

**THE INTRINSIC AND ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE
CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST, Week 2**

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

- Colossians 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**.
- Ephesians 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**,
- Ephesians 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, **who is the Head, Christ**,
- Ephesians 4:16 **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.
- 1 Corinthians 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but **God caused the growth**.
- 1 Corinthians 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but **God who causes the growth**.
- 1 Corinthians 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**.
- John 3:29 **He who has the bride is the bridegroom**; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
- John 3:30 He must **increase**, but I must decrease.
- John 3:34 For He whom God has sent **speaks the words of God**, for **He gives the Spirit not by measure**.

In the last chapter we saw the intrinsic essence of the church for its organic existence. Now we want to see the **intrinsic growth of the church for its organic increase**. The essence is for existence, and the growth is for increase. A child is organic, something of life, and its beginning is at birth. Following birth, every child's greatest need is growth. The church is also something **organic, full of life**. It is not an organization, void of life. We should forget about the common concept of the church as an organization or some social body. It is true that the church is a corporate entity, but it is not something organized. It is **something born**.

The Bible calls this birth **regeneration**. Paul was regenerated over nineteen hundred years ago, and I was regenerated just about sixty-four years ago. Everyone who believes in the Lord was regenerated at some point in time. However, in God's sight we all were regenerated at the same time. First Peter 1:3 says, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" This is a crucial verse. It tells us **God has regenerated all His chosen people**. We were not regenerated separately. According to 1 Peter 1:3, we all were regenerated at the time the Lord Jesus was resurrected. We have been regenerated through His resurrection. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 2*)

Day 1

- Colossians 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.
- Colossians 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;

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**.

Day 2

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

Colossians 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.

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.

Day 3

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Ephesians 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

- 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.

Day 4

Ephesians 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,

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

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.

By God's Growing in the Believers

The intrinsic growth of the church is by [God's growing in the believers](#). We were reborn by the divine life, which is God Himself. Now we are being fed and watered, and [God is causing us to grow](#). This growth is God Himself growing in us. When God gives us the growth in life, this means that [He is increasing Himself within us](#). As we are feeding on the Word, and as we are being [watered](#) by the gifted ones, God Himself is moving and growing within us.

The last part of Colossians 2:19 tells us that the Body “grows with the growth of God.” [We grow by God's growing within us](#). Of course, God in Himself is not growing, because He is complete and perfect. [His growing is within us](#), and how much He grows within us depends on how much room we will give to Him to grow. We may be full of the world, of ourselves, of our own interests, but by reading the Bible, little by little the word of the Bible takes away some part of our worldliness, some part of our self-interest, and some part of our love for things other than God Himself. Then [within us more room is given to God; He takes this room and expands and increases within us](#). This increase is His growth in us. His growth becomes our growth because we and He are one. The growth of the church is God's growth in the church. By our feeding on the Word and being watered by the gifted members, the negative things within us are taken away, and there is more room for the very God who dwells in us. When He gets more room, He grows within us. This issues in the church's organic growth. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 2*)

Day 5

John 3:29-30 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

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.

Day 6

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 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.

- 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.

The Increase of Christ in His Organic Body as His Bride

The church grows until it reaches [maturity](#), which is the [measure of the stature of the Body of Christ for His expression](#). This growth is for the organic increase of the church. This organic increase is the increase of Christ in His organic Body as [His bride](#). The fullness of Christ is His Body, and the Body of Christ is His counterpart, His bride. This is based on the type of Eve being the counterpart of Adam.

God in His wisdom did not create a couple but a single man, a “bachelor.” God brought all the living creatures to Adam, and Adam gave names to all of them, but among these Adam did not find his counterpart. Finally, God put Adam to sleep, opened his side, and took out a rib. In typology, this is a picture of what happened to Christ in His death. His death on the cross was His being “put to sleep” by God. In the Bible sleep means death. When Christ was sleeping on the cross, a soldier pierced His side, and out came blood and water. All that came out of Adam's side was the rib without the blood. At Adam's time in Genesis 2 there was no sin, so there was no need of blood for redemption. When Christ was sleeping on the cross, however, there was the problem of sin, so His death had to deal first with this sin problem. The blood came out of Christ's side for redemption. Following the blood, the water came out. The rib taken out of Adam's side and the water that flowed out of the side of Christ at the cross both signify the divine life. God used this rib, which was a part of Adam, and built a woman to be Adam's counterpart. Now [God builds up the church with the divine life, the resurrection life of Christ](#).

All the countless believers, regardless of how many millions there are, are as [one man in the sight of God](#). This universal man is the new man. The Head of this new man is Christ, and the Body of this new man is the church. The church is the Body of Christ. This is not the individual Christ but the corporate Christ, the enlarged Christ. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 2*)