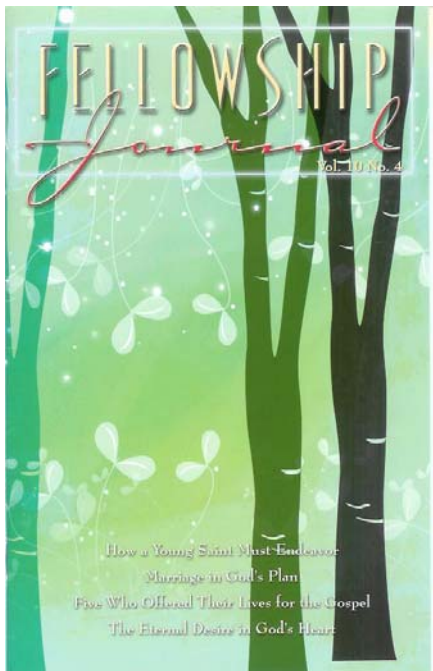


FELLOWSHIP *Journal*

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Labor While Abiding
in Freshness

The True Meaning
of Marriage

Surviving to Grow

The Will of God

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Our sister,
Sharon Chu,
went to be with the Lord on
November 18. She faithfully
served her Lord Jesus Christ
together with her husband and so
many others who endeavor for the
Lord, upholding them, as she did,
in their labors for the kingdom's
sake. We thank and praise the
Lord for the portion she exercised
before Him through many years
and trust the Lord will supply and
encourage her family and all those
who benefited from her faithful
prayer and ministry
and now feel her absence until
that wonderful day when we shall
greet her again.

A Word to the Young People in the Internship:
**LABOR IN A FIELD
WHILE ABIDING IN THE FRESHNESS
OF A RICH CHURCH LIFE**

Young people are apparently “doomed” in our church life. Why? Because it is so very aggressive, profound and rigid. In the church life we don’t stress playing around! The good part is that such a church life produces aggressiveness for the Lord’s interest. The bad part is that brotherly love does not flow in such a way that saints in any condition can come to any meeting and feel they may simply love the Lord according to their measure.

The church life provides a way for those within it to come into the spiritual riches in a deep way. On the entire earth, very few Christians are as focused on what the Lord desires as we are. Many might be surprised at how shallow most Christian assemblies are when it comes to pursuing Christ! Yet at the same time, in the church life this stringency makes people feel as though they have no place among us if they are not as absolute as we seem to be. Furthermore, once our young people hit a certain age in our current culture, there seems to be almost no place for them to be responsible for much of anything. A few are able to arrive at a place where they can bear something before the Lord; for those who cannot find something, there is nothing left. We simply do not practice what we preach regarding the church life! This is one reason why so many young people do not remain among us. As time goes by, rather than expanding, opportunities seems to shrink. Instead of developing and enabling those newer or younger, our current way of carry-

ing the church life appears to increasingly frustrate them. Our vision regarding the church seems very clear—we claim that in the church life every member should be able to develop and grow and have a place and function—but in actual practice this simply doesn't appear to happen.

Among you young people here today, how many will still be here with us after five years? How about after ten years? Or twenty? As I look back through my years in the church life, I realize just how few who were with me in the past have been able to continue. Eventually, something happened to nearly every one of my companions that drew them off to something else. In view of this and of all my own experience, is there anything I might pass on to you that might help preserve you in the church life, and something that might help the church life to be more healthy?

First of all, you must realize that what will decide your future is what you are laying hold of today. You must make your decision; you cannot hold onto multiple “citizenships” if you want to go on with Christ. Furthermore, what you hold onto must have substance! And you yourself must have a fresh relationship with the substance of what you hold onto. Many people seek to “hold onto” America by becoming citizens. And after they gain U.S. citizenship the “freshness” they experienced with their old homeland begins to fade, as it should, being replaced with the freshness of their experience of America. But sometimes citizens who once held strongly to America, such as during the Vietnam War, may find themselves now questioning whether it is worth it. In the same way, those who have followed Christ in the church life may find themselves no longer in the freshness, asking, “Is it worth it?” That is the time you must be very careful. We must hold firm to what we have seen, and what

we see must be very fresh to us! If what we have seen is no longer fresh to us, we will find that many things will begin to appear reasonable to us that challenge what we are holding onto. You may have come to the church life for Christ alone, but some other aim may insinuate itself, such as the desire for manifestation, which will challenge your purity.

We may use marriage as an analogy. Most who get married really love the person they marry; but in some marriages something is lost and the husband and wife begin to entertain reasons of discontent. Considerations replace the freshness of their love for each other. When the freshness disappears, the strength of the bond established in the initial experience of “laying hold” is weakened, and can even be lost.

So, firstly, do you know what you are here for? Have you seen the vision of Christ and the church? Secondly, are you fresh or sweet with what you are in? The freshness or sweetness you experience with the substance of what you hold onto is what makes the difference between duty or delight as you serve (which assumes the third necessary thing, that you find a field in which to serve).

Where will you be five or ten years from now, or even when you come to my age? Will you still be a blessing to the One we are now holding onto through our labor? You will be, if you hold onto the sweetness and freshness of the substance of the Wonderful One we have discovered in the church life. It is our freshness and sweetness towards Christ that insures we will indeed produce the kind of fruit in our lives that He seeks. - *Titus Chu, Ashland Woods, September 6, 2011*

THE GOSPEL & THE MUSIC OF CULTURES

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. (Psalm 40:3)

I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. (1 Cor. 9:22b)

A member of the Crips, a violent street gang, is shot down in south L.A. He survives and gives his life to Christ. Eventually he and a fellow gang member, together with an ex-rival from the Bloods gang, decide to take the gospel of God's love to their "homies" in the streets.

A member of the Motilone tribe in the Venezuelan jungle finds Jesus through the word of a missionary. He knows he now holds the secret others must hear, and he sets his heart to communicate his new-found faith to his people.

Like people of every culture who have likewise found Jesus, they communicate their faith through their spoken testimony, and they also do it through *song*.

If you have been raised in the predominant culture that identifies with European hymnody (or even so-called "contemporary" Christian music), you may find the melodies, rhythms or tonalities of other cultures hard to appreciate. But if you were to draw a Venn diagram containing the types of songs sung by those who typically gather with you where you live, how many young people from the inner-city or some other culture foreign to middle-class, middle-aged white America would be able to identify with *your* singing? The Lord must send some to every people. The Lord has reached us. Wonderful! But what of

those in other cultures that are unfolding? Paul declared, “I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.” From among the masses who listen to hip hop, those who preach by means of rap do gain *some!*

Mr. Solo, who made his decision for Christ after having nearly died of his gunshot wound, founded the rap group Gospel Gangstaz. He told someone, “The Gospel Gangstaz stand in a position to help, because we have seen how the gospel of Christ is real. Our lives were changed from selling crack, drive-by shootings, car-jacking... to a life of peace, joy, and happiness because of Christ. We want to go back to the hood and let our light shine.” Another member of the troupe added, “I gotta make music for my homies. I believe in bringing the church to people, not just bringing people to church.”¹

Another who raps for Christ, Trip Lee, teaches young people regarding Christ and the Spirit in his songs “Behold the Christ” and “Behold the Spirit.” Sho Baraka, drawing from Psalm 42, declares his desire for more God in “Catch Me at the Brook.” In “God Man,” a rapper calling himself Flame tells of how Christ is God wrapped in flesh who died for His Bride. Lecrae challenges those who vainly seek in the world to receive Christ as the source of real transformation and satisfaction in “Change.” And in a song simply entitled “God,” Pro proclaims we are the Lord’s *poiema*².

As a teenager, Bruce Olson was sent by God to South America. After a long time of labor among the Motilone tribe, one person, Bobarishora, received Jesus Christ. “Bobby” took upon himself the responsibility to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the rest of the tribe, and he chose the yearly Festival of the Arrows to do this. During this festival the people communicated what was noteworthy by singing it to each other.

Olson describes the event in his eye-witness account:

“Jesus Christ was incarnated into man,” Bobby sang. “He has walked our trails. He is God yet we can know Him.”

The home was deathly still, except for Bobby’s wailing song and Adjibachayra’s repetition. People were straining their ears to hear.

Inside me, however, a spiritual battle was raging. I found myself hating the song. It seemed so heathen. The music, chanted in a strange minor key, sounded like witch music. It seemed to degrade the Gospel. Yet when I looked at the people around me, and up at the chief swinging in his hammock, I could see that they were listening as though their lives depended on it. Bobby was giving them spiritual truth through the song. (pp. 168-169³)

After that night of singing, every member in the tribe made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, receiving that He died for their sins and had been resurrected to be their life. It was through that time of song that Jesus reached them.

For every culture, there should be some whom God has burdened to go. Whether they come from that culture or not, they must go with the message in the form people are able to hear. Even for young people who identify themselves with the most extreme forms of rock and roll, there are some burdened to reach them there, where they are. How do they do it? In a way many of us simply couldn’t, but for some reason they can. Jesus Christ is reaching people in every culture today, and one of the ways His message is preached is through the music of that culture. If it is possible that even one “lost sheep” might be gained, shall we not stand with those who feel led of Christ to go as missionaries to reach those in that culture? How does the person burdened to bring Christ to some ungained

population in America differ in their labor from those who have gone to any other culture that seems remote from ours because of *physical* distance?

Besides the gospel, no other agency among mankind has found its way into so many different forms of music. In the United States alone, Christ is being sung of to those who associate with country-western, rock 'n roll, folk, rhythm & blues, hip hop...and He *should* be sung of to any group of the lost by means of whatever form of song they identify with. Though Satan has used and will continue to use music as a means to captivate every culture for his own ends, may many be delivered by being “caught by guile” in such a way (2 Cor. 12:16)!

Does this mean we should use any and every form of music when we gather together? Of course not. What is used to reach a particular group of people may not lend itself to the mutual praise and worship the Lord seeks from His church. But those who have the burden, ability and means to carry the gospel to some group bound by a style of music, might be recognized as doing so for the sake of the spread of God's kingdom. Whatever is done, let it be done to the glory of God, and let each be persuaded in his own heart as he feels led (1 Cor. 10; Rom. 14). - *John Berglund*

Notes:

1. Accessed at christianmusic.com/gospel_gangstaz/gospel_gangstaz.htm
2. All of these songs can currently be found at youtube.com
3. Bruce Olson, *For This Cross I'll Kill You*, Bethany House, later published as *Bruchko*. (Charisma House edition contains updated information, see also Charisma House's *Bruce Olson and the Motilone Miracle*.)

The True Meaning of Marriage

Let us consider some very interesting and attractive verses in the Bible. In Genesis 2 God created man and called him "Adam." Then God made a declaration saying, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart" (Gen. 2:18). Man needed someone to meet his need. So God put Adam to sleep, took a rib from his side, and built a woman. Then God brought the woman to Adam, and Adam became very excited. He said, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). This declaration is so intimate and touching. The verse goes on to say, "This one shall be called Woman because out of Man this one was taken. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:23b-24).

These verses show us two things. One is God's place, and the other is man's place. God, the Creator of the universe, made a declaration: "It is not good for man to be alone." This is not just referring to man. This verse also talks about God Himself. God was declaring, "It is not good for Me, the unique God, the universal God, the 'I am that I am,' the One without beginning and without end, the all-sufficient One, the all-powerful, all-wise One, to be alone. I am a lonely God. This is why I created man."

Do you know why human beings are here? Today there are many scientists with many theories. But no matter what theory you believe, no matter how you try to convince yourself, within every man there is a realization that there is a God in this universe. When people are in desperate situations their automatic response is to cry out to God. Why do they do this? Because within them, they know there is a God.

But how many realize that God is a lonely God? God made man as a prototype to show the human race why we are here. The reason why human beings exist is because God is alone, and He realized that this is not good. God has declared that He needs man. We can see this in God's statement to Adam that He would make a helpmate to meet his needs (Gen 2:18.) God took a rib from Adam's side and built a woman.

Four thousand years later, God became a man, Jesus Christ. When Jesus was on the cross, He "fell asleep," that is, He died. While He was "sleeping" on the cross, a soldier pierced His side, and out of His

side came blood, to cleanse our sin, and water, symbolizing God becoming our life. By being cleansed by the blood and by receiving God's life, we become the "building materials" of God's counterpart, the church. From the blood and water that flowed from Jesus' side, God built the church.

This portion tells us several things. Firstly, God is lonely. Secondly, God needs a helpmate to meet His need. Thirdly, God died for man. Fourthly, out of death God's life was released. Lastly, no matter how sinful we as humans are, as long as we open to Jesus Christ and receive Him as our Savior, His blood will cleanse us from our sin. And His life will come into us to make us material for God to build into His counterpart so that we can meet God's need.

The story in Genesis also shows us the principal of human existence. When you consider a man's lifetime, most of his life is not spent with his parents. God did not create the children for their parents. Neither did He command children to always remain with their parents. Rather, God has prepared for you to spend the majority of your life with your spouse.

The husband must realize where his wife comes from. The woman was built for the need of man. For this reason, all husbands should learn to treasure their wives, and to love their wives. Learn to nurture your wife, realizing that she is bone of your bones and flesh of your flesh. Her existence is from you, according to God, and her existence is for you in your daily life. It is hard for a woman in this modern age to say that her existence is for her husband's need. It seems that it is against "women's rights." Actually, this is woman's highest right. A wife's existence is for her husband. She is built to meet his need. Every part of who she is meets her husband's need. The existence of the woman is so high. She is here to be with her husband just as their household is here to meet God's need.

If you are not yet a Christian, realize that God has not created you to be a Ph.D. or a scientist or a physician. All these are too low. This is not what God desires. God desires that your existence should be for God Himself. God knows that you are sinful and fallen. But He died for you. He "slept" on the cross so that His side could be opened. His blood was shed to cleanse you from all your sins. When you confess your sins and receive Him as your Savior, all your sins are cleansed away. More than that, His life, the water which flowed out of Christ's side, will come into you to regenerate you when you believe in Him. Then, together with all the believers in Christ, we will become God's helpmate to meet God's need. - Titus Chu

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION

John 11:1-44

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (Jn. 11:25)

Death is the ultimate equalizer for everyone who comes into this world. No matter what advances are made in science or medicine, death remains the earthly finale to mortal man.

Throughout the Gospels we see that Jesus is able to change many negatives into positives. The blind He was able to make see. The lame He was able to make walk. But what of the dead? Could Jesus turn this ultimate negative into something glorious?

Even before Jesus went to Bethany where Lazarus was, the Lord already knew death was coming. He and the Father had been in communication, and He was aware. He was full of feeling toward the three siblings of this household. Mary and Martha had sent someone to let the Lord know their brother Lazarus was sick, yet the Lord replied, "This sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Was the Lord telling the truth? Lazarus **did** die. He was sick, dying, and dead. But the Lord's comment was that the glory of God would be revealed through His being glorified in this death not being unto death.

The greatest manifestation of God is that He is able to enter into death and turn it into resurrection! This results in the glory of God. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! He is not a God of the dead, but of the living. God is able to make the dead alive!

Thus we must realize that we are not here just for this short time on earth. Life does not end after death, and yet we still do everything to preserve it. We lose weight and exercise and eat a certain way to preserve our earthly existence. But regardless of how much we do, we

still die. Those of my generation do everything in their power to escape death, but eventually all will die. No matter how much we resist it, it is inevitable. Death will come to every man.

The Lord in this situation is trying to bring people to believe that He is something more than what they are able to see. In the story Jesus told of a rich man and the other Lazarus, the rich man died and in Hades proclaimed, "O that I might go back and tell my brothers to live differently; that they should live not only for the age in which they are living, but also for the next!" The Lord had Abraham reply that even if he were allowed to do so, his relatives would not live any differently, for we are so geared to live for the here and now (Luke 16:19-31).

Even for those who believe, this is true. If you are an unbeliever your thought is, "This is **my** life." But it is **not** your life. There will be a resurrection for everyone, and in this situation in Bethany the Lord seeks to reveal to us that He is something more than what we see. This was a situation God had ordained so that His Son would be glorified, and that in seeing it our faith would be strengthened.

The Lord waited as Lazarus grew sicker and died. Then he waited even longer until Lazarus was truly "good and dead." This would not be a situation as when Elijah raised the widow's son in 1 Kings 17 or when Paul raised the young man in Acts 20. Lazarus was a stinking corpse! In this situation there seemed to be no hope!

Eventually Jesus said, "Let us go." The disciples replied, "They are seeking to stone You, and You would return there?" The Lord answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? Those who walk in the light do not stumble." When we are people who do not understand what the Lord is doing, we are in the night. We look at a seemingly hopeless situation such as this, and we feel there is no way. But when we begin to realize who Jesus is, we see things differently! Often we walk according to the "light" we have, but that light is darkness. The true light that comes into the world is Jesus Christ (John 1:9)! The Lord was trying to unveil the disciples. They could only see that the Jews were planning to stone Jesus, meaning that they might also get the same treatment. Their thoughts proved they were not experiencing Christ as light. God was trying to do something in His sovereignty to strongly manifest something to the disciples that they might believe in who Christ is, and to live fully in Him!

We should ask ourselves whether we are *believing* believers. We have believed in Jesus Christ, but do we believe when things get difficult? We may say we do, but in a particular situation we may be full of unbelief instead. If you walk in the light, no matter how a situation appears, you are still able to abide in the light. The Father's will is that the Son would be glorified, but how can that happen unless the situation becomes such that there is no way? As long as there is hope in a situation for a "regular" recovery, what will be seen will not be Christ. No one wants to "run out" totally, but God's intention is that His Son would be glorified in the situation where who He is, can be manifested to the uttermost.

I have been in a situation for many years, hoping for some improvement. You eventually reach a point where you realize nothing is going to be different. That is when the Lord begins. As long as you are holding out hope, you will feel that it is through your efforts and diligence that it will turn out to what you desire. This is what Mary and Martha wanted. They wanted their brother to be well while there was still "hope"! They were not simply resting in who Christ was.

The Lord eventually told His disciples that Lazarus was sleeping and that He would now go to wake him. The disciples didn't understand. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." The Lord tries to give us indications but we are pretty dense, so He must often bluntly tell us something. But remember that even so, He is the God of the living!

Jesus even said, "I am glad for your sakes I was not there." It is tempting to complain to the Lord, "Must it always be the hard way? Can't something work out so that I am rescued from my situation? Why are You glad I have to go through this? Why is it that life has to be such a struggle?" Psalm 116:15 tells us that the death of the saints is precious in the eyes of the Lord, but it is not precious to us! We don't want to be terminal, but unless we are brought to an end, He cannot have a beginning. Without death, there is no life. But when there is death, there is the possibility of resurrection!

The Lord is far beyond what we are able to see and the circumstances we are in. Therefore, He is glad that He may begin to reveal Himself so that He might be glorified in His Son!

While it is true that faith comes through hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17), the problem is that many among us know too much, just as

Martha who doctrinally believed in the resurrection. When the situation comes, we pull out our scriptural knowledge and past experience and consider the experience of others. But when in reality it doesn't happen as it should according to my understanding, I am done.

Sometimes we feel so sure about a situation, and then the Lord does something different. It is almost comical. Therefore the Lord has to take us on so that our faith becomes genuine and solid as opposed to just what we superficially know. We must live by every Word that proceeds out from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4) and by knowing God in our experience. That is the solid stuff. It is not what you heard in a message! Your faith is established through your direct experience and interaction with Jesus!

Thomas made the statement, "Let us go, that we may die with Him." I like that! When Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had already been in the grave for four days. Many had come to comfort the family. Martha was there, and she was a "doer." She said, "Lord we sent for You four days ago. You didn't come, and it isn't that far. If You had been here he would not have died." She should have said, "Lord, now that You are here, what would You do?" Instead, we have a list of what the Lord should do for us, what He should have done. Or we ask, "Lord, why did you let me lose my job?" or "Why did that family lose its child?" The Lord could have come earlier. But Martha still said, "I know that even now, whatever you ask God, it will be given Thee." She was seeking to manipulate Him, as we often do. Jesus said unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again." She replied, "I know he shall rise again in the last day." She had faith in the "bye and bye" resurrection of the dead. But Jesus replied, "I AM the resurrection." In this Gospel the Lord is the "I AM" (so many things). But here He says, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE." He becomes not only the resurrection to raise us from the dead, but also the one able to give us eternal life, the life that is really life. When the eternal life comes in, everything is wonderful. Jesus Himself becomes the factor that enables us to know and enjoy Him.

If you believe, you will live! If you are living and you die, you won't die forever! Do you believe this? The key is not our knowledge or our understanding, but our intimate relationship with Jesus, in our knowing and believing Him. - Paul Neider, October, 2011 Jubilee sharing with churches in the metro Cleveland area.

Organic Oneness

The word "organic" is not used in the New Testament, but the fact is there. We are organically joined to Christ and to our Christian brothers and sisters. There is a life relationship between us that was formed on the day of Christ's resurrection, and it should be experienced by us from the day of our regeneration. We should never replace this organic relationship with anything artificial.

OUR ORGANIC RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

Picture #1: The Vine with Its Branches

The Lord Himself unveiled our organic relationship with Him in John 15. In verse 5, He says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing." It is hard to tell when looking at a vine where the trunk ends and the branches begin. One thing is for sure - if you sever the branch from the vine, the branch will die. The relationship is organic. The branch cannot live without the vine, and the vine depends on the branches for fruit.

The verse before v. 5 says "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me," and the verse that follows v. 5 says "If one does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Everything of value depends on our maintaining an active, organic relationship with Christ the vine. Without it, we will cease to bear fruit and our spiritual life will dry up.

Picture #2: The Head with Its Body

The second picture of our organic relationship with Christ comes from the Apostle Paul. In Colossians 1:18, he writes, "And He is Head of the Body, the church," and in Ephesians 4:15-16, he says, "But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, 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." Who can deny the organic relationship pictured here? He is our Head and we are His Body. Our spiritual growth is "into Him." Our being joined and knit together is "out from" Him. Any member severed from the Head will surely die!

OUR ORGANIC RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER

Picture #3: Members One of Another

Our relationship with one another is equally organic. On this point the Apostle Paul is extremely clear. Romans 12:5 says, "So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Yes, we are many, but we are each members of the one Body of Christ, and thus members of one another. This organic connection affects our relationship with one another, as Ephesians 4:25 shows. "Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." Why should we speak truth to one another? Because we are members one of another! To Paul, it seemed inconsistent for one member of the Body to live or speak a lie before another member.

Paul told the Thessalonians "Because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord" (1 Thes. 3:8). His organic bond with those in that young church was very real. Their stand affected his life. What happened to them mattered to him because his relationship with them was organic. He likened himself as their "nursing mother" (2:7) and as "a father to his own children" (2:11). He told them, "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at His coming? Are not even you? For you are our glory and joy" (vv 2:19-20).

This is emphasized in 1 Corinthians 12. Verse 12 says, "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." This chapter goes on to describe the great variety that exists among the many members of that one body. But this is not a problem because, as verses 24b-27 say, "God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked, that there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another. And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually." The results of our organic blending, even in the midst of great variety, are oneness and mutual care. Our organic relationship rules out competition and pride. There is genuine mutual suffering and mutual rejoicing as we experience one another's pain and glory.

THE WARNING OF HISTORY

God has provided a marvelous relationship between the Vine and the branches, the Head and the Body, and between the many members. It is a relationship of life. It is organic. History however shows a very inorganic picture. Christians, it seems, do not trust what God has done and inevitably try to improve it with something of their own.

Instead of keeping the headship of Christ, organizations and institutions take His place. Just about every denomination started through some genuine move of God among His people, but today they are all institutionalized, controlled by some central board or hierarchy of men.

Christians also find it difficult to trust the organic flow of life between the many members. It is much easier to bring in control and conformity. "Oneness" is then tangible, measurable, and manageable. The variety among the members as described in 1 Corinthians 12 all but disappears.

It is doubtful that Martin Luther understood the organic nature of our relationship with Christ and with his fellow Christians. This understanding is our privilege. It is part of today's recovery. Praise the Lord! We are one because He has made it so! The divine life flows between the Head and all the members! We must treasure our organic relationship and guard it jealously. We must not repeat history. - *Dave Shields*

SURVIVAL MESSAGE ONE

SURVIVAL IS FOR GROWTH UNTO OUR MEASURE

INTRODUCTION

To survive in the church life is not an easy matter. To my realization, most saints do not grow into what the Lord has prepared for them. “Survival” does not mean merely that you are able to remain in the church life. If that were the case, Christianity would be sufficiently successful, for denominations produce many who remain faithful members for their entire lives. The Lord gains very little from that. We may say that survival is the most crucial thing in our Christian life besides our being saved and our seeing the vision of Christ and the church.

Regarding our growth, the first crucial matter, of course, is our salvation. The most necessary thing after being saved is that we receive a vision of who God is and what He is after on the earth. This vision then becomes the regulating factor for our going on with the Lord. Once we have received this vision, the crucial thing becomes how to substantiate it in our living. What we have seen should never become a mere slogan or outward belief to us; rather, it should become the very substance of our daily experience. But beyond even this, we must be those who endeavor to develop what the Lord has given us to the uttermost. If this is our situation, we are healthy in the church life.

GENUINE ATTAINMENT COMES OUT OF THE EXPERIENCE OF SURVIVING

It may seem that I should use the word “attaining” rather than “surviving,” but actually in our experience it is a matter of surviving. Because I possess a talent, I have a measure of function. When I function to my fullest extent, this is attainment. In your experience, however, you are struggling, you are surviving; you do not sense attainment. You come upon frustrations which you did not anticipate. Your experience is that you cannot make it, that you cannot make all the meetings, read the Bible every day, read through the life-studies, preach the gospel all the time, have people over to your home, and so on. Our real experience is that we are tired of the meetings, yet we go anyway; that we have no interest to invite others to our homes because it is too bothersome and usually they don’t come anyway; and even if they do come they don’t get saved, love the Lord, or come into the church life. Yet even with

such discouragement confronting us, for some reason we are still pursuing. Are you encouraged? No. Are you discouraged? Yes. Then why won't you give up? You are surviving.

SURVIVAL IS PURSUING ON IN SPITE OF OUTWARD DISCOURAGEMENT

Survival does not refer to missing a meeting and then recovering to make the meeting the following week. No, it is that, by the Lord's mercy, in the midst of all the frustrating things we encounter, we still have the desire and ability to pursue on. This is the reality of surviving.

When I was just a young brother, I was given responsibility with two other brothers for one of the group meetings in Taipei. Of we three, one was in the military, and during (and due to) one of his absences our attendance tripled from twenty-five to seventy-five through our labor. When this brother returned, however, he took over the leadership, for he was not only older, but was also a commander. During that time, as I watched those we had brought in and cared for drop away one after another, I had to learn to say "amen" to stand with this brother when he ministered. You have to learn survival, for the church life is like this.

In my thirty-some years in the church life there has been little seeming encouragement. Of course, there is some encouragement, as with this year-long labor. Yet even while I am so happy with all the trainees, every trainee also gives cause for discouragement. However, even when the situation with the trainees is discouraging, I am encouraged. Do you have the ability to develop such insight? This is a spiritual art. If you possess this kind of insight, you will be able to survive. Consider my background. Nearly all of those whom I grew up with in the church life are gone today. How can I now trust you young people? Now you see how necessary is the art of survival. I have seen what I have seen and yet I continue to survive.

Some of you have been in the church life a number of years. Perhaps some of you can even testify that you have been through all of Brother Lee's trainings on the New Testament. How glorious! You can also testify of many confusing situations and discouragements. How easy it seems to remember the negative experiences and forget the wonderful infusions.

There are many things which can potentially discourage you in the church life. Formerly, to be at morning watch was so enjoyable. Now to

be in bed is so comfortable. Once you went to the campus to conquer it. Now you go and feel like grasshoppers among giants. Your environment seems to block you. This is the normal church life. This is also the normal human life. How many wives or husbands have come up to their spouse's expectations? A wife may look at her husband and feel, "I'm proud of him. I love him, and I am glad the Lord has given me such a husband, and yet...if only he were a little more ambitious!" Those with ambitious husbands desire that their husbands would spend more time at home. There is not one thing in our human life with which we are satisfied. Even in the human life we live by surviving, for the more you can handle the negative things in your human life, the more successful you will be in your human life. This is a principle. Successful people do not arrive at success because of a smooth pathway; they arrive at success after surviving many failures and defeats.

All things are given to us by the Lord, whether good things or things which don't agree with us. Both the things we would like to happen and things which we are afraid might happen, happen.

Some brothers who go through difficulties become weaker. Other brothers going through the same difficulties become stronger. Some grow to realize their limitation. Some, realizing how hard it has become for the Lord to use them, struggle to grow, to break through the limitation. Others, realizing the same thing, give up.

PAUL'S REALIZATION

In the church life we confront all sorts of things which frustrate and discourage us. We may even be brought to the point where we question whether we are in the Lord's recovery, for our thought is, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Paul is the one who wrote this verse, and who was Paul? He was one who experienced sin and suffering in his flesh, watched the churches leave his ministry, and confronted so many frustrating circumstances. Even his co-workers left him. It was not due to favorable conditions that he said "God is for us." If that were the case, his statement would be of little value. When we first came into the church life we took this verse in this way. We felt nothing could frustrate us. God was for us. We were going to capture every major city from the beachhead in Los Angeles to the New York City bay! There was talk of taking the fifty largest cities. We were in Akron, which was the fifty-first largest. Some told us we were in the wrong place. We said, "After you capture the fifty, you will have one extra. That's not bad!"

However, that word was discouraging. You give your life to the recovery and then are told that you are not in the “flow.” Many such things will come in to discourage and beat you. On the one hand we feel these things are hard. On the other hand we must learn to say, “Praise the Lord, they all are for my growth.”

THE LORD ALLOWS ALL THINGS
SO THAT WE MIGHT DEVELOP A MATURE APPRECIATION FOR HIM

We have such negative experiences because we need them. Without them we would never learn how to survive. Through such experiences the Lord brings us out of what is merely theory into what is real; He will not allow us to remain naïve. Experience produces the reality of maturity. How can a student become a mature engineer without field experience? You do not become mature because of the theories you know. If we live a life free of frustration and trouble, would we be able to offer to the Lord any genuine praise? We would be like the children who for Mother’s Day buy a twenty-five cent card or draw a heart on a sheet of paper and write “Mommy I love you.” They lack the experience to show something of real appreciation in their love. The love and appreciation a man has for his wife after fifty years of marriage is far beyond that which a young man declares to his fiancée, simply because of all the things they have gone through together.

If we all came to the recovery and proceeded along smoothly until the Lord returned, I don’t believe we would have much to say to Him. We could say, “Lord, I have been saved!” The Lord may ask, “And then?” We would answer, “I saw the vision!” The Lord would reply, “Then?” “I’m in the church in Chicago!” “And then?” “That’s enough; that’s all I have.” I believe that out of my experience I should already have much to say. I may say, “Lord, I don’t know how I made it. You know when that brother was killing the church, and how I saw the brothers I brought in one by one dropping out of the church life. I was just about to revolt, but thank You, Lord, You stopped me. You kept me in Your presence.” There are many love stories. Then one’s praise becomes full of genuine appreciation.

The Lord allows us to go through many tears, many fastings, many prayers, and many difficult times, even difficult beyond what we could imagine. Although, perhaps it seems hard to believe that in a genuine church such-and-such a thing could really occur, yet through it you experience Christ. How have you attained? Not by “marching on, marching on,

hallelujah, marching on.” Your attaining has been by falling down, failing down, hallelujah, falling down. You don’t know how, but you are surviving, and even attaining. Your appreciation to the Lord in eternity will thus be much greater.

THE REAL SHEPHERDS ARE PRODUCED THROUGH SURVIVING

Usually anything that results only in your encouragement is shallow. Once you receive a little encouragement, watch what happens. When you receive an “A” in class or a promotion at work, you come home and talk nonsense. When you are so high the church witnesses Peter on the mount of transfiguration saying, “Let us build three tabernacles!” It is when the discouragement and difficulties come that you are slow to speak. It is during such times that your word has meaning. On the one hand, we need the high experiences. The church needs buoyancy, for buoyancy attracts new ones. But for the brothers to be raised up in life, furnished with truth and equipped with experience of life, buoyancy alone will not work. The saints grow practically through shepherding, and shepherding is possible only because some brothers have survived so many things.

After you have been through so many of these things, you become more clear toward the Lord, more attached to the truth, and more able to follow the Lord according to His eternal purpose rather than your own personal psychology. When you go to the young ones, you know how to help them, for you now have genuine life experiences to back you up.

SURVIVAL IN ATTAINING IS POSSIBLE ONLY WITH A LEARNING SPIRIT

In order to attain to what the Lord desires for us, we need to be in this process of surviving. This doesn’t mean that we attain seniority in the church life, having kept ourselves in the church life for so many years. We are thankful for that, yet we also realize that this is not adequate. We must be able to testify, “Brothers, I survived, by the Lord’s mercy, through all the bombs, storms, depressions, frustrations and discouragements, and I have gained Christ. My vision is more clear. I have gained more growth in life. My entire person possesses more divine constitution.” Then you know all your surviving experience has been attaining experience. By exercising a learning spirit you are attaining to what the Lord desires for you. - *Titus Chu, from Survival Messages, Summer 1985*

The Faith of the Gospel:

Five Missionaries to the “Auca” in Ecuador and Their Legacy

The five young men had been waiting for this moment. For months they had been planning and now here they were, face to face with this tribe that the others called “Aucas,” or “naked savages.” Anthropologists told them they were the fiercest tribe in South America they had ever studied. Even their neighbors the Jivaros, the head-hunters, were afraid of them. Six out of every ten Aucas died at the hands of others. Strangers, they killed on sight. Yet these young believers felt called to reach them with the good news of God’s salvation.

They had learned their language from a girl who fled to another tribe after her family had been killed. For three months they had done what they could to prepare the way. One among them, Nate Saint, had invented a trick to lower gifts in a bucket from his plane. The first gift they lowered was a machete, wrapped in canvas and decorated with colorful streamers. Later, when they flew over the village again, it was gone. They called out over the loudspeaker attached to the plane, “We like you! We are coming to visit!”

The Aucas accepted their gifts, and began sending back some of their own. The first was a parrot. Eventually they even built a platform in their village for these exchanges. The Aucas continued to send back gifts in the bucket, including a squirrel, smoked monkey tail, cooked fish and a woven headband. The time seemed right to take the next step. The young men set a date and it arrived. Together, that morning, they prayed with their wives, sang a hymn, and made their way to the beach close to the village...

They brought guns with them, but only to try to scare away an attack if it came. They agreed they would not use them to harm anyone, even if it meant losing their own lives.

They flew over the village before landing on the beach to invite anyone who wanted to visit them when they landed. Three approached them on the beach that day, a man they called George, a woman, and a teenage girl. They even convinced George to take a ride in the plane. He was delighted.

No one came the second day, even though they dropped more presents. The third day, all five men were speared to death.

One of the Aucas later told Nate Saint's sister Rachel that they thought the foreigners were going to eat them, and they were afraid. They realized they had made a great mistake when they saw that the foreigners had weapons that could have killed them, but did not use them. One killer even cried afterwards. The Indian girl who had taught them their language returned, and was received with joy for they had assumed she had been eaten. The tribe now was ready to hear the message these men had been willing to die for.

One of the men's wives, Elisabeth Elliot, and Nate's sister Rachel moved in with the Huaorani (the actual name of the Auca tribe, also referred to as the Waodani). Many received the message of Christ's death on the cross for their sins, including the killers. News of the deaths of these young men spread all over the world. Based on their example, thousands decided to live their lives for the gospel.

THERE'S MORE...

Immediately after the Auca began believing in Jesus, the killings among them stopped. One of those who killed the missionaries, Kimo, told Rachel, "Jesus' blood has washed my heart clean... my heart is healed." Years later, the gospel of Mark was translated into their languages. Kimo prayed, "Father God, You are alive. This is Your day and all of us have come to worship You. They brought us copies of Your Carving, enough for everybody. We accept it, saying, 'This is the truth.' We want all of Your Carving."



After the presentation of Mark's gospel to the Aucas, Steve, one of Nate Saint's children, stayed on. While there he received a letter from his 15-year-old sister Kathy saying she desired to show her faith by being baptized by the Huaorani. Steve decided he would do the same.

The baptisms took place on the beach where their father, along with the other four men, had been slain. Kimo spoke to them and two other teenagers from among the tribe about the meaning of baptism as a witness of resurrected life in Christ. Then he baptized them.

Afterwards, Kimo and one of the other forgiven killers led Nate Saint's family to the graves of the young missionaries. There they sang together the hymn those young men had sung with their wives before they left that day...

**“We rest on Thee, our own great weakness feeling,
And needing more each day Thy grace to know,
Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing,
We rest in Thee, and in Thy name we go...”**

- J. Berglund

The Will of God

Revealing the Eternal Desire of God's Heart

Every Christian must have one fundamental realization: God has a will. God is not miscellaneous, whimsical, or random. Instead He is full of purpose and desire. In eternity past, before the foundation of the world, God had a deep longing in His heart. This longing became His will. God's will is simply His heartfelt desire. When the Bible speaks of the will of God it is referring to something which reflects the desire of God's heart. Perhaps you have never considered that God has a will. Yet this is the wonderful revelation of the Word of God (Eph. 1:4-5).

Our Christian life must have this perspective. Without a vision of God's will we may live a Christian life full of many activities that are scattered and unrelated. We may respond to exhortations to preach the gospel and feed the Lord's sheep. However, without a view to God's eternal will these activities may easily become ends in themselves, and we may still find ourselves without a clear goal.

Fortunately we have the Bible, which is simply the unveiling of the divine will of God. Every book, every chapter, and every verse of the Word of God is a product of, and sheds light upon, the eternal will of God. Why was there a creation? Because God has a will. Why was there the giving of the law? Because God has a will. Why must God become a man? It is because God wants to carry out His eternal will. What is the reason Christ needed to accomplish redemption for us? It is not just because we are sinners and need to be redeemed, although certainly this is true. But redemption was for a much higher purpose: God wants to carry out His eternal will.

To Know God's Will, We Need to Grow Up

Then what is the will of God? We need to open our hearts to the Lord in order to know His will. We should pray, "Oh Lord, I thank You for Your wonderful salvation. But now I want to know Your eternal will. I ask You, Lord, to unveil Your will to me. Dear Lord, grant me a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that I may know Your heart's desire" (Eph.

3:14, 16.) Many dear brothers and sisters plan and consider what to do with their Christian life. They ask, "What is God's will for my life. How is God leading me?" This is a very healthy response to the Lord, yet such a consecration is that of a very young Christian. It is pure, but it lacks the revelation that God has a will. Each of us needs to grow up and seek to know what is God's unique, eternal will.

To many Christians, God is simply the One who blesses them abundantly. If they attend Christian services, tithe, and are considerate of their fellow man, they expect God to bless them with material benefits. They want God to help them with their needs. We could never deny that God will supply our material needs, but God wants much more than this. We must grow up in Christ to see that God has an eternal will. Even when He supplies our material needs He has His eternal will in view.

Furthermore, some Christians, once they are redeemed and have tasted the sweetness of their salvation, mistakenly respond, "Now I will do something for God." This reaction seems noble. In fact, if we recall our initial experience of salvation we probably had a similar response. This reaction shows that we touched something real of Christ. However, the thought of doing something for God is still just a natural, religious concept. It is actually apart from God's will. God does not want us to return Him a favor. Yes, He desires us to consecrate ourselves to Him. However, our consecration is not to do something for Him, but to be one with Him for His eternal will.

Coming to the Bible to Know God's Will

To know God's will we must come to His Word, the Bible. Throughout the sixty-six books of the Bible there is one central thought, around which every other thought revolves. This central thought is the will of God. Every page of the Holy Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation is an unveiling of His will. What is the will of God? In the Bible God has shown that He desires to impart His divine life into man. Everything God has done is with the intent that He could live in man. God wants to indwell man so that He may have many sons just like His firstborn Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). Therefore, the will of God is that He would impart His life into man.

Have you ever considered why God created man? It was for this purpose. In Genesis 1:26 the Triune God determined to make man in His image and after His likeness, as a kind of "photograph" of Himself. Then when God created man He put him in the Garden of Eden before the tree of life (Gen. 2:7-9). This action indicates God's will. God wanted man to be His expression. In order for man to truly express God he needed to be filled with the life of God Himself. God did not create man to do something for Him, but He created man to partake of the tree of life. When man fell by partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he not only came under God's judgment but he was barred from the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). This is the real significance of man's fall. Man was forbidden to partake of the tree of life, which meant that he was separated from God's will.

Although man fell, God would never give up His eternal will. He had determined to put His life into man. Therefore, God planned to redeem man. God became a man, Jesus Christ, so He could redeem man back to Himself. Jesus Christ bore all of our sins and offenses on the cross, thereby reconciling us back to God. He did not merely save us from hell, but He reconciled us to the Father so that we could receive His divine life.

The Lord Ministering and God Being Triune to Give Life

Throughout His earthly ministry the Lord Jesus brought the life of God to people. All of His labor, speaking, and prayer was so that man might have eternal life. Jesus declared, "I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10). He told His disciples that He was the bread of life, and that He needed to be eaten by them so that they could have life (John 6:48, 51, 57). Jesus also described Himself as the water of life. He said that He would become a spring of water within the believers gushing up into eternal life (John 4:14; 7:37-39). He likened Himself to a grain of wheat which needed to fall into the ground and die. His death as the grain of wheat was to produce many grains, the believers, who would possess the same life (John 12:24). When Jesus prayed in John 17, He recognized that He was to give life to those whom the Father gave Him (John 17:2-3). Throughout His ministry Jesus took every opportunity to unveil the will of God to those around Him. This will of God is for man to have God's life.

It is for this reason that God is Triune. The Bible unveils to us not only God's will, but also the Triune God's operation to accomplish His will. The Lord Jesus came to bring the life of God to man. However, as a man with a physical life He could never dwell within His believers. Those who were around the Lord, such as His disciples, could touch Him, see Him, and talk to Him. But as a man Jesus Christ could not live inside of them. Therefore the Lord Jesus took on a new form. Through death and resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). "Now the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17). And this Spirit is the Spirit that gives life (2 Cor. 3:6; John 6:63). Now, as the life-giving Spirit, Christ can live in us. We as His believers can receive eternal life through the Spirit. Our Savior Jesus Christ is presently at the right hand of God the Father (Acts 7:56; Eph. 1:20). But at the same time He is also the life-giving Spirit. Through this Spirit God has now come to reside in man as life. God, who became a man, is now the Spirit to indwell all those who believe in Him. All that He is and all that He has accomplished is now in the Spirit, and this Spirit has come to live inside of us. This is truly marvelous!

God Creating Man as a Vessel to Receive His Life

We have seen that God created man for the very purpose of imparting His life into man. Each step of God's creation of man was so that He could have the perfect container to receive and contain His life. God made man as a vessel (Rom. 9:21-23) to contain His divine life. God put a human spirit in man (Zech. 12:1; Prov. 20:27) whereby man could contact and receive God who is Spirit (John 4:24). This is the real significance of regeneration, or being "born anew" (1 Pet. 1:3; John 3:3). At the moment we believe, we receive the life of God in our spirit and become children of God (John 3:6; 1:12).

Our receiving of God's life should not be limited to when we first believe. God's desire for us as believers is that we would always be receiving His life. The Lord Jesus charged us to abide in Him, which means to be constantly in the flow of the divine life (John 15:4). We can daily receive the divine life by eating and drinking Christ, who is our spiritual bread and our spiritual drink (John 6:48; 4:14). The more we eat of Him, the more we have life (John 6:54-57). All of God's promises are related to His desire to give us life. Even John 3:16, a verse which

is familiar to every Christian, shows us not only God's provision to save us from eternal punishment, but much more His desire to give us eternal life. This is the unique will of God.

Testing Our Life and Service by the Will of God

Now that we know the will of God, we must apply this to our own Christian life and service. Today, with so many Christian works and activities, we must always ask ourselves, "Is this work according to the will of God?" For example, some Christians focus on feeding the poor. This service is certainly Biblical, but is it fully according to the will of God? Some Christians struggle for peace among mankind. This desire is noble, but again, is it according to the will of God? There are numerous works and ministries that are done in God's name, and are even based on God's Word, but ultimately their value is tested by only one matter: are they truly according to the will of God? In other words, is God's life being imparted into man?

How inadequate it is for us to try to do so many things for God! How mistaken it is for us to try to reciprocate God for His favor! We should only care for one thing: God's eternal will. We need to continually ask ourselves, "Are people, through my labor, being filled with God's life? Am I saturated with God's life through the Spirit? Am I flowing this divine life to others around me?" Apart from such a dispensing of life we know that our labor is not according to God's will.

The Lord must uplift our vision, and give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him (Eph. 1:17). We all must learn to pray, "Lord, I want to care for Your divine will. I want to receive Your life through the Spirit. I want to impart Your life into others. For this cause I give my entire life to You. Lord, use me for Your eternal will." Under such a heavenly vision and desire we will be saturated with God's divine life. Our life and our living will be a testimony of the living God, for God Himself will live out from us. Then we will be able to dispense His life into others. How wonderful! How glorious! This is the will of God for us.

- *Titus Chu*