distinctions in the function according to the growth of life, but there is no hierarchical relationship of human organization. This does not deny elder brother/sister leading and taking care of his/her younger brother/sister. This also does not deny the gifted member perfecting other saints. The elder brothers/sisters in church life and the gifted members pray for the new ones, such as the gospel friends, the newly saved ones, the saints who became weak and are not coming to the meeting, the seeking believers in Christianity, the ones who have just moved in, and your family members, and cherish, nourish, and perfect them through one on one shepherding. This kind of relationship is not like the relationship between a boss and a subordinate in the office.

In a family, there is a mutual relationship in love so that younger brother/sister also takes care of his/her elder brother/sister. They take care of each other. In the office, there is a promotion race, but in the family of God, the Body of Christ, there is no race but caring and nourishing each other in love. It is for all the Body building up of itself. You should practice your church life not according to man's opinion but according to God's word from your youth. Hallelujah!

### Experience ② : The church life of the Lord's recovery must follow the pure revelation of the Bible

Although I had contact with Brother Nee's ministry in 1925, I did not come into the Lord's recovery in a full way until 1932. Since that time I have seen the recovery passing through a process of coming out of Christendom. Even today we have not come out of Christendom in a thorough way. We still have something of Christendom within us, even unconsciously. When we come to a meeting, we may expect a good speaker to speak to us. In nature, this is the element and cause of fallen Christendom. This is the evil element of Nicolaitanism, the Clergy-laity system, which the Lord hates (Rev. 2:6). Why do we not come to the meetings prepared to minister something? We may say that we are weak, but we are strong in expecting to listen to a good message. We may dislike going to a meeting where there is not a good speaker. This is the subtle element of the clergy-laity system still remaining within us.

The Lord's recovery is for bringing us out of this unscriptural system and back to the beginning of the pure practice of the church life according to the divine revelation.

Because of our standing for the pure church life, others have been offended. But what can we do? Paul said in Galatians 1:10, "If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of Christ." If we were men-pleasers, we would not suffer persecution as Paul did. The history of the Lord's recovery is a history of coming out of and being outside of the present evil age. We have burned the bridges between us and Christianity, but some among us have tried to build a bridge to bring us back. We need to burn all the bridges. There should be no bridge between the local churches and Christianity. Everything should be after its kind. The denominations are after their kind, and the local churches should be after their kind. We should be what we are without compromise or pretense.

#### For working young saints

In the church life of the Lord's recovery, the Bible is our one and only standard. Every activity in the church should follow the pure revelation of God's Word. Japanese culture, Chinese culture, Korean culture, Western culture, African culture, or culture of any kind is not to be followed. Because the church is the kingdom of God.

According to history, after World War II, the Christians in Korea did not fear the persecution and had kept the basic Christian faith (including dealing with idols thoroughly). However, the Christians in Japan were in fear of the persecution and compromised with the Japanese society. As a result, the gospel became very dominant in Korea, and one-quarter of the population became Christians. On the other hand, compromises in Japan had weakened the power of the gospel; the number of Christians is less than one percent of the population. The lesson here is that even if one can escape from the persecution of society, being afraid of the persecution and be halfway dedicated, your will eventually be considered as not genuine and be despised from the society.

You need to love the believers who have seeking hearts in Christianity and pray for them, and shepherd them. However, you need to completely reject the system of Christianity, especially the clergy-laity system of one person speaks and everyone listens. Such kind of system kills the functions of the members of the Body of Christ.

Even in the company, you should not be afraid of the surroundings and become timid. First, you should consider and understand what essential needs of the project you are engaged in and what is the ultimate goal. After that, do not account for the precedent, do it on a zero-based review, think boldly in faith about what you need to promote the project and speak. By doing this, you will be respected by your boss and colleagues. Amen!

## 詩歌 597

1. かみは創世のまえ、御子にありえらび、子たる身分あたえ、召会を聖となす。召会がかみの所有、聖霊の証印受く、それは嗣業の担保、またまえあじわい。
2. キリスト昇天して、すべてに超えつし、ばんぶつのかしら、召会そのからだ。かれ、万ゆう満たし、召会はその豊満、しょう会はかん全に かれを表現する。
3. かつて、つみに死に、世の潮流にならい、にくよくにふけり、サタンにしたがう。いまや主とともに 復かつ、昇てんし、ともにてんに座す けっさくとなる。
4. 主はすみのいしで、使徒、預言者は土台、ユダヤ人と異邦人、建造されていぢ；かみのいえとなり、ともに建造され、霊にてちょう和され、主を安そくさす。
5. 召会かみのおく義、かみのごけいかく、キリスト住ませ、知恵をあらわす。主を理かいさせて、主を鑑しょうさせ、無限のあい満たし、主の豊満とする。
6. からだ、れい、のぞみ、主、信仰、バプテスマ、御ちち、みなひとつ、しょう会もひとつ。キリストの豊満の 身のたけの度量、われらはせい長し、ともに到たつす。
7. かく種のたまもの、召会はあたえられ、せい徒らを成就し、からだ建造する。ふるいひとを脱ぎ、あたらしいひと着、おもいの霊のなかで こうしんされる。
8. しみもしわもない 召かいをむかえんと、主は召かいを愛し、ご自身あたえた。おのがからだのよう やしないはぐくむ、キリストと召かい、大いなるおく義。
9. 召会はからだ、つま、住まいだけでなく、あく魔をほろぼす たたかうせん士。主の大のうにより ちからづけられ、かみの武具を着け、霊にありいのる。

1. 神在永遠創世之前，喜悅、揀選並豫定，要叫召會在子裡面，得子名分成為聖；得蒙救贖，作祂產業，受祂聖靈為印記，保證必得祂的基業，並得先享祂自己。
2. 基督升天坐在神右，遠超一切的勢力；神使祂作萬有元首，召會是祂的身體。萬有一切祂全充滿，召會乃是祂豐滿，祂藉召會普及、蔓延，召會彰顯祂完全。
3. 原是死在罪惡之中，隨從今世的風俗，

撒但、邪靈竟也順從，放縱肉體真可怒。

- 今與基督一同復活，一同坐在高天上，成為神的榮耀傑作，基督裡面所獨創。
4. 基督作了房角首石，使徒、先知為根基，照著神的奧秘啟示，猶太、外邦歸一體；在祂裡面同被建造，作神靈裡的居所；在靈裡面彼此相調，給神定居享安樂。
5. 神的奧秘乃是召會，神在永遠所計畫，為著彰顯祂的智慧，基督也可來安家。給眾聖徒明白基督，賞識基督的無限，知道祂愛超人領悟，充滿神性的豐滿。
6. 一身、一靈、同一指望，一主、一信並一洗，一位父神，眾人之上，召會因此當合一。認識基督，長大成人，有祂豐滿的身量；不再受到誘騙、牽引，不再隨風而飄蕩。
7. 基督賜下各樣恩賜，為要建造祂身體，成全聖徒各盡其職，愛中建造她自己。脫去舊人，穿上新人，再無從前的舊樣；心思靈裡得以更新，滿有主神的形像。
8. 基督捨己為愛召會，要使召會脫斑斕，聖潔，毫無瑕疵、污穢，作祂榮耀的配偶。祂愛召會，保養、顧惜，如待自己的身體；祂與召會成為一體，乃是極大的奧秘。
9. 身體、居所、新人、配偶，召會不僅是這些；也是戰士，為神爭鬥，將神仇敵全除滅。穿戴神的全副軍裝，賴主大能而剛強；靠主站住，靠靈抵擋，禱告隨時又多方。

## Hymn 823

1. God before the world's foundation  
Chose the Church in Christ the Son,  
That the Church might share the sonship,  
Holy, blameless, with Him one;  
That the Church be His possession  
With the Spirit as the seal,  
Of our heritage the earnest  
While His Son He does reveal.
2. To the throne Christ has ascended,  
Far above all rule and power;  
God has made Him Head o'er all things  
To the Church, His Body here.  
All in He ever filleth,  
And His fulness is expressed  
Through the Church, which is His Body  
And His image manifests.
3. We, once dead in our offences,  
Walking in the worldly course,  
Lusts of flesh and mind fulfilling  
Satan and his hosts their source,  
God with Christ has resurrected,

Seated in the heavenlies;

- We, His masterpiece, created  
In Christ Jesus, Him to please.
4. Jews and Gentiles are one body—  
God His myst'ry has made known—  
On apostles, prophets founded,  
Jesus Christ the cornerstone;  
We in Him are built together  
For God's dwelling manifest,  
Fitly framed by God the Spirit  
For His pleasure and His rest.
5. In eternal ages purposed  
That His wisdom be made known,  
Was the Church, His hidden myst'ry,  
Where the Son could make His home;  
That the saints may all in spirit  
Apprehend His boundlessness,  
Know His love which passes knowledge,  
All God's fulness to possess.
6. One in body, hope, and Spirit,  
One in faith, one Lord, the Son,  
One baptizing, with one Father,  
That the Church may thus be one;  
Christ to know in all His fulness,  
Unto manhood be matured,  
Ne'er by winds of doctrine carried,  
Nor by cunning men allured.
7. Many gifts the Lord has given,  
That His Body He may build,  
That the saints may be perfected  
And their ministry fulfilled.  
Thus we must put off the old man  
That we may put on the new;  
Thus, renewed in mind and spirit,  
We will bear God's image true.
8. Christ in love Himself has given  
That the Church be sanctified,  
Without blemish, spot, or wrinkle,  
To become His glorious bride.  
He does nourish her and cherish  
As a man his body treats;  
He and she become one body —  
Thus the myst'ry very great.
9. Body, house, new man the Church is,  
Bride, and temple, and yet more:  
She's the army too which fighteth  
All God's foe to triumph o'er.  
She is clothed with all God's armor,  
In His mighty strength is strong,  
Standing in the Lord, resisting,  
With all prayers she fighteth on