

Message Two

The Intrinsic Growth of the Church for Its Organic Increase

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:13, 15-16; 1 Cor. 3:6-7; 12:12; John 3:29-30a, 34

- 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—Eph. 4:15-16; 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14:**
- 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—John 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 3:6c.
 - 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—1 Cor. 3:6-7; Gal. 4:19.
 - 2. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head—Eph. 4:15-16:
 - a. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.
 - b. The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head—Eph. 4:15-16.
 - 3. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Col. 2:19:
 - 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—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - d. Only God can give growth; only God can give us Himself, and without Him we cannot have growth—vv. 6-7:
 - (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—Rom. 8:11.
 - (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—Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:16:
 - 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—1 Cor. 6:17.
 - 5. The growth of the church as the Body of Christ is the growth of God in the church—Col. 2:19.
 - C. The church grows until it reaches maturity—"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"—Eph. 4:13:
 - 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—1:23:
 - 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—vv. 22-23.
- c. Through the enjoyment of the riches of Christ (3:8), 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—4:13; 1:23.
- 4. The fullness of Christ has a stature, and this stature has a measure—4:13:
 - a. Because the stature of the church, the Body of Christ, grows, Paul speaks of its measure; this measure is the full-grown man—v. 13.
 - 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 for 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—Phil. 3:12-14.

II. The organic increase of the church is the increase of Christ in His organic Body as His bride—John 3:29-30a:

- A. The fullness of Christ is His Body, and the Body of Christ is His counterpart, His bride—Eph. 4:12-13, 16; 5:25-27.
- B. “He who has the bride is the bridegroom...He must increase”—John 3:29-30a:
 - 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—vv. 3, 5-6, 29-30a.
 - 3. Christ increases by regenerating the redeemed sinners, making them His bride—v. 29.
- 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—v. 34:
 - 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—6:63; 3:30a, 34.
- 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—v. 6.
- E. The bride as the increase of Christ is Christ Himself because the Body of Christ—“the Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12)—is the corporate Christ, composed of Christ as the Head and the church as His Body with all the believers as members.