

Special Study

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

I. Definition of terms:

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

Organism: "Any highly complex thing or structure with parts so integrated that their relation to one another is governed by their relation to the whole."

Organization: "An organism; any vitally or systematically organic whole; an association or society" with emphasis upon system and structure.

Thomas M. Lindsay, D.D., Principal of the Glasgow College of the United Free Church of Scotland in *The Church and The Ministry in the Early Centuries*, page 8.

"Organism, where the whole exists for the parts, and each part for the whole and for all the other parts."

"I devoutly believe that there is a Visible Catholic (universal) Church of Christ consisting of all those throughout the world who visibly worship the same God and Father, profess their faith in the same Saviour, and are taught by the same Holy Spirit; but I do not see any Scriptural or even primitive warrant for insisting that catholicity (universality) *must* find visible expression in a uniformity of organization . . ." page viii of Preface.

" . . . (the church is a self-governing society) where the individual rights and responsibilities of the members would blend harmoniously with the common good of all."

"The individual believer is never lost in the society, and he is never alone and separate. The bond of union is not an external framework impressed from without, but a sense of fellowship springing from within. The believer's union to Christ, which is the deepest of all personal things, always involves something social. The call comes to him singly, but seldom solitarily," page 7.

A. H. Newman in *A Manual of Church History*, Vol. I.

"When applied to Christians the word (ekklesia) means in the New Testament: (1) The entire community of the redeemed,

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

considered as an organism held together by belief in a common Lord and by participation in a common life and salvation, and in common aims and interests.”

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, p. 652, article on “Church”

“And the unity of which Paul writes and for which he strove is a unity that finds visible expression. Not, it is true, in any uniformity of outward polity, but through the manifestation of a common faith in acts of mutual love (Eph. 4:3-13; II Cor. 9).”

“. . . if each believer is vitally joined to Christ, all believers must stand in a living relation to one another. In Paul’s favorite figure, Christians are members one of another because they are members in particular of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 12:27).”

Baker’s Dictionary of Theology, article on “Church” p. 123.

“. . . the one church of God is not an institutional but a supernatural entity which is in process of growth towards the world to come. . . . All its members are in Christ and are knit together by a supernatural kinship.”

What is the Scriptural definition of the church in relationship to “Organism” or “Organization”?

Read: I Corinthians, chapter 12, in its entirety

Ephesians, chapter 4, in its entirety

Romans 14:1 — 15:13 (the church functioning as an organism)

Thus the conclusion:

Although divinely appointed offices are provided for the visible church, the church on earth is essentially an *organism* and *not* a systematic, structuralized *organization*, as organization is commonly thought of today. The church is a living, vital organism wherein its members are so integrated and controlled by the Head, even Christ, that their relation to one another is governed by their relation to the Head and to the whole body. The church as an entity exists for the individual member and the individual member exists and functions for the edification of the whole and other members.

FIRST CORINTHIANS

Some pertinent comments on I Corinthians 12:12-31 from the *International Critical Commentary on I Corinthians* by Plummer and Robertson:

“. . . though the gifts of God's Spirit may be many and various, yet those who are endowed with them constitute one *organic* whole.”

“The ultimate aim of the Christian is the well-being of the whole body, of which the controlling power is Christ, who is at once the Head and the Body, for every Christian is a member of Him.”

“The Church is neither a dead mass of similar particles, like a heap of sand, nor a living swarm of antagonistic individuals, like a cage of wild beasts; it has the unity of a living organism, in which no two parts are exactly alike, but all discharge different functions for the good of the whole. All men are not equal, and no individual can be independent of the rest; everywhere there is subordination and dependence.”

“. . . every individual has some function to discharge, and all must work together for the common good. This is the all-important point—unity in loving service. The Church is an organic body of which all the parts are moved by a spirit of common interest and mutual affection.”

“God made unity, but not uniformity; He did not level all down to monotonous similarity . . . every member cannot have the same function, and therefore there must be higher and lower gifts. But pride and discontent are quite out of place, for they are not only the outcome of selfishness, but also rebellion against God's will . . . it was not our fellow-men who placed us in an inferior position, but God; and He did it, not to please us or our fellows, but in accordance with His will, which must be right . . . there is no such thing as independence in an organism . . . all parts are not equal, yet no one part can isolate itself.”

II. Discussion of Unity as it is related to the Nature of the Church, Organism or Organization.

A. The hue and cry in contemporary Protestantism is unity, visible unity at almost any cost.

1. Mostly liberals are pushing this movement.
2. Some evangelicals and their denominations are clamoring for visible unity.

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

B. Even among the Restoration brotherhood

1. Some of the Disciples of Christ leaders and churches are planning on "restructuring" the brotherhood in preparation for merger with other denominations to form a visible, unified church.

C. The emphasis in this movement for unity is placed almost exclusively upon Organization, Structuralism, Federation.

1. Hardly, if ever, is oneness by spiritual brotherhood stressed.
2. Oneness of doctrine and faith is *deemphasized*.
3. Contemporary theologians now pressuring for structural unity interpret the nature of the church as an Organization—but is it?

III. What motives are behind the ecumenical thrust for an organizational church?

A. Ecumenists feel that a united church under one organization would be able to affect the larger affairs of human history and to control events here and now such as banning of atomic tests, elimination of racial segregation and many other problems.

But will the means such a "world-church" uses to accomplish these be political pressure or regeneration of men's hearts?

B. Ecumenists feel that a pagan world would be more impressed and more likely converted by a "world-church" organization.

But what is the true missionary situation today? The missionaries under national federations such as the N.C.C. are decreasing proportionately while the missionaries sent independently are increasing!

C. Ecumenists feel that one consolidated church would impress a religious stamp upon the culture of the world whereas now education, arts, professions, politics are being dominated by secularism.

1. But this secularism is not due to lack of organization, but simply because the church in every community has become too secularized—Sunday social clubs, having lost their vital message of salvation.

FIRST CORINTHIANS

2. We need not *reorganization*, but *regeneration*!

D. Ecumenists either fear or envy, or both, as they behold the visibly united Roman Catholic Church. Ecumenists believe that the influence of Catholicism (felt in government, labor, industry, communications, education, etc.) is due to visible organizational unity.

1. But Catholicism's basis for organizing is for political warfare and influence—union of church and state.

2. Separation of church and state is a basic tenant of Protestantism (and the Bible, we might add).

E. Ecumenists believe that the particularly visible unity for which our Lord prayed can only be realized within the framework of one ecclesiastical structure.

1. The Lord *did* pray for visible unity! John 17:21

2. The nature of that unity must be defined.

a. Would federal union of churches fulfill the will of God for visible unity?

b. Or is unity to be a spiritual, doctrinal harmony revealed authoritatively and exclusively in the New Testament?

IV. What of the Ecumenical Movement? Can the Church obtain unity through Organization or has she unity now Organically? What would the believer be called upon to promote or surrender in ecumenicism? **CAN AN EVANGELICAL BELIEVER OR CHURCH UNITE WITH THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT AND NOT SURRENDER THE "FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED"?**

A. Christianity is the only true revealed religion; it is not of human origin. The Christian *must*, therefore, compare religious movements and philosophies with what God's revelation says.

B. What Christ will the ecumenical movement hold to?

1. The Christ of the modernist—human only.

2. The Christ of the existentialist—a mere subjective ideal.

3. The Christ of the syncretist—a conglomeration of all the Christs.

4. Or the Christ revealed in the Scriptures, human and divine,

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

the Son of the living God, in whom only is salvation and immortality.

5. The question cannot be avoided, the church cannot live in a vacuum, if she is to preach a vital message of hope and life to a dying world.
- C. What will be studied by ecumenical preachers and taught by them?
1. Will it be the social gospel of the liberal?
 2. Will it be neo-orthodoxy (agnosticism using scriptural terminology)?
 3. Will it be atheism or communism?
 4. Will it be the Bible as the supernaturally revealed Word of God?
- D. How inclusive will the ecumenical "world-church" be?
1. C. C. Morrison writes, "What in a united church shall we do with our differences? There can be only one answer. They must be welcomed and embraced as essential to the fulfillment of the Christian life."
 2. To Mr. Morrison, diversities of belief and faith are a spiritual asset . . . **NO NEED FOR A UNIFYING FAITH AS LONG AS WE HAVE A UNIFYING ORGANIZATION.**
 3. But in this wide inclusiveness what divergencies will be tolerated?
 - a. Denial of the blood atonement by substitution?
 - b. Denial of the humanity and divinity of Christ?
 - c. Denial of the indwelling of the supernatural Holy Spirit?
 - d. Denial of Heaven and Hell and the immortality of the soul? **THE VERY SUBSTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY WILL BE LOST IF TRUTH BE SACRIFICED TO OBTAIN ORGANIZATIONAL UNION!**
- E. What of the ecumenical concept of the church?
1. In its hysteria for organization will it demand membership in the external society in order to obtain salvation, fellowship and toleration?
 2. If so, God stands helpless until the church is properly functionalized . . . the heathen await salvation until it can be organized!

FIRST CORINTHIANS

3. Will not a centrally controlled church also mean centrally controlled clergy, laity, journalism, finances, etc., etc.?
 4. Will not this also bring about a bureaucracy similar to federal governments—more and more bureaus, offices, secretaries, building up of empires, funds.
- V. The Authority of Scripture is essential to the life and unity of the Organism (the Body of Christ—the Church).
- A. The proper function of the Body of Christ as an organism is dependent upon the authority of Scripture.
 1. For it is in Scripture *alone* that the mind of Christ is expressed.
 2. For an organism to live and function it must receive instructions from and obey its head—Christ is the head of the church.
 - B. The major cause for division and sectarianism in Christianity is the rejection of the authority and veracity of apostolic teaching.

There is a real lack of Biblically authoritative preaching in the pulpits of the churches today.
 - C. The ecumenical/organizational thrust is an outcome of the rejection of the authority of Scripture.

The ecumenists want to replace Scriptural authority with organizational authority.
 - D. The history of man testifies to man's own realization of his estrangement from God.
 1. Neither by his own wisdom (I Cor. 1-2) nor by nature (Rom. 1) has man been able to find reconciliation or restored fellowship with God.
 2. A revelation from God Himself unto estranged man was needed.
 3. Christianity makes exclusive claim to be the only revealed religion and to have absolute claim upon the souls of men.
 4. All that is needful for the salvation of man and the maintenance of the Body of Christ has been revealed.

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

5. The repository of that revelation is in the Bible.
 - a. **IN THE BIBLE WE HAVE OBJECTIVE TRUTH.**
 - b. And because it is *REVEALED TRUTH*, the written Word possesses authority to command belief from all men.
- E. The leading theological emphasis (control) within the ecumenical organization is the *authority of experience*.
 1. Most of the leaders of ecumenism are either neo-orthodox/existential or liberal.
 2. All religious authority for faith, life and action is, for them found by experience and subjectivity.
 - a. Religious truth and faith is based on how the individual feels about it—the Bible is only true if the man feels it is true!
 3. But, **WHOSE EXPERIENCE IS VALID?**
 - a. Shall we take a survey of the membership of the church to determine the authoritative message of God; or will the subjective judgments of church councils, religious leaders and professional theologians be accepted—
 - b. **OR SHALL WE GIVE THE CHURCH OVER TO COMPLETE ANARCHY AND CHAOS BY LETTING EVERY MAN DECIDE FOR HIMSELF WHAT IS TRUE AND RIGHT SIMPLY ACCORDING TO HIS FEELINGS?**
- F. If the church is to exist as a living, vital, compassionate, feeling organism—each member so integrated with the other yet functioning as a whole it must:
 1. Have one mind (the mind of Christ, its head).
 2. Partake of one food (the Bread of Life, John 6).
 3. Speak the same thing (one objective message of truth, Gal. 1:8-9).
 4. Have each member working its own “due measure” (Eph. 4).
 5. This oneness is not to be found in organizational structure—**ONLY WHEN EACH MEMBER SURRENDERS**

FIRST CORINTHIANS

HIMSELF TO THE MIND OF CHRIST AS AUTHORITY IN ALL MATTERS OF FAITH AND ACTION . . . AND AGREEING THAT THE MIND OF CHRIST IS FOUND IN OBJECTIVE REVELATION (THE SCRIPTURES)—Only then, will the church be a vital organism functioning for the salvation of mankind.

VI. Is Structural Organization the only way to the visible Unity for which Christ prayed in John 17:21—or may the church as an Organism attain it?

A. It is true that Christ's prayer (John 17:21) demands visible unity of believers.

1. How else could the world behold and believe? It cannot behold the invisible.
2. But notice also that the Lord defined the unity he desired with the clause, “. . . as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.”

B. The same oneness that exists in the Godhead organism forms the pattern of unity for the organism which is the church.

C. One in DOCTRINE.

1. Father, Son and Holy Spirit taught the same doctrine.
2. John 7:16; 8:26-28; 12:49
3. Those who advocate structural unity in organization abhor the idea of oneness of doctrine.
 - a. They say doctrinal unity is impossible.
 - b. They fear that doctrinal emphasis will offend and destroy unity.
 - c. If doctrinal unity was essential between Father and Son, how can the church composed of fallible men exist without it?
4. Organizational union without organic unity in doctrine will NEVER impress the world.

D. One in PURPOSE.

1. There was mutual agreement in carrying on the work of redemption between the Father and Son (cf. John 5:19-29; 6:38-40; 17:4).

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

2. The church must echo that agreement of purpose by proclaiming the same agreement in message (salvation).

The rapid growth of the first century church can be ascribed to the unity of its message of redemption.

3. The Organizational union in ecumenism today has multiple purposes.
 - a. Social gospelizing (improving living standards).
 - b. Political influence and pressure.
 - c. Enlarging the structure of church union.

E. One in LOVE.

1. There can be no doubt that Father and Son were one in love (cf. John 10:17).
2. The pagan world stood amazed at the demonstrations of love in the lives of Christians in the early centuries.
 - a. The church was of one heart and of one soul.
 - b. Each member felt what the other members felt; for what affected one affected all.
3. Generally speaking the ecumenical movement stresses economic necessity and ecclesiastical pressure as its cohesives.

A union which must be held together by the cold, lifeless and unfeeling necessities of economics and ecclesiasticism HAS NO RESEMBLANCE TO A UNITY EN-GENDERED BY LOVE . . . WHERE EACH MEMBER IS OF ONE HEART AND SOUL!

F. Now the question: How may the ecumenists argue for organizational unity from Christ's prayer in John 17:21? Does the Godhead form a corporate unity that can be seen?

1. In the Old Testament dispensation it was necessary to have physical representations of spiritual truths (sacrifices, tabernacle, priests, etc.).
 - a. The Israelites even demanded a physical king whom they could see. They were not content with the rule of the king of Heaven in their hearts.
 - b. It is still true of men today who are not content with the church as an Organism and the rule of Christ in their hearts, but must have an outward, structural world-church organization.

FIRST CORINTHIANS

2. The New Testament dispensation is on a much higher spiritual plane.

Its worship is more spiritual than visible and ritualistic.

3. When we understand the higher plane of New Testament revelation.

We will see more than organization in John 17:21.

G. The first century *does* reflect *somewhat* of the unity for which Christ prayed.

1. Unity of doctrine, faith, life and purpose

2. But even the early church never reached the fulfillment of His prayer.

3. Paul's epistle (Gal., Col., I & II Cor.) shows how he withstood the infiltration of false doctrine lest it divide the church.

4. In Ephesians Paul stresses the fact that knowledge of Christ and speaking the truth in love is one of the great necessities to unity.

H. Under no condition can the Lord's prayer, John 17:21, be interpreted as a prayer for:

1. "one over-all organization under central control," or

2. "a single comprehensive organization of the churches.

VII. Life and Unity is *in* Christ.

A. The Church receives not only her origin and position but her continuing life in Christ.

1. Cf. John 15:1-5

2. External connection with a visible organization does not save.

a. Men must be internally connected with Christ Himself.

b. A man might be entirely destitute of spiritual life and still be connected to a visible organization.

B. The ground of unity among believers is their spiritual union with Christ.

1. By surrender to Him in faith and obedience to His commands we are united to Him.

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

2. Out of this union of each individual believer springs the organic unity that unites all in a fellowship whether separated by time, space, language or race.
- C. Hindrance to unity does not consist in the lack of one external organization to which people can cleave, but to the absence of internal connection with Christ.
 1. The building of world-church organizations means nothing in the sight of God if the churches are not *IN* Christ.
 2. Search as much as you like—**YOU WILL FIND NO DRIVING COMPULSION BY CHRISTIANS OF THE FIRST CENTURY TO ESTABLISH A WORLD-CHURCH ORGANIZATION WITH ECCLESIASTICAL HEADS AND COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS!**
 3. Winning ecclesiastical battles for amalgamation and merger means nothing in the sight of God if churches are not *IN CHRIST*.
 - a. To be *IN* Christ means a vital relationship to Christ as the Head—obedience to the Head.

VIII. To Be of One Mind (One Faith) is Necessary to the Life of the Church As An Organism.

- A. Rom. 15:1-7; I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; Eph. 4:4-6; John 14:1-11
- B. The ecumenical movement does not subscribe to the proposition of **ONE FAITH** as defined in Scripture.
 1. The World Council of Churches has openly declared war on the idea of **ONE FAITH** as being divisive, bigoted, prejudicial and intolerant.
- C. But the first cause of division in the early church was heresy (those who divided over the **ONE** faith) rather than schismatism (those dividing over non-essentials).
 1. Heretics are different than schismatics—heretics seldom desire to leave the church but prefer to remain and control the church to proclaim their false doctrines:
 2. **THE APOSTLES DID NOT BROADEN THE DEFINITION OF FAITH SO THAT ALL SHADES OF BELIEF COULD LIVE COMFORTABLY WITHIN THE CHURCH.**

FIRST CORINTHIANS

- a. They were pointedly restricted and confined to the ONE faith that revealed through the apostles (Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 3).
 - b. They absolutely refused to accept peace at the cost of revealed truth.
3. If we say that all modes of faith have equal standing (as the W.C.C. does) **WE WILL SOON BE SAYING THAT NO FAITH IS NECESSARY.**
- A faith that is not contended for has little value in the sight of men and will soon be the death of the organism of the Body of Christ.
- D. The ecumenists continually insist that all Christians may be united by having ONE *subjective* faith.
1. **BUT WITHOUT ONENESS OF OBJECTIVE FAITH THERE CAN BE NO SUBJECTIVE FAITH!**
 2. Diverse gospels produce diverse subjective faiths and beliefs.
 3. Destroy the essence of Christianity (the ONE revealed, objective faith) and you destroy the organism which results from that objective faith!
 4. The system of doctrine contained in the Bible (especially New Testament) is itself AN ORGANISM—destroy one vital doctrine and terrible sickness and weakness will result.
 5. The church is responsible to God as “the pillar and ground of the truth.”
 - a. A world organization without a clearly defined Biblical doctrine (objective faith) is a violation of that trust.
 - b. **HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONAL VISIBILITY BE CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT THAN VISIBILITY OF UNITED TRUTH?**
- E. Genuine and permanent unity simply cannot exist without agreement on essential teachings of Christ.
1. Stifling controversy over basic doctrines and minimizing differences may hasten the organization of a world-wide church, **BUT WILL THE END RESULT BE A CHRISTIAN CHURCH?**

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

2. Unity of faith cannot be accomplished in a generation—especially in a generation that is scripturally illiterate.
 - a. Paul says it takes “diligence” (hard work) to have unity—patient, courageous *work*.
 - b. It takes teaching—“speaking the truth in love . . . *growing up*. . . .”

IX. The Church is An Organism Because it is A Universal Church.

- A. The existence of the church is not dependent upon visible organization.
- B. The church is not a matter of sight but of faith.
 1. If the essence of the church were her visibility, then there would be no need of faith to realize her existence in far distant places—unseen.
 2. If one organization were essential to unity then faith in the essential oneness of the church would be a delusion.
- C. The concept of universal organism appears in various figures of speech.
 1. The Body—church in Corinth was not in organizational union with the church in Jerusalem or Rome yet she is spoken of as the body of Christ.
 2. Bride—pluralities of brides do not exist in the sight of the Bridegroom.
 3. Temple—the Temple is one (cf. Eph. 2:21-22).
- D. Although organizational union is not essential to universal unity—that universal, spiritual unity must be of necessity manifested visibly.
 1. Recognizing and submitting to the absolute Headship of Christ is an outward and visible manifestation of spiritual unity.
 2. Observance of divinely instituted ordinances is a visible manifestation of spiritual unity. (cf. Acts 2:42)
 3. Holiness, Sanctification, Separation from the world is a necessary and distinctly visible manifestation of unity.
 - a. WITHOUT HOLINESS THE CHURCH CAN NEVER EXPECT TO ACHIEVE UNITY UPON EARTH (James 4:1).

FIRST CORINTHIANS

- b. Unjustified division finds root in the evil lust of the human heart.
 - c. Let us seek first a holy church and unity will be added to her.
4. Discipline is an outward manifestation of unity.
- a. There can be no unity if the church tolerates immorality and heresy.
 - b. **EVEN THOSE OF EVANGELICAL FAITH OFTEN EXPRESS THE FEAR THAT THE EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE WILL DRIVE PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE CHURCH.**
 - (1) History reveals just the opposite to be true.
 - (2) Note the effect of discipline in Acts 5.
 - (3) The world beholds other societies exercising discipline over its membership while the church, checked by cowardice or false tolerance, fails to remove even the most flagrant violators of her laws. **NO WONDER THE WORLD SCORNS THE CHURCH!**

Conclusion

I. The Body of Christ

A. The body (the church) receives life from the Head.

1. Members of the body have union together *not* through external organization but by virtue of their spiritual union with Him.

Structural organization is not stressed in the New Testament.
2. Compare these scriptural references.

Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 12:12-31; Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:1-16; 5:23-32
3. These scriptures plainly teach that the body of Christ exists as an organic whole.
4. An overall organization was non-existent in the 1st century church.
 - a. Because individual or groups of churches had separate organizations does not imply that the church was divided or fragmented.

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

b. The fundamental idea of the above scriptures is that the Church is an organism.

B. The term body focuses special attention to the Head.

1. The focal point of interest of the human body is the head.

2. Col. 1:18 . . . Man is not the head of the church nor even the center of the universe—man is the body and exists to give glory to the Head.

a. The primary reason for the creation of the Church was for the glory of God focused on the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. The body receives life from the Head.

He is the Vine, we the branches. . . . He is the Bread of Life.

D. The concept of the body is essentially spiritual.

The visible church contains dead members who do not belong to the living organism . . . tares and bad fish are in the visible church but not the invisible (Matt. 13).

II. The Analogy of the Human Body (I Cor. 12)

A. The body consists of many different members united in one organic whole, each necessary for the perfection and good of the whole and animated by one life principle, controlled by the head.

B. A body consists of many parts but there is in it an essential unity (the church).

1. Every member is important to the body.

2. The diversity of gifts contributes to the glory and usefulness of the body.

3. The analogy of the term body implies a far more intimate relationship between believers than members of an external ecclesiastical organization can ever attain!

a. WHEN ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL MEMBERS SUFFER.

b. WHEN ONE MEMBER REJOICES, ALL REJOICE.

c. There is no cold, detached unconcern for suffering, but HEARTFELT CONCERN.

d. There is no envy over another's honor or joy.

FIRST CORINTHIANS

4. Even the Head is closely associated with the suffering and rejoicing of the body (Matt. 25).

NO HUMAN ORGANIZATION CAN MATCH THE ONENESS AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST!!

- C. The scriptures stress that increase of the Body depends upon closer union with Christ (John 15).
 1. The ecumenists stress structural organization for increase of the body.
 - a. But mere organization cannot convert the human soul and give it victory over Satan.
 - b. **THE GREAT AND PRIMARY EFFORT SHOULD BE TO INCORPORATE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH INTO CLOSER UNION WITH CHRIST!! TEACH, TEACH, TEACH.**
 - c. Mere incorporation into external mergers for the sake of structural union is not fulfilling Christ's prayer in John 17!!

III. What Does All This Mean Practically?

- A. It means that mergers into structural world-church organizations are contrary to the revealed will of God in the New Testament for unity of believers.
- B. It means that "brotherhood" organizations, officers, offices, agencies, societies, secretaries are not necessary to the unity for which Christ prayed.
- C. It means that the truth (the One objective faith) cannot be compromised for the sake of superficial tranquility.
- D. It means that the Church in some instances has failed to rise to the challenge of perfecting the unity of believers and perfecting the church as an *organism*.

The Lord is not as impressed with our attendance craze and promotional madness as He is with patient, loving, diligent "feeding of the flock . . . the growing up together by a steady diet of the *meat of the gospel*. . . ."

WHY MUST THE SUCCESS OF PREACHERS OR CHURCHES BE MEASURED SOLELY BY ATTENDANCE FIGURES, DRIVES, CONTESTS AND SUPERSTRUCTURE OF ORGANIZATION?

IS THE CHURCH AN ORGANIZATION OR AN ORGANISM?

2. Let us never let the fires of evangelism be extinguished . . . God forbid!

a. But **LET US STRIVE TO REACH THE ORGANIC UNITY EXPRESSED IN I Corinthians 12** and we will **HAVE SPONTANEOUS EVANGELISM IN ALL THE MEMBERSHIP!**

b. When we *truly become a body*, an organism, then will the world believe!

E. The distinguishing mark of the Church is holiness, sanctification.

NOT ATTENDANCE, NOT NEW BUILDINGS, NOT EVEN ADDITIONS—BUT UNWORLDLINESS!!

F. The distinguishing mark of the church is “speaking truth in love. . . .”

1. **NOT ORGANIZATION, NOT SOCIAL AFFAIRS, NOT POWER, NOT PRESTIGE (Rev. 2-3)**

2. **WHY ARE WE GOING OVERBOARD FOR ATTENDANCE AND LETTING “BABES IN CHRIST” AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BODY BECOME SPIRITUAL ILLITERATES, INACTIVE AND DEAD BY NEGLECT THROUGH FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE CHURCH IS AN ORGANISM . . . NOT AN ORGANIZATION!**