

Fellowship - Part 5 (Organic)

by Lance Lambert

Lance Lambert emphasizes the vital importance of understanding and practicing organic fellowship within the Church, highlighting its life-giving nature and the dangers of organizationalism.

Duration: 1:13:08

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2, Romans 12:10, Romans 12:12-15

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of dullness and lack of ministry in church meetings. They suggest that instead of trying to fix these problems through human efforts, believers should humble themselves and seek the Lord's intervention. The speaker emphasizes the importance of genuine fellowship and unity among believers, highlighting the concept of being one body in Christ. They also mention the need for different gifts and ministries within the church, encouraging believers to use their unique gifts according to the grace given to them. The sermon references Romans 12:4-5 to support these points.

Transcript

to the twelfth chapter of Romans. Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12 and I will commence reading from verse one.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace that was given me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but so to think as to think soberly, according as God has dealt to each man a measure of faith.

For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office, so we who are many are one body in Christ, and several members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith, or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry, or he that teach us through his teaching, or he that exhort us through his exhorting, he that give us, let him do it with liberality, he that rule us with diligence, he that show us mercy with cheerfulness, let love be without hypocrisy, abhor that which is evil, plea to that which is good, in love of the brethren, be tenderly affectioned one to another, in honor

preferring one another, indeligent not slothful, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer, communicating to the necessities of the saints, given for hospitality, bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not, rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep, be of the same mind one toward another, set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly, be not wise in your own conceit. Shall we just have a further word of prayer this evening? Lord, we do just want to bow again in thy presence and recognize, dear Lord, that speaker and hearer, we are bankrupt, Lord, to thy grace.

We're not going to get anything, Lord, out of this time, unless, Lord, thou dost come in by thy Spirit. We praise thee, Lord, thou hast made the provision for us in and through our Lord Jesus, and, O Father, we come on no other foundation, no other basis or ground than that which thou hast given us, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his finished work. And, Father, we ask thee now, wilt thou flood this time as we turn to thy word with divine light and divine life? Wilt thou, we pray, dear Lord, get this burden out of thy heart and into our hearts, Lord? O thou seest, Lord, the poorness of the vessel through which thou must speak.

But, Lord, overcome all that, we pray, as we turn to thee, and let thy strength and power be manifested in human weakness. And, Lord, thou seest the weakness of our hearing. Let thy power and strength be manifested thereto, Lord, and let this whole evening, Lord, redound to thy glory and honour because of thy coming in through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask it in his name. Amen. As you all know, I have been dealing, as the Lord has enabled me, with different principles of fellowship.

And this evening, I want to take another principle. I consider it to be as vital and as strategic, as important a principle as any of the ones we have thus far dealt with. It is the principle of the organic.

The principle of the organic. A bit of a mouthful. The principle of the organic.

I think that this is another principle of fellowship, that the enemy has used every device known to him, and every weapon in his armoury, to somehow or other induce the people of God to contradict. Because the enemy knows far better, unfortunately, than most of us, that this principle is so vital to the building up of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. So vital to real fellowship in practice, that he will do anything and everything to blind the people of God to this matter.

Ignorance of this principle in its practical outworking and meaning has led to many, many tragedies, not only in the history of the Church, with which we could spend the whole evening dealing with, but even in our contemporary situation. We see all over the world things which really, I believe, began with the Spirit of God contradicting this principle of the organic, and producing a structure and a system which at the beginning seems to be very much of the Lord, but which proves to be later foreign to the life of God. It is an imposition upon the life of the people of God, upon the life of Christ in the people of God, and therefore in the end becomes a very undoing of the deepest desire of the people of God.

Some of these dear ones in these moves of the Spirit of God, they desire more than anything else to see the house of God built. They desire more than anything else to see the recovery of truth concerning the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they themselves, through contradicting or contravening this principle of the organic, undo the very thing they long to see fulfilled in our day and generation. The apostle Paul once said to the people of God at Corinth, we are not ignorant of Satan's devices.

We must say sadly against ourselves that for the most part we are ignorant of Satan's devices. Oh, that the Holy Spirit this evening could take something of this matter, could take this principle of the organic and get it into our hearts. Oh, that somehow or other I might be enabled at least by the Spirit of God so to elucidate this principle, so to set it forth that the youngest of us here may see it.

May the Lord help us. True fellowship is organic in its nature. True fellowship is organic in its nature.

You cannot structure it. You cannot systematize it. You cannot reduce it to a technique, to a matter of methods, a matter of regulations.

You all know those sticky times that we can have when we suddenly say that this is the technique for fellowship. We don't put it quite like that, but we say now we're going to have a time of fellowship. We sit ourselves round in a circle all looking at one another and we say now this is how you have fellowship.

One, two, three and four and the time becomes so sticky. We all look at each other and then we look at the ground and we look at the ceiling and we look over there and we look over there. Then we look at each other and we're so thankful whenever anyone even makes a peep.

You know we go, oh someone's saying something. But even when they've said it, it's artificial. And then as soon as it's all over we go out and we have fellowship.

We make this mistake again and again. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that the kind of time like tomorrow, like we had the other morning when we had a time of fellowship, it was the most blessed time. But when you try to structure this thing of fellowship, when you try to define as it were methods of fellowship, technique in fellowship, when you try to systematize it, you have somehow or other missed the whole point of real fellowship.

Real fellowship is organic. It is something within the very life of God. Fellowship is inherent within the life of God.

You know when real spiritual life comes into a human being, they suddenly desire fellowship. That is the natural desire to find someone else who's got the same life. Someone else who knows the same Lord.

Someone else who's been saved by the same Saviour. We long for fellowship. And the more life we have in us, the more we feel our need of each other.

The strange thing about the life of God is it never makes us self-sufficient. It never makes us self-sufficient. Knowledge always makes us self-sufficient.

We feel the more we know in the head, the more we can do without other people. The more sort of self-contained, self-sufficient we can become. But the life of God somehow creates within us a hunger for the rest of the people of God.

It creates within us a hunger for one another. It creates within us a sense of the need to share with others. Our Lord Jesus explained it in such simple way.

In one way He didn't explain it. It was in prayer and He was speaking to His Father in John 17. But it is explained in those wonderful words of His in John 17 verse 21, that they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may also be in us.

That's organic. That's an organic fellowship. You can't structure that.

You can't systematise it. You can't reduce it to method or technique. That's a matter of life.

And you get the same thing again in Romans chapter 12 in the passage that we have read together where the Apostle says in verse 4 and 5, for even as we have many members in one body and all the members have not the same office, so we who are many are one body in Christ and severally members one of another. And here's the point. Having gifts, differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith, or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry, or He that teaches to His teaching and so on and so forth.

Suddenly we discover that this whole matter of being in Christ, of being one body in Christ, of being members of Christ and members one of another is a matter of fellowship. We don't all have the same thing. We have differing gifts according to the grace that was given to us.

One has something, one has another, and fellowship flows out of that. It's something organic. Now let's look a little more closely at this principle.

What I want to say is this, that the Church, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, is an organism. Or let's put it this way, is organic in nature. Now most evangelicals give lip service to this.

Most theological seminaries and Bible colleges will teach that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a living organism. And then they teach everybody how to organize the organism. But you will go through many, many believing fundamental Bible colleges and seminaries where you still find them, and you will discover that they teach that the Church is a living organism.

A living organism. Some, it is true, make a distinction between what they call the mystical body of Christ and the Church on earth. This is a difference made between something which is all up there in the air, in the heavenlies, invisible, intangible, universal, spiritual, and what is down here on earth which is organized, institutional, earthly, and has every kind of contradiction within it.

Now there is a kind of teaching which I must say I cannot find in the New Testament, that somehow or other up there we have the mystical body of Christ, and down here we have an institutional, organized thing. The fact of the matter is this, if you take your New Testament and shut out all the ideas you've ever had about Church, and so on, churches, you must come to the conclusion that the Word of God teaches us that the Church on earth is the expression of the Church. That really all it is is that somewhere on earth is found a fellowship produced from heaven, governed by heaven, developed from heaven, which one day will be caught up to heaven and will return to the earth from heaven.

You come to that conclusion. In these days in which we're living, thank God, more and more true believers are beginning to see the evil of denominationalism. Twenty years ago it was still very respectable to be denominational.

Now even if you're in a denominational church, it's not so respectable to be denominational. We have to thank the World Council of Churches for that, and also the Second Vatican Council, as well as the fact that evangelicals are being pressurized into a corner where they're having to rethink the whole term Church. And we find all over the place that suddenly it's respectable to be non-denominational.

Even if you go to a Baptist church, it's respectable to be non-denominational. Even if you go to a Methodist church, it's respectable to be non-denominational. Respectable now.

We have even groups who seem to feel that the main thing is to be non-denominational. I've got my tea sack into place. We can continue.

Denominationalism is not the disease Listen carefully to me. Denominationalism is the symptom. You can get rid of every trace of denominationalism, and you've got rid of the symptoms, but the disease is still there.

You know, sometimes you can go to the doctor, this is not devaluing the doctor, but you can go to the doctor and you have some pimples or a rash and he says, oh yes, yes, yes, he's a very busy man, especially on our side of the Atlantic, and he says, yes, yes, here you are, take this prescription and go. And off you go to the chemist, and now welfare state, we get something for it, we slap it on the rash and it's gone. And then it comes up here.

So then we put it there and it comes up here. Then we put it there and it comes up here. The fact of the matter is, you can get rid of a symptom, but the disease may stay inside you.

To get rid of denominationalism is, thank God, a major step forward. But it is still only getting rid of the symptoms. What is the disease? The disease is organizationalism.

That is the disease. You will discover that every single major denomination began as something organic, became organized and structured outside of the life of Christ, and finally that thing crystallized into a denomination. The disease is organizationalism.

Denominationalism, our labelling of ourselves by all the various names we have, is only a symptom. Now what is the difference between an organism and an organization? An organism has got a very complex, often a very complex and intricate organization. Don't make any mistake about this.

An organism is thoroughly organized, but the difference between an organization and an organism is that an organization is static and man-made, is put together from without to within, whereas an organism has to be born and it is within the life. Now do you begin to get it? For instance, my body is an organism. Now every one of you here this evening has a body.

This is a remarkable fact, but every one of you in this place has brought your body along with you. I am thankful for that. Now you have the illustration of this whole matter sitting with you.

You are sitting in an organism and the organism is sitting in a chair. This organism, this body is an incredible thing, isn't it? You know, quite a few years ago I was born and I was no more on the left side and everything I've got except these clothes, everything I've got has come out of that. How did I get like this? Did my parents stretch me? What did they do? How did it happen? No, I grew, I grew.

Do you know that this body of mine has got the most incredible organisation? I have got a central intelligent system. Believe it or believe it not, so have you. That intelligent system in you is more intricate than anything in the pentagon and far more accurate.

You have a telephone exchange. You've got all kinds of things in your Do you know you've got a built-in thermostatic control? When it gets too cold you shiver and that is your thermostat at work. It says now

generate a bit of heat and you start to shake and when you get too hot you perspire.

Not sweat, you perspire. And that is the way that your body is trying to cool you down. But you've got, where did it come from? Where did this intelligent system in your body which is so remarkable and so accurate, where did it all come from? Did it come from reading books? No.

Did your parents play a kind of, endlessly play a kind of tape to you? That told you how you should react and the way you should react? No. You've got the whole thing in your life. The whole thing is in your life and it was all there when you were born.

Parts of it were there but not developed because you didn't need it. But as you grew so the whole organisation that you needed to be a contemporary human being, you understand what I mean? The whole organisation developed with you so that an organism is always contemporary. It never falls behind.

It's always contemporary. You see here I am quite a few years after I was born but I'm contemporary. You may not feel it but I am.

I'm contemporary. Do you understand the word contemporary? You use it over here I hope. In other words my body is absolutely contemporary.

I'm not living back in 1935. I'm living here in 1975. I've got a body that's absolutely renewed.

All the cells of my body are being renewed all the time. I'm living a contemporary life. I've got a contemporary body.

I've got a contemporary organisation. Some things have had to be cut back because I've grown older and other things have had to be developed in order to keep me contemporary. Now that is the difference between an organisation and an organism.

An organisation is something which is put together. It never grows unless men change it from without. You understand? The only way you can bring an organisation say from 1935 up to date is to try and change it from without.

It doesn't grow from within. If you had a 1935 car, automobile as you say, it would still be a 1935 car in 1975. It's an organisation but it's a static organisation.

But my body is contemporary in 1975. How come? Because my body has an organisation that is developed from its life. Now the whole key to this matter of organisation is where it finds its origin.

You see we cannot do without organisation. It is stupid to think that the people of God can do without all organisations. Things have to be done decently and in order.

There has to be a certain amount of organisation. That is obvious. But where does it come from? Where does it come from? Does it find its origin in the life of God? Or is it something that we are thinking up and conceiving from the Bible and imposing upon the life of God? Sometimes you see we think we see a weakness.

Oh I could speak for an hour on this matter just from observations and experiences I've had in all kinds of things all over the place. You see people see a weakness amongst the people of God and it's a real weakness and then they begin to talk and discuss and think and think and think and discuss more and

then they look at the Bible and then they think again and then they discuss more. Perhaps at the end they have a little bit of breath.

And then they produce something to answer to the weakness. Of course when it first comes in it seems to be marvellous, absolutely marvellous. It seems to be an answer to the weakness.

But what we have done unwittingly is we have brought a structure in that hasn't come out of the life. It's come out of our head. And in the end that structure will kill the life of God inside.

It will suffocate it. It will strangle it. It will bleed it to death like a parasite living on something else.

It will drain everything out of it till it's killed. Now that leads me to say that everything is within the life of Christ. Everything is within the life of Christ.

The church is within the life of Christ. You can't put the church together. That's the whole danger of books which define for us church principles.

We need to see clearly what these things are. But the danger has always been the same. As soon as some people get hold of that, they're off.

Now we've got it. Now we've got it. Now we can put it together.

Just get a few people together and we'll have this and we'll have that and we'll have the other. And you on this side are terrific at this. You'll ride away in a moment.

We are very much more slow and stupid on our side of the Atlantic. But over here you've got a business instinct. As soon as you see the technique or the way or the idea, you're in.

That is the whole danger of this matter. We tend to think that anyone who's saved can put the church together. That somehow or other all you've got to do is to know certain teachings, certain principles and then you can start to think that principles are living things.

They are within life. What we have to do is to recognize a principle and then see that we obey it. That's a different thing to try to structure it.

I wonder whether you understand what I'm trying to say this evening. What is the meaning of Pentecost? Didn't those dear, those 120 in the upper room, don't you think that those dear ones had a perfect church? 120 saved believers in an upper room gathered around a risen Christ with an open Bible, pure doctrine. I said this before, I believe, when we began this time.

We couldn't have asked for more. But something happened on the day of Pentecost which was all together in a different realm. When the Holy Spirit came, what was the meaning of His coming? That we might speak in tongues, that we might have gifts, that we might have a manifestation of the Spirit.

My dear friend, all these things may be true, but that's not the meaning of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Those are the evidences of the equipment. What is the end? The end was this, that within the life of our risen Lord, transmitted to us through the Holy Spirit, we suddenly find the church has come.

In other words, it was the risen life of our glorified Lord that came by the Holy Spirit into 120 members of a congregation and turned them into 120 members of a body. From then on, they were an integral part of

one another. They belonged to Christ and to one another.

They shared in a way they never shared before. Now they were in living touch with the head. Now they could get a direction from the head.

Slowly but surely, an organization began to develop. But it's interesting when you see the kind of organization, how it developed. It all came from the life of God.

In other words, it was fellowships that came with the Holy Spirit. God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The pattern of the church, the gifts necessary for the building up of the church, the functions of the body, they are all within this life of Christ.

Once we can see the life of Christ flowing through members of the body, we begin to see the development of a pattern. People get so caught up on this thing about elders and deacons. Oh dear, all over the place they're so caught up on this shepherdhood business and everything else.

We must have elders, we must have shepherds, we must have this, we must have that. Oh my dear dear friend, the first thing we need to bother about is loving one another. Caring for one another.

And as we share that life and really submit as it were one to another, God by his Spirit raises up those that must take the responsibility amongst us. And we shall all know that they are. No one.

There'll be no question about it. The tragedy is this. You can start making people elders who are not elders.

You start making people deacons who are not deacons. You start making people apostles who are not apostles. I have people coming to us saying, I'm an apostle.

God help us. They say, I'm an apostle. Really? And they say, yes, yes, so and so laid his hands on me and set me aside, I'm an apostle.

I had no doubt that there are times when hands should be laid on people and people should be recognised. And no wonder the apostle Paul says, lay hands on no man suddenly. Give time for the organic so that we can see in men something happening.

Oh, there is a pattern, make no mistake about it. There is a church pattern. You see, people always say that the Methodist pattern is found in the Bible and the Baptist pattern is found in the Bible and the Presbyterian pattern is found in the Bible and they say the Episcopalian pattern is found in the Bible and the Brethren pattern is found in the Bible and the Pentecostal pattern is found in the Bible.

All these patterns are found in the Bible. It's incredible, isn't it? I am quite sure that our Lord, who was not limited in knowledge in any way, could have cleared this whole matter up by giving us one simple chapter in the New Testament which exclusively dealt with the pattern of the church once and for all. And He never did.

That's why you get one pattern built on one thing and another pattern built on another and another pattern built on another and another and it's all fragments of the pattern. Why? Don't you think our Lord, if He was so interested in the building of the church, could have given this whole thing clearly to us? Of course He could have done. But what our Lord was trying to tell us was this, that the whole thing is a spiritual matter.

It is within life and the thing to bother about is life. The resurrection life of Christ is at least two or more members of Christ. When we start to bother about that, then in the end the pattern will develop.

I said to this some years ago to you, maybe I said it last year, I'll say it again, because it has to be put together again. You know, if I were to take some things and plant them, I'd take, you know what a daffodil is? A daffodil bulb and an onion bulb. They look so alike.

How come that when I plant an onion bulb and a daffodil bulb, the daffodil comes up a daffodil and the onion an onion? Now wouldn't you think that sometimes they might make a mistake and the onion become a daffodil and the daffodil an onion? They look so alike. If they look so alike, how come they never change or swap? Do you know you can take one daffodil bulb and plant it in a field of one million onions and the one million onions will come up onions and the one single little daffodil all on its lonesome in the centre of the field will come up a daffodil. Now wouldn't you think that one bulb that looks so much like those million onions would think, well I'm so much like them, I'll be an onion.

What is the key to the whole thing? The key is this, that the daffodil has a pattern within its life. It has daffodil life. The onion has an onion life.

The pattern is in the life. Do you understand? It's all in the life. Once the life starts to develop and grow, you have the pattern.

We learnt this lesson at home so deeply and so bitterly. When we first began years ago, we were as green as green could be. The one thing we did was to seek the Lord about everything.

But on this matter we naturally were very taken by the fact of Scripture. And we began to ask the Lord about elders and deacons because we saw in the Bible that there were such things as elders and deacons. And as we sought the Lord, we saw, well they prayed and fasted.

So we had two weeks of prayer and fasting. And in those two weeks of prayer and fasting, three, at the end of it, three men were made elders and four men were made deacons. Now we couldn't have had a more perfect church pattern.

Nor could we have got this pattern in a more spiritual way. After all, there are not that many people who would fast and pray for two weeks. But we prayed and fasted for two weeks and we ended up with three elders and four deacons.

And everything went on for a year or two blissfully. People were saying everything seemed to be right and good. But then after a year or two, we became aware, that I became aware anyway, and I think one or two others did, of a kind of like tremor, a kind of spiritual shaking deep down within the very life of the company of God's people.

And it ended in one autumn with 13 of us brothers spending a day of fasting and prayer together to seek the Lord. Now in that time, it was in the study at Halford House, there happened to be on the table, halfway through the day I had my eyes open in prayer, I looked across and I saw on the table an acorn vase. Now I always have difficulty in explaining this, but it's one of those little vases that you put an acorn from an oak tree in and you can see it grow.

You know, you see it roots come and then you see the thing go out, it grow up and so on. And as I was looking at it, the Lord said to me, that's the answer to your prayer. So I looked very carefully at this acorn

vase and thought, what? And I thought, I'm crazy.

But then again, the voice deep in me said, that's the answer to your prayer. So I looked again at the acorn vase and then the Lord said to me, you see the acorn? The pattern you've got is like that outward shell, perfect. But it's satin.

Inside that acorn is life and that life has got the pattern of an oak tree in it. That life inside, if you will let it, will break the outward shell and grow up into an oak tree capable of reproducing other oak trees. Then I saw it in an instant.

We had produced, by the most spiritual means possible, fasting and prayer, we had produced a pattern. Then we didn't know what to do. I shared it with the brothers, we all prayed about it, we became of one mind and we sought the Lord, what shall we do about this pattern that we've got? And we felt the right thing to do was to hand the whole thing over to God, which we did.

There came this wonderful Sunday when one after another, all those with responsibility, sort of faded out. A girl playing the piano was an LREM. She sort of played and it sounded like a cross between a catfight and Arabic music.

She tried again and it was worse. And then she finished all together, weeping and she said she couldn't play anymore. That was her out.

One of the brothers, who was quite a gift of the gap, stood up and what came out of him was neither a tongue nor was it English. It was certainly not grammatical. He stopped and started again and then covered in confusion, he sat down, that was him out.

We ended that Sunday with one elder and one deacon. And then we said, well that's no longer a New Testament pattern. And so the whole thing went overboard and we all became brothers.

Now the most amazing thing happened, when we all became brothers again and just committed ourselves to one another in the Lord, then the Lord started to do some quite remarkable things. People we least expected began to emerge in the next year, heads and shoulders above the rest. The point was that the pattern we had was stopping the organic development and that thing was growing.

You see, we're not dealing with something that's just a fairy tale, we're dealing with realities. This thing was growing inside the company. It was the organic life.

It had come up against the output shell and it couldn't get through it because we had imposed a structure and the only way it could come through was by breaking the whole thing open. Now I have seen more works that I believe were in their beginnings of God, wrecked by this elder-deacon complex, this shepherdhood complex than any other thing. You can make people elders, it's very hard to de-elderise them.

Now the thing sort of gets right into our lifeblood. Oh, I wish I could go on about this matter, but if we're going to cover what I want to cover this evening, we really can't. But my point is simply this, that within the life of Christ you have got all the pattern of the church.

And once we bothered ourselves about seeing that that life of the Lord Jesus is flowing through us, the pattern will come and so will the function and so will the gift as we hold fast the head by the Holy Spirit. We

shall find the body and the body will increase with the increase of God. The body will build up itself in love.

All these functions and gifts that are necessary will come. There have been times when we have become deeply bothered in the work at home about certain weaknesses. By the grace of God, He has stopped us every time from structuring something or systematising something or somehow or other countering that weakness.

What we've done instead is to have a week of prayer. We have been very honest with the whole company. We've said we'll have a whole day of prayer and fasting.

Or we'll have a week of prayer. We'll tell the Lord that there is a weakness. For instance, take the matter of relatedness.

We feel that there's a lack in our company of discipline or relatedness at some particular point. Then we saw it as brethren. Then we said to the company, we feel the need now is that we should get before the Lord and ask Him, Lord, do something about this weakness amongst us.

God has preserved us from somehow or other trying to answer those weaknesses with our own spiritual biblical solutions. But instead we have seen something and we've seen the Spirit of God come in and relate people to one another. You see, dear child of God, it all goes back to this whole thing of who is head.

It all comes up to this principle of authority. If once we really see that He's been made head over all things to the church, then when we see weaknesses, we shall get through to the head. And we will say to the head, now, Lord, we believe this and this and this needs to be done.

Oh, release something from heaven. Do something about this matter. Do you begin to understand what I mean? Wouldn't we have been saved from some innovation, some things that have destroyed real works of God, if instead of just trying to answer some dullness in our meetings, some burst in our meetings, some lack of ministry in our meetings, we had instead got on our knees and asked the Lord to do something.

If we had called, as the Lord said, pray the Lord of the harvest. Please turn the cassette over at this point. That's the principle.

Then He may send forth labourers into His house. If we see there's a need of ministry amongst us, why don't we get on our knees and say, Lord, Lord, do to tackle whatever it is that's stopping you from raising ministry amongst us. Get through to it, Lord.

You see, by our very act of being together in the Lord and praying together, we find each other in the Lord. This is real fellowship. It's real fellowship.

The head has transmitted by the Spirit a sense of weakness to us. We begin to see an area of weakness and instead of trying to answer it just like that, we go back to the head and say, what will you have us do? There's a pain here. There's an area of paralysis here in the body.

What would you have us do? And the head has always an answer. Sometimes it's just to wait and He will work. Sometimes it's to take some kind of action which He will show us.

But oh, do you begin to understand my point? People often come to me and ask me if I'm a charismatic and I say dogmatically, I am certainly a charismatic. I want to know what they mean by charismatic. They normally mean, do you speak in a tongue? But I say that the Scripture says quite clearly in Romans 6 and verse 23, for the wages of sin is death, but the charisma of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And all the gifts are in the life of our Lord. Everyone who's born of God must be a charismatic. So forget this business about the charismatic.

You're all charismatic. Good. What some of us may need is the Holy Spirit to come upon us and be the dynamic for the gift so that what's inside the life will come out.

The word for spiritual gift, of course, is pneumatic. 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 1, and I've often wondered what would have happened if we'd all been called pneumatic instead of charismatic. Someone says, are you a pneumatic? I am.

I'm a charismatic and a pneumatic. I'm a Calvinist. I'm a Pentecostal Plymouth Blubber.

I'm a Baptist with Lutheran conceptions and a Calvinist who sometimes sees the need of human responsibility. Well, forget that. I'm a believer, aren't you? And if we're in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, then we shall find all these various emphases, won't we? They're too much for me.

I can't contain them within myself, really. All I can do is be what God has made me in Christ. And all you can do is be what God has made you in Christ.

But when we come together, we've got a fullness. Oh, may God help us in this matter of gifts. We need them.

We need them. We need the gift of faith. We need words of wisdom and knowledge.

We need discerning of spirit. We need prophecy. We need these things.

We desperately need the manifestation of the Spirit, especially when we go further and further into this last phase of world history. Without the life of Christ, we cannot have the organic. You can have organization.

But without the life of Christ, it is impossible to have the organic. Now, that leads me just to say this. There can be no resurrection life without the cross.

My dear friends, why is it that we are all so capable of producing a structure which is non-organic and thus defeating our own deepest desire to see the house of God built? How come that we are so capable of this? I tell you why. Because to produce structures, to produce systems, to produce things through techniques or methods or regulations, is something that we do naturally. It belongs to our natural man.

It is us naturally. To see something organic means that we must know the life of Christ flowing through us. And we cannot know the life of Christ flowing through us unless we know the death of Christ in our experience.

Here is our dilemma. Dear child of God, this is our dilemma. The problem is not how to live, but how to die.

That is the problem that faces us all and all the companies that are represented in this room. Continually people come and say, Oh, if we could only know life, if we could only know life. My dear friend, that is not

the problem.

The problem is how we can die. For I will tell you this as sure as I stand here tonight, more surely than my standing here tonight, that if a person dies, God will take care of the resurrection. Where two or more members of Christ deliberately commit themselves to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God will take care of the resurrection.

Now you understand why people say we are all mystics. It is so much easier, isn't it, to produce a structure. So much easier to produce a system.

Biblically we have only got to search a few scriptures and put our heads together and have a bit of fellowship, so-called. And we can produce some kind of structure, some kind of regulation, some kind of technique. And we can spread it everywhere.

We can write books on it. We can do all kinds of things. But my dear friend, if what I say is true, that the pattern is in the life of Christ, and the gifts are in the life of Christ, and the functions are in the life of Christ, if the church itself is within the life of Christ, if the very meaning of true fellowship is in the life of Christ in more than one believer, then the great need is to know resurrection life.

And you cannot have resurrection life without death. And you cannot die but by the Spirit. If you think you could die, try.

People are always coming to me and saying, oh, oh, I must die, I need to die. Oh, you try, try. People say, could you tell me a book on how to die? Well, it will only make you heavier than ever.

I can give you one or two books that will tell you about the need of dying. But how to die? How to die? If a grain of wheat, verily I say, unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides by itself alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.

The wind, the wind is the only thing that makes the grain fall into the ground. The Spirit of God is the only one, once you have seen the need to die, who can bring you to the place where you fall into the ground and die. Maybe He will use your brothers and sisters, maybe He will use your circumstances, maybe He will use your job, maybe He will use some unsaved relative, maybe, maybe, maybe, but He will take something like the wind of God, the wind will come and shake you, you are ready, because you have seen the need, and you will fall into the ground and die by the Spirit.

How did the Lord Jesus die? By the eternal Spirit He offered Himself up to God without spot or blemish. If our Lord Jesus could not die on the cross, apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, how much more you? How can you know the death of Christ except by the Holy Spirit? All it becomes is a miserable heaviness. The people go round looking dark, as they say in Norway, it is easier to wear black stockings than have a pure heart.

The fact of the matter is this, that you can preach the cross, and preach the cross, and preach the cross, and preach the cross, until in the end it becomes a thing, and everyone is heavy, and everyone is trying to die, and no one can die, because in the end it is the Spirit of God alone who can enable people to die. No one can die of themselves. You must will to do the will of God, but you cannot die.

Oh, how many times I got stuck on that wonderful hymn we sang this morning, O cross that lifteth up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee, I can say that from the fullness of my heart, for then I lay in dust. Life,

glory, death, that from the ground there blossoms rest, life that shall endless be, that's where I get stuck, don't you? There are times when you know you should die, there are times when you know you should lay down your life, there are times when you know you should lose your life, there are times when you know you should deny yourself, but you can't. Your very knowledge that you should do it only makes you the more miserable.

Oh, we poor Christians. But when the Spirit of God comes and blows, and we are ready, then we do what we cannot naturally do. O dear child of God, what does it mean that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His offerings, being made conformable to His death? What does it mean, being made conformable to His death? Conformed to His death.

Oh, no wonder we see so little of church life, no wonder we see so little of the body of Christ in expression, no wonder we experience so little of real fellowship. The problem is that the whole thing is locked up in the life of Christ, but to get the life of Christ really flowing means the death of the cross. Now, get me clear on this matter.

You see, we receive life through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, but to experience life flowing through us, we must know what it is to be crucified with Christ. It is by the Spirit that we put to death the deeds of the body. O dear friend, the problem is not how to live, it is how to die.

There are a thousand situations, I have no doubt, represented in this place tonight, and every one of them would be solved by dying, some measure of dying. Now, may I say something here since I am talking about fellowship and not just talking about personal life, or personal growth, or character? The fact of the matter is, if you and I are going to know church life, if we're going to know fellowship, then two or more brethren, or sisters, must die by the Spirit. Now, I want to say something which I hope will lift everything out of the realm of problem for some of you.

God does not even require all to die, but a nucleus must die for the rest. Now, do you get me? You see, we get into this trap where we say, you mean everyone's got to die? Everyone's got to die? They'll never do it. No, they never will.

Anyone who's looking for the perfect church will never find it. It was Moody who said, when you join it, it will be imperfect. But you know we've all got this thing where we're all looking for the perfect church.

My dear friend, God never meant the church to be perfect down here. The very evidence that it is the church is that it is imperfect, but it is being perfected. How can you have a perfect church down here? If all the believers were to gather together in any given locality, why, we'd have all kinds of problems.

We'd have the ones that are lame, and the ones that are paralysed, and the ones who are rebellious, and the awkward squad of whom God has saved the many, and all kinds of states and conditions. We would have young ones and old ones. What is needed? What is needed is this.

Not that everyone should die, although God, of course, would be wonderful if it could be so. But what God desires, listen to this, my dear responsible brethren, what God desires is that if you want to see real fellowship in the area in which you live, and you want to see the house of God built up, and you want to see the body of the Lord Jesus Christ expressed, you want to see something which has got balance within it, my dear friend, you responsible ones have got to die. You may have the most difficult people in the world in your company.

It makes no difference. After all, every company has the devil. You may have the most difficult person in the whole world in your company, but if you will only learn how to die, God will use the difficult people to do something in your company.

Our time is nearly gone. I wish I could say something about travail now. Having said something about another, the fact of the matter is this, that if you and I want to see the organic really come, it has to be born.

And if it is to be born, there must be those who travail. Now we come to God's dilemma, if we can so speak, of God having a dilemma. It is this, that babes cannot travail, nor can children.

There must be a certain maturity, a certain capacity. The apostle Paul says in Galatians 4.19, my little children of whom I am again in travail, that Christ may be fully formed in you. Again in travail! So he travailed over them first when they came to Christ, when they were born of God.

This was no cheap evangelism. Here was someone who travailed over these people, so that into that place there may come, there might come the testimony of Jesus. Here was evangelism with a marvellous panoramic view of the purpose of God.

Then he says, my little children of whom I am again in travail, you know what is the problem? We are all babies. Where can God find those who will travail? The whole company can't travel. God has to find those who are old enough, with enough spiritual capacity, who will have not only laid down their lives, because this is something further than laying down your life.

To lay down your life is one thing, a step further is to be ready for travel. Wouldn't it be an easy thing if those responsible brothers amongst us only had to lay down their lives once and the church was produced? Oh, how wonderful it would be! If we could get it all over with in a few months. And I want to tell you something, you dear responsible ones, you're going to have to lay down your lives once and for all.

And you will have to lay them down not one time, but again and again and again and again and again, so that the church of God may be built up, so that the church of God may increase with the increase of God, so that the life of God may flow through, so that the organic may really be known in your midst. And then, dear, dear people of God, there are some of you who are a little older than the Lord, and God is preparing you for a ministry of travel. May God help us in these days that lie ahead.

We haven't so much time. This is the dilemma of God, to find enough spiritual capacity and vision in which the Holy Spirit can conceive something. Then I think I should finish.

And I want to finish by just, in some ways I'm afraid, attending on a rather negative note, I want to speak of the terrible danger of contravening this principle. It is much easier to produce a system, or a structure, or go by regulation, or a technique, than to walk by the Spirit and to be led by the Spirit. What a judgment this is.

It is so much easier, dear, dear child of God, to just produce something that is biblical, scriptural, but not out of the life of God, than to really walk by the Spirit. I know people, now let me say this straight, I believe in healing. But I know people who've got some regulation on healing, and oh, it's much easier to have a regulation on healing.

A regulation is that everyone should be healed. All stops. Oh, it's much easier to just have a regulation because you have no problems.

Well, you have no problems for a while. And then you do get your problems, and very real problems. And then you have to explain them away and say, well, of course the person was in sin.

Or the person had no faith. Or you have other extraordinary doctrines, like delayed healing. Which means that when the person dies, they're healed.

Now, I find that the most incredible thing I've ever heard. I had a Harley Street doctor tell me about delayed healing. And I said, what do you mean? Well, when they died they were healed.

But then I said, do you mean that some people go into heaven with sickness then? And that others get healed? All of us are healed when we die, thank God. It is much easier to go by the regulation on healing than to go by the Spirit. What does it mean, the prayer of faith shall save the sick? It means that the prayer of faith has got to be given.

But when the prayer of faith is given, God always acts. When it really is the prayer of faith, then God always acts. For it is come out of heaven by the Spirit into us.

The history of the church is full of tragedies. Things that apparently began in life and ended in death. Structures and systems and techniques and methods all brought in seemingly biblical to try and meet some weakness or some birth or some spiritual impoverishment.

And at the time, as things were growing in number and everything seemed to be going ahead, it all seemed so wonderful, but it was the undoing of that movement of the Spirit of God. The structure took over and killed it. When this principle is contravened, there is weakness, there is paralysis, there is deception.

Deception and death. For we start, whatever I mean by deception, I mean this, that when we contravene this principle and we start to make elders or apostles or whatever we do, we are calling people names that God knows nothing about. It is a deception.

A man has been called an apostle and God has never made him an apostle. A man has been called an elder and heaven has never made him an elder. A man has been set aside as a deacon and he is not a deacon.

Something is called something else and it is not. It is a deception. Instead of seeking the Lord, inquiring of the Lord, waiting on the Lord for a new release of divine life, we produce our own answer to the need.

May God help us. We need the Lord and we need him gratefully. And I have sought this evening to speak about this principle, the principle of the organic.

No easy principle to talk about. People normally charge us with mysticism when we talk in terms like this. My dear friends, it is not mysticism, it is spiritual practicality.

What is the point of having a system, a structure, a technique, a set of methods, a book of regulations when the thing itself becomes the death of the work of God? Is that being practical? Is that common sense? Never. Spiritual common sense is to recognize that we need the life of God and we need more of the life of God. We need the life of God in abundance.

We need an overflow of the life of God. And the only way we can have it is to know what it is to lay down our lives for the Lord and for the brethren. And the Spirit of God alone is able to empower us.

If for no other reason, every one of us should seek for a new relief of the Holy Spirit upon us. Shall we pray? And now Lord, we do commit this whole time into thy hands. Oh, preserve it, Lord, from misunderstanding or misinterpretation or those constructions being put upon what has been said which are wrong or imbalanced.

Dear Lord, we ask thee by thy Holy Spirit to convict us. Oh God, convict us as believers. Convict us, Lord, of the need in our lives to know the death of the cross so that we may know also what it is to walk in newness of life.

Oh God, convict us of the need to let go of our lives, to lose our lives for thy sake and the Gospels that we might find it. Convict us, Lord, of the need that we must fall into the ground and die so that, Lord, there might be much fruit. Oh Father, preserve us from talking about the Church, preaching about the Church, dreaming about the Church and never experiencing it.

Lord, work, for we ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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