

CALLED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON

BY DAVID YOON

First Corinthians is widely considered as the apostle Paul's attempt to resolve various problems in the church in Corinth arising from moral deficiencies and doctrinal deviations that have been attributed to the contamination of their faith in Christ with elements from their Greek cultural background. The Epistle appears to have been prompted by a number of disquieting affairs concerning which Paul's counsel was sought (7:1) or concerning which others had reported (1:10-12; 5:1). Victor Paul Furnish represents a perspective common to many expositors of 1 Corinthians when he claims in "Paul and the Corinthians" that although all of Paul's Epistles are situation-specific, "this is especially true of his letters to the Corinthians" and that the "highly situational character" of these letters requires modern interpreters to pay careful attention to the practical issues addressed therein (236).

While 1 Corinthians certainly addresses concerns particular to the church in Corinth, we should not neglect the underlying cause of the Corinthians' problems. In *Pauline Christology* Gordon Fee observes that, even though Paul in 1 Corinthians "spends most of his energy trying to correct behavioral aberrations," "an undercurrent in much of the letter" may be a "crisis in Christology" (84). While the Epistle deals with the misguided behavior of the Corinthians, Fee asserts that their delinquencies may reflect a diminished view of Christ (86). This may explain why 1 Corinthians "contains the most Christological data" of Paul's entire corpus, making this letter so "thoroughly christocentric" that "Christ is the central focus at every turn, from beginning to end" (86-87). In other words, the Corinthians' failures were rooted in their insufficient knowledge and experience of Christ. Hence, Paul's burden was to minister a higher revelation of Christ as the solution to their problems. A reader cursorily surveying 1 Corinthians might conclude that it is merely a collection of Paul's responses to specific causes of disorder in the church in Corinth. A closer examination, however, shows that the Epistle presents the all-inclusive Christ as the unique remedy not just to the immediate problems at hand but to all undertakings in the Christian and church life. Therefore, 1 Corinthians is valuable and timeless not only because the Corinthians' shortcomings mirror our own but even more because the solution that Paul provides is the full answer to every problem that might be encountered in Christian experience.

Paul's ministry to the Corinthians was altogether centered on Christ. From his first visit to the city of Corinth, as recorded in Acts 18:5, Paul "was constrained by the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." In 1 Corinthians 2:1 Paul tells the Corinthians that when he came to them, he announced the mystery of God, that is, Christ (Col. 2:2). Paul then affirms that he determined not to know anything among the Corinthians except "Jesus Christ, and this One crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Similarly, Paul proclaimed Christ as the unique content of his gospel: "We preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness" (1:23). Further, Paul professes that he did all things for the sake of the gospel of Christ in order to become

a fellow partaker of this gospel (9:23). In 2 Corinthians Paul reminds the Corinthians that he and his fellow apostles preached “the Son of God, Jesus Christ” (1:19). These same apostles came unto the Corinthians “in the gospel of Christ” (10:14). Paul and his co-workers did not preach themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord (4:5). Thus, Christ is the center of the gospel that Paul preached to the Corinthians, and Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians consistently maintains a sharp focus on Christ.

Paul’s attempt to direct the Corinthian believers to focus on Christ is most strident in his introduction. In the first nine verses of 1 Corinthians, Paul lays a foundation for the revelation of the all-inclusive Christ in the remainder of this Epistle. It is significant that the word *Christ* or a corresponding pronoun is used in every verse of Paul’s opening address. Paul refers to himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus (v. 1); the Corinthians had been sanctified in Christ Jesus (v. 2); they had received grace from the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 3); God’s grace was given to them in Christ Jesus (v. 4); they were enriched in Christ Jesus (v. 5); the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them (v. 6); they eagerly awaited the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 7); and they were to be unrepensible in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 8). Although every reference to Christ in these verses is full of spiritual significance, one particular expression merits special attention because of its tremendous implications concerning the believers’ relationship to Christ and to His Body: our being *called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord* (v. 9).

The introduction to 1 Corinthians climaxes in verse 9 with the declaration that through God the believers were called into the fellowship (κοινωνία) of His Son. In Greek the objective genitive phrase *fellowship of His Son* refers to the believers’ “common participation in Christ” (Milne 25). In “KOINONIA and Its Cognates in the New Testament” J. Y. Campbell points out, “When a genitive is used with κοινωνία it is highly probable that it is a genitive of the thing shared, . . . even if the noun in question happens to denote persons” (358). “The primary idea expressed by κοινωνός . . . is not that of *association* with another person or other persons, but that of *participation* in something in which others also participate” (353, emphasis added). Hence, the believers are not merely called to be associated with His Son but are called to have a mutual participation in His Son (380).

The culmination of Paul’s Christ-imbued introduction to 1 Corinthians reveals that the believers are called into the enjoyment of Christ. Paul’s writing here is not merely a rhetorical device meant to reassure or ready the Corinthians for the sharp rebuke to follow; more importantly, Paul signals that his objective in writing this Epistle is to refocus the distracted Corinthian believers on their common participation in Christ. Before recounting a catalog of ills plaguing the Corinthian believers, Paul unfolds this governing thought—the fellowship of God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Although the failures of the Corinthians were numerous and appalling, Paul opens his Epistle by looking past their disgraceful condition and drawing attention to God’s calling them into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ. This attests to Paul’s supreme faithfulness to, and his single-hearted concentration on, Christ the Son as God’s unique center and the believers’ common portion.

In light of the Christocentric focus of 1 Corinthians, the expression *the fellowship of His Son* encapsulates the intrinsic content of this Epistle: the believers’ joint participation in Christ as the life-giving Spirit in their regenerated human spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ, His corporate expression. The fellowship of God’s Son is simultaneously the believers’ enjoyment of Christ in their organic union with Him, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and the fellowship of the Body of Christ. Because the Son of God is the embodiment of the divine life, the fellowship of God’s Son is the believers’ subjective participation in Christ by way of their union in life with Him. In such a union they are one with Christ in their inward parts, walk, and service. Because the believers’

BEFORE RECOUNTING
A CATALOG OF ILLS
PLAGUING THE
CORINTHIAN
BELIEVERS, PAUL
UNFOLDS THIS
GOVERNING
THOUGHT—
THE FELLOWSHIP
OF GOD’S SON,
JESUS CHRIST
OUR LORD.

TO BE CALLED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON IS NOT MERELY TO ENTER INTO A FRIENDSHIP, A COMPANIONSHIP, OR SOME KIND OF PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS FOR THE CARRYING OUT OF A COMMON ENDEAVOR.

participation in Christ is dependent on their contacting Him as the life-giving Spirit, the fellowship of the Son is presented to them as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Finally, because partaking of Christ is a corporate experience that involves the organic oneness with fellow members of the Body, the fellowship of the Son is the fellowship of the Body of Christ. We need to heed Paul's exhortation to consider our calling by considering the implications of being called into such a fellowship (1:26). May the Father of glory grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of His Son and enlighten the eyes of our heart, gracing us to know the hope of His calling according to His own purpose. This will usher us into an ever-deepening enjoyment of Christ as the life-giving Spirit and into an ever-advancing experience of the life of the Body of Christ. Such an enjoyment and experience will not only solve our own Corinthian-like problems but also fulfill God's eternal purpose of building up the Body of Christ.

The Fellowship of God's Son—the Believers' Participation in the Son through Their Organic Union with Him

The fellowship of God's Son into which the believers are called in 1 Corinthians 1:9 takes place through their organic union with Him. Thus, Paul states in this Epistle that a believer "is joined to the Lord" (6:17). In Paul's mind, for us to be "called into the fellowship of His Son" is synonymous with being "joined to the Lord," which is also to be firmly attached unto Christ (2 Cor. 1:21). In keeping with this notion, the Jerusalem Bible translates 1 Corinthians 1:9 as follows: "Because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful." The fellowship of God's Son means "to partake of the fellowship of the union with God's Son, Jesus Christ" (Lee, Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 1:9, note 2). God's calling is not a calling into a physical place as our final destination, into the exercise of miraculous gifts, or into the study of certain teachings; it is a calling into the fellowship of a wonderful person—His dear Son, Jesus Christ. In *Life-study of 1 Corinthians* Witness Lee explicitly states that "Christ Himself is actually the fellowship into which God has called us" and that "to say that we have been called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ means that we have been called into Him" (101). S. Lyonnet, as quoted in George Panikulam's *Koinōnia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life*, similarly asserts that since the fellowship of God's Son is a participation in the person of Christ, a Christian is best defined not as one who "embraces a certain doctrine or adheres to it, nor because he accomplishes a certain work," but as one who "is united with others to a person, namely the person of the Son of God" (15). To be called into the fellowship of God's Son is not merely to enter into a friendship, a companionship, or some kind of partnership with others for the carrying out of a common endeavor. More intrinsically, it is to be brought into a union with Him so that we may partake of all the varied aspects of the riches of His person. Commenting on the significance of the Greek preposition (εἰς) translated "into" in 1 Corinthians 1:9, Götz Ludwig Häuser in *Communion with Christ and Christian Community in 1 Corinthians: A Study of Paul's Concept of Koinonia* points out that Paul "used an εἰς with accusative construction" in order to "stress the radical change of the Corinthians' position," their being brought into "the new life ἐν Χριστῷ" (67). The fellowship of God's Son "describes, no less than 'ἐν Χριστῷ,' the mode of the Corinthians' salvation and of their new existence since then; it is the constantly constitutive condition of their life since God had called them" (67). For Paul, the believers' participation in Christ is a matter of their mystical union with Him.

The believers' being called into the fellowship of God's Son is a matter of organic union—a union with Him in the divine life. The Gospel of John reveals the Son of God as the embodiment of God's life: "In Him was life" (1:4). John's first Epistle echoes this revelation: "God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life" (vv. 11-12). The Lord Jesus stated that He is the divine life (John 14:6). Since the Son of God and the life of God are inseparable, to believe into the Son is to receive Him as

the divine life into us and enter into a union of life with Him. John confirms this when he equates receiving the Son with believing into His name: “As many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name” (1:12). Further, three times the Lord proclaimed that he who believes into the Son has eternal life (3:15, 36; 6:40). Since the Son is the divine life, the fellowship of God’s Son is the fellowship of the divine life, that is, the believers’ participation in the divine life (cf. 1 John 1:1-3). In *We Belong Together: The Meaning of Fellowship* Bruce Milne defines the fellowship of God’s Son as “a common participation in the life of God in Christ” (30).

According to Paul’s understanding, the believers’ union with Christ is a coinhering union of mutual indwelling. After announcing that they have been called into the fellowship of Christ, Paul tells the Corinthian believers that they are “in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1:30), and in his second Epistle Paul tells them that Jesus Christ is in them (13:5). Paul experienced the reality of this mutual indwelling with Christ in his ministry of the word: “We speak in Christ” (2:17), and “Christ...is speaking in me” (13:3). Paul’s experience harkens to the Lord’s words in John 15:4 concerning the mutual abiding of Him as the true vine and of His disciples as branches in the vine: “Abide in me and I in you.” Just as the branches in the vine absorb sap from the vine because of their union with the vine, so also the believers in Christ draw their life supply from Christ. To be called into the fellowship of the Son is to be grafted into Him as the true vine so that we may live a life of coinherence with Him, participating in His divine life and receiving His unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8).

Participating in the Inward Parts of Christ through Our Union with Him

As we live in the fellowship of God’s Son through our organic union with Christ, this union will pervade our inward being, living, and work. Through our union with Christ, according to W. E. Vine, “our thoughts, aims and activities conform to the mind and will of Christ” (77). Since all that Christ is and has are made available to us through our union with Him, Christ’s inward parts may be our inward parts so that we may be one with Him in His mind, emotion, and will. In 1 Corinthians Paul, as a “man in Christ,” exemplifies a believer who is so organically one with Christ that his soul—his mind, emotion, and will—is saturated and dominated by Christ (2 Cor. 12:2).

In 1 Corinthians one of the clearest indications of Paul’s oneness with Christ is his declaration that he and his co-workers “have the mind of Christ” (2:16). Vine notes that the Greek word *nous*, translated “mind” in verse 16, refers to “the seat of reflective consciousness, comprising the faculties of perception, understanding the judgment” and that “the claim to have the mind of Christ is founded upon the fact of the indwelling of Christ” (39). This does not mean that we possess omniscience, an incommunicable attribute of the Godhead. However, based on our union with Christ, He may permeate our mind, transforming our mind into the mind of Christ so that we may have His understanding and discernment in both the things of God and the things of man (Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:11-15). To have the mind of Christ is to let the mind which was in Christ dwell in us in order that our mind may be renewed (Phil. 2:5; Rom. 12:2). This was so much Paul’s experience that even his own opinion expressed Christ’s mind and became part of the divine revelation in the New Testament (1 Cor. 7:12, 25, 40); his charge was the Lord’s (v. 10); and his teachings were “the commandment of the Lord” (14:37).

The last verse of 1 Corinthians reveals the union of Paul’s emotion with Christ’s: “My love in Christ Jesus be with you all” (16:24). This love was the motive for the frank rebuke in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, which Paul wrote so that “you [the Corinthians] would know the love which I have more abundantly toward you” (2 Cor. 2:4). Later, in his second Epistle to them, Paul, though likely grieved by the Corinthians’

SINCE THE
SON IS THE
DIVINE LIFE,
THE FELLOWSHIP
OF GOD’S SON
IS THE FELLOWSHIP
OF THE DIVINE LIFE,
THAT IS, THE
BELIEVERS’
PARTICIPATION
IN THE DIVINE LIFE.

THROUGH HIS
ENJOYMENT OF
CHRIST, PAUL HAD
THE MIND OF CHRIST,
THE EMOTION OF
CHRIST, AND THE
WILL OF CHRIST;
THAT IS, HE WAS
ONE WITH CHRIST
IN HIS THINKING,
HIS FEELING, AND
HIS CHOOSING.

accusation of beguiling them for monetary gain, manifests his selfless love for them: “I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?” (12:15). Paul’s love for the church in Corinth was more than his natural inclination; it sprang from his organic union with Christ, for his love was “in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 16:24), the embodiment of God as love (Col. 2:9; 1 John 4:8; 2 Cor. 13:14). Thus, Paul’s affection for the Corinthians was at once his love and Christ’s love, for his feeling was suffused with the Christ in whom he loved. This calls to mind Paul’s statement in Philippians 1:8, where he calls on God to bear witness that he longed after the believers “in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.” In his longing for the Philippian believers, Paul expresses Christ’s deep, delicate, and tender inward feelings in his emotion. Taken together, 1 Corinthians 16:24 and Philippians 1:8 reveal that Paul loved the believers not merely with his natural emotion but with a Christ-enriched, Christ-pervaded, and Christ-ruled emotion. Paul’s feeling for the saints stemmed from his participation in Christ through his union with Christ.

First Corinthians also suggests that Paul’s will was permeated and governed by Christ because he lived according to his organic union with Christ. In carrying out his ministry, Paul made a strong determination to know only Jesus Christ among the Corinthian believers (2:2). He eschewed Greek philosophy, Jewish religion, excellent speech, and worldly wisdom, which had taken hold of the Corinthians, because he determined to know only Christ. According to Albert Barnes in *Notes on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians*, the word *determine* in verse 2 implies that when Paul arrived in Corinth, he made Christ his “great and constant theme,” and this was “not a matter of accident, or chance” but the apostle’s “fixed, deliberate purpose” (28). Since determination is a matter of the will, Paul’s testimony suggests that his will was focused on, saturated with, and directed by Christ.

Paul’s oneness with Christ in his will is further revealed in his announcement to the Corinthians: “I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills” (4:19). This statement is similar to what he says in 16:7: “I am hoping to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.” These verses reveal that though Paul intended to come to the Corinthians and stay with them for a period of time, he would not insist on his own intention but would submit to the Lord’s leading. Instead of being “self-willed” (Titus 1:7), he was “a person who was broken and even terminated in his natural life” and “softened and flexible in his will” (Lee, Recovery Version, 2 Cor. 2:10, note 3). By virtue of his organic union with Christ, Paul was one with Christ in His will, because he experienced and enjoyed the indwelling Christ as the God who operated in him both the willing and the working for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13), enabling him to do that which is well pleasing in His sight—His will (Heb. 13:20-21; cf. Rom. 12:2). Through his enjoyment of Christ, Paul had the mind of Christ, the emotion of Christ, and the will of Christ; that is, he was one with Christ in his thinking, his feeling, and his choosing.

Being One with Christ in Our Living and Service

Paul’s union with Christ in the faculties of his soul served as the basis for his living and service. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 the apostle Paul presents himself as an imitator of Christ. To imitate Christ is not merely to conform to a historical Christ, taking Him merely as an outward pattern or trying to emulate His virtues by the effort of our natural life. Rather, it is to be organically conformed to His image by taking the indwelling Christ as our life and by allowing Him to live in us, be formed in us, and make His home in us (Col. 3:4; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17; Rom. 8:29). Paul’s virtues and actions expressed the Christ with whom he was one in an organic union. Thus, he could testify to the Corinthians that the ways in which he conducted himself in the churches were in Christ (1 Cor. 4:17); he lived within law to Christ (9:21); he was weak in Christ yet lived together with Christ by the power of God (2 Cor. 13:4); he participated in the sufferings of Christ (1:5); he forgave a brother in the person of Christ

(2:10); he was constrained by the love of Christ to live to Him (5:14-15); he entreated the Corinthians through the meekness and gentleness of Christ (10:1); he experienced the grace and power of Christ (12:9); he sought to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Christ (5:9); he bore about in his body the putting to death of Jesus for the manifestation of the life of Jesus in his mortal flesh (4:10-11); he was being transformed into the image of Christ (3:18); and he was a fragrance of Christ to God (2:15). Since Paul imitated Christ by living in an organic union with Him, it was Paul's desire that by imitating him the Corinthians would ultimately become imitators of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

In writing to the Corinthians concerning his commission from the Lord, Paul refers to himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus, a servant of Christ, an ambassador of Christ, and a minister of Christ (1:1; 4:1; 2 Cor. 5:20; 11:23). This reveals that Paul's union with Christ governed not only his living but also his service. As God's fellow worker (1 Cor. 3:9), Paul testified that he was working together with God (2 Cor. 6:1) and that he was "working the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 16:10). He carried out the work of the Lord not by his natural ability or strength but in his life union with Christ. Concerning his apostolic work, Paul says, "I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me" (15:10). Here *the grace of God* refers to Christ, the person who operated in Paul's service. This is made evident when comparing verse 10 with Galatians 2:20, which says, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." *Not I but the grace of God which is with me* parallels *no longer I...but it is Christ who lives in me*. Christ not only lived in Paul but also labored in him. For this reason Paul could exhort the Corinthians to always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labor in the Lord—their labor accomplished through their union with the Lord—would not be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). Thus, the apostle Paul, as a pattern to all believers, was a person whose living and service issued from his remaining in the fellowship of God's Son, that is, from his living in a mystical union between him and Christ (1 Tim. 1:16).

The Fellowship of God's Son—the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

The fellowship of God's Son, the believers' participation in the Son, is also the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit of reality brings the believers into an organic union with Christ and makes Him real in their experience (John 14:17-18). In Paul's concluding benediction to 2 Corinthians, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all," he weaves in the grace of the Lord Jesus with the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (13:14). Here the grace of the Lord Jesus can be viewed as being synonymous with the fellowship of God's Son, because to be called into the fellowship of the Son is to be called in the grace of Christ (Gal. 1:6). Thus, the love of God is realized as the grace of the Lord Jesus that is communicated to us through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. In Greek each of the three expressions, corresponding to the hypostases of the Trinity—the *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*, the *love of God*, and the *fellowship of the Holy Spirit*—can be considered appositional. Just as the Son as grace is the manifestation of God as love, so also the Spirit as the fellowship is the transmission of the Son with the Father to the believers (John 1:14-18; 16:13-15; 1 John 4:8). The Son into whose fellowship we have been called is the embodiment of the Father, and the Spirit is the realization of the Son with the Father. Hence, the believers' participation in the grace of the Lord Jesus through the fellowship of the Spirit brings them into the love of the Father, thus encompassing the full experience of the Triune God. Paul's final blessing to the Corinthians serves as the kernel of his ministry to these dear saints. It unveils that the believers' enjoyment of the Son as the center of the Trinity incorporates His fellowship with the Father as the source of the Trinity (1 John 1:3, 6) and becomes their experience through the Spirit as the application of the Trinity to them (John 16:13, 15).

THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON, THE BELIEVERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE SON, IS ALSO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BECAUSE THE SPIRIT OF REALITY BRINGS THE BELIEVERS INTO AN ORGANIC UNION WITH CHRIST.

The Spirit's Operation to Make Christ Real to the Believers

TO BE BAPTIZED
INTO CHRIST IS
EQUIVALENT TO BEING
BAPTIZED INTO THE
SPIRIT, BECAUSE
THE SPIRIT AS THE
REALITY OF CHRIST
FUNCTIONS TO BRING
THE BELIEVERS
INTO AN ACTUAL
ORGANIC UNION
WITH CHRIST.

In 1 Corinthians Paul underscores the Spirit's role in bringing the believers into the enjoyment of Christ. In 2:9 and 10 Paul says, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But to us God has revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God." According to Henry Alford, the Greek word translated "searches" "is used [to describe] active research, implying accurate knowledge," and the site of the Spirit's "active research" is the believers' human spirit, which is inseparably joined to the Holy Spirit who is "working in us and with our spirits" (986). Witness Lee confirms Alford's understanding of the Spirit's function to search the depths of God in union with our spirit: "The Spirit of God explores the depths of God concerning Christ and shows them to us in our spirit for our realization and participation" (Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 2:10, note 2). The depths of God revealed by the Spirit—as God's wisdom in a mystery which none of the rulers of this age have known (vv. 7-8)—are related to Christ, who is God's wisdom to us (1:24) and who is the mystery hidden from the ages that the apostle Paul proclaimed (Col. 1:26-27). Here the hidden depths that God has prepared for us should be understood as referring to the all-inclusive and all-extensive Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (2:2-3) and whose riches are unsearchable and whose dimensions are immeasurable (Eph. 3:8, 18). Christ is so unfathomably profound that His riches cannot be seen by the human eye, heard by the human ear, or conceived in the human heart (1 Cor. 2:9). As the Son Himself attests, flesh and blood cannot reveal Him to us (Matt. 16:17). There is only One who fully knows the Son and who can reveal Him to us—the Father (11:27). Yet when God reveals the Son to us, He does so only through the Spirit, who knows the things of God and searches the depths of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11; cf. Eph. 1:17). The Spirit's role in revealing Christ to the believers is consistent with the Lord's prophetic word in the Gospel of John that the Spirit will testify concerning the Son (15:26). The Lord also prophesied that this Spirit would guide the believers into the reality of the Son and glorify the Son by transmitting to the believers the Son's possessions. These possessions include all that the Son has from the Father and all that He has accomplished, obtained, and attained by undergoing the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection (16:13-15).

The Spirit plays a central role in bringing the believers into Christ through faith and baptism. In chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians Paul asserts that no one among the believers in Corinth, whom God had placed into Christ (v. 30), were baptized into his name, implying that these believers were baptized into the name, that is, into the person, of Christ (vv. 13-15). Paul himself was baptized while calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16), and the early believers were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (8:16; 10:48; 19:5). To be baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely a ritual that symbolizes one's belief in a set of Christian doctrines; more significantly, it is the testimony of being identified with Christ by being brought into a mystical union with Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul declares that "in one Spirit we were all baptized." Our baptism into Christ and our baptism in one Spirit are not two separate baptisms that we experience but one divine reality. In Paul's mind, to be baptized into Christ is equivalent to being baptized into the Spirit, because the Spirit as the reality of Christ functions to bring the believers into an actual organic union with Christ.

The Spirit operates to bring the believers into the reality of their full salvation in Christ, who "became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1:30). Thus, when Paul declares to the Corinthians that they were washed, sanctified, and justified, he points out that this experience was "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (6:11). Here *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* means "in the person of the Lord, in an organic union with the Lord through faith," and *in the Spirit of our God* means "in the power and realization of the

Holy Spirit” (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 11, note 1). Paul joins the believers’ union with the Lord and their appropriation of the power of the Spirit in order to give special emphasis to the Spirit’s operation to make their union with Christ a reality as they experience God’s salvation. According to Fee, 1 Corinthians 6:11 reveals “how crucial the role of the Spirit is to Paul’s view of salvation in Christ” (*Presence* 131).

In 1 Corinthians one of the most crucial aspects of the Spirit’s operation to bring us into the fellowship of the Son is the revelation of the life-giving Spirit as the application of the crucified Christ to the believers. Paul’s intention in writing the first Epistle to the Corinthians was to bring these distracted believers back from their preoccupation with replacements for Christ to Christ Himself as their unique portion. Among the Corinthians the most insidious substitute for Christ was their cultural backgrounds that principally consisted of Jewish religion and Greek philosophy. In the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians Paul highlights not only Christ as God’s center (1:1-9) but also the word of the cross as God’s power that terminates the Corinthians and their replacements of Christ (vv. 13, 17-18, 23; 2:2, 8). By the terminating work of the cross God destroys the wisdom of the wise, sets aside the understanding of those who understand, and brings to nought the things which are so that no flesh may boast before God (1:19, 28-29).

After establishing at the beginning of 1 Corinthians the believers’ need to experience the working of the cross, Paul approaching the end of this Epistle, unfolds the way to appropriate the efficacy of the all-terminating work of the cross. In 15:45 Paul declares that the last Adam, the crucified Christ, became a life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). The expression *the last Adam* refers to Christ as a God-man, who through incarnation became a member of the adamic race and who through His crucifixion terminated the fallen human race. Adam, as the first man with all his descendants, became the fallen corporate old man through his transgression (Eph. 4:22). Christ’s death as the last Adam brought to an end not only the old humankind created by God yet fallen in sin (Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20) but also the entire old creation with all its negative factors, such as Satan, sin, the world with its elements, and the law with its ordinances (Heb. 2:14; John 12:31; 1:29; Eph. 2:15). Since the last Adam is the One who became the life-giving Spirit, this Spirit contains the all-inclusive death that Christ accomplished as the last Adam. The death of Christ as the last Adam is not merely a historical event related to the God-man; rather, it is one of the many rich elements in the Spirit of Jesus Christ—the Spirit of God compounded with the human experiences, obtainments, and attainments of Jesus Christ, who has passed through the process of incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection (Phil. 1:19). Hence, in order for the effectiveness of Christ’s all-inclusive crucifixion to be applied to us, we need to contact the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Christ. Without such a Spirit, Christ’s terminating death would merely be the distant experience of a God-man who was nailed to the cross on Calvary two thousand years ago; it would be a point of truth that has little or no bearing on our daily life filled with the vestiges of the old man. But with the Spirit as the reality of the crucified Christ, we have the means to apply Christ’s all-inclusive death to ourselves. In order to experience our co-crucifixion with Christ, we need to touch the Spirit, who makes Christ’s terminating death as the last Adam real to us (cf. Rom. 6:6; 8:13).

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul reveals that by enjoying the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit, we can participate in Christ as the firstfruits of resurrection. In verse 20 Paul describes the Christ who “has been raised” as “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Christ’s status as the firstfruits of resurrection, which corresponds to His status as “the Firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18), indicates that His believers as members of His Body will also be resurrected. Paul confirms this several chapters earlier in 1 Corinthians when he states that “God has both raised up the Lord and will raise us up through His power” (6:14). Paul goes on to further to state in 15:21 and 22 that through Christ “came the resurrection of the dead” and that “in Christ all will be made alive.”

ONE OF THE MOST
CRUCIAL ASPECTS
OF THE SPIRIT’S
OPERATION TO
BRING US INTO THE
FELLOWSHIP OF THE
SON IS THE REVELATION
OF THE LIFE-GIVING
SPIRIT AS THE
APPLICATION OF THE
CRUCIFIED CHRIST TO
THE BELIEVERS.

THE BELIEVERS' PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST THROUGH THEIR MYSTICAL UNION WITH HIM IS MADE POSSIBLE AND REAL ONLY THROUGH THE REGENERATED SPIRIT OF THE BELIEVERS INDWELT BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THAT IS, THE MINGLED SPIRIT.

Verses 21 and 22 imply that in their organic union with Christ all the believers are made alive by the impartation of Christ as the resurrection life into them (Eph. 2:5; John 11:25; Col. 3:4). Paul then indicates that Christ as the resurrection life is made available to the believers because in resurrection Christ became the life-giving Spirit. Noting “an integral connection” between “Christ as firstfruits and Christ as the life-giving Spirit,” Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. in *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* asserts that “because Christ’s resurrection is the indispensable foundation for others to share in resurrection life, he functions as life-giving Spirit” (88). Through their mystical union with Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the believers can receive resurrection life into their tripartite being, thereby allowing Him to make their spirit life (Rom. 8:10), cause their mind to be life (v. 6), and give life to their mortal body (v. 11). Thus, our organic union with Christ, in which we are enlivened by Him as the resurrection life, is made real to us because the resurrected Christ imparts the divine life into us as the life-giving Spirit.

The Mingled Spirit

The believers’ organic union with the Lord can be seen in 1 Corinthians 6:17: “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” In this verse *he* no doubt refers to a regenerated believer. The hallmark of every genuine believer’s spiritual existence is his being united with the Lord through faith. *The Lord* here should be understood both in the immediate context of chapter 6 and in the broader context of 1 Corinthians. In chapter 6 Paul mentions that God has raised up the Lord (v. 14), which suggests that verse 17 speaks of the resurrected Christ. Paul later equates the resurrected Christ with the Spirit, declaring that Christ, as the last Adam, became “a life-giving Spirit” (15:45). Paul echoes this thought in his second Epistle to the Corinthians when he speaks of “the Spirit” who “gives life” (3:6) and proclaims in the same chapter that “the Lord is the Spirit” (v. 17).

The phrase *one spirit* in 1 Corinthians 6:17 refers to the organic union of Christ as the Spirit with a regenerated believer. The fact that Paul characterizes the believers’ union with Christ not as one body or one soul but as one spirit implies that “the believers’ union with Christ is a spiritual union” (Bruce 65). In other words, the Lord’s “union with the believers is His union with the believers’ spirit” (Nee 236). Through our response to the hearing of faith, Christ as the Spirit enters into our spirit in order to dwell in us, thereby mingling Himself as the divine Spirit with our human spirit to be one spirit (Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:13; John 7:39; 3:6). It is through the mingling of the Spirit with our spirit that our organic union with Christ takes place (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16). Hence, the key to experiencing the reality of our life union with the resurrected Christ is the mingled spirit—our human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the life-giving Spirit. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians 6:17, Fee notes the crucial role of the Spirit’s operation in uniting the believers with Christ:

In light of vv. 19-20, Paul’s primary referent is to the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby through the “one Spirit” the believer’s “spirit” has been joined indissolubly with Christ. Thus, by the Spirit the believer is united to the Lord and thereby has become one S/spirit with him. (*Presence* 133)

The “S/spirit,” the mingled spirit, is the vital means by which the believers’ indissoluble union with Christ is realized. The believers’ participation in Christ through their mystical union with Him is made possible and real only through the regenerated spirit of the believers indwelt by the Spirit of God, that is, the mingled spirit.

Living in the Mingled Spirit

In 1 Corinthians 2, after underscoring the divine Spirit’s function to communicate the

riches of Christ to the believers, Paul points out the need for them to live in their regenerated human spirit indwelt by the divine Spirit. In verses 14 and 15 Paul contrasts a soulish man, who “does not receive the things of the Spirit of God,” with a spiritual man, who “discerns all things.” In 3:1 Paul refers to himself and his fellow apostles as “spiritual men.” It is erroneous to understand a soulish man as an unbeliever, one who does not possess the Spirit of God, and a spiritual man as a regenerated believer, one who possesses the Spirit. It is possible for a genuine, blood-washed and Spirit-regenerated believer in Christ to be a soulish person. The Corinthians were no doubt saints who had been sanctified in Christ Jesus (1:2) and in whom the Spirit of God dwelt (3:16), yet they were not regarded by the apostle as spiritual persons (v. 1). Instead, they were called fleshy or fleshly (vv. 1, 3). They were decried as soulish persons who made divisions (1:10; 11:18; cf. Jude 19). A soulish man is one who lives according to his soul and neglects his spirit. In contrast, a spiritual man is a person who denies his soul and walks according to his mingled spirit (Matt. 16:24-26; Rom. 8:4), thereby allowing the mingled spirit “to dominate his entire being” (Lee, Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 2:15, note 1). A spiritual person can discern the things that have been graciously given to the believers by God, which things are the riches of Christ as the deep and hidden things that God has prepared for the believers and has revealed through the Spirit (vv. 12, 9-10). This is because a spiritual person exercises his spirit to contact the Spirit, who alone knows the things of God and searches the depths of God (vv. 10-11). A spiritual man has the mind of Christ, because he allows the Spirit of God in his spirit to saturate his mind, his thinking. Paul and his co-workers could declare that they had the mind of Christ because they were spiritual men who enjoyed the operation of the Spirit “who imparts the mind of Christ to believers in virtue of their vital union with Him (Vine 39). Hence, for Paul, the key to enjoying Christ in his organic union with Him was to live according to the mingled spirit.

First Corinthians reveals that Paul was a partaker of Christ, a person whose entire being was dominated and governed by his mingled spirit. Unlike the fleshly Corinthians, who misused their body by indulgence in fornication and in the unrestrained eating of idol sacrifices (6:18; 8:9-13), Paul was not fleshly. Instead, he buffeted his body and made it his slave (9:27). And, unlike the soulish Corinthians, who lived by their soul and uplifted their natural wisdom, Paul denied the natural life of the soul and forsook his human wisdom (2:1, 4-5). Being a spiritual person, Paul discerned the things of the Spirit of God, interpreted spiritual things with spiritual words, prayed and sang with his spirit, and sowed to the Corinthians spiritual things (vv. 13-15; 14:15; 9:11).

As a believer partaking of the virtues of Christ in his mingled spirit, Paul speaks of coming to the believers in “a spirit of meekness” (4:21). While Alford understands *spirit of meekness* as referring to Paul’s “own spirit,” Alford points out that in most of the portions in the New Testament “where *spirit* is joined with an abstract genitive, it imports *the Holy Spirit*, and the abstract genitive refers to the specific working of the Spirit in the case in hand” (1000). According to Alford, these include the phrases *spirit of faith* (2 Cor. 4:13) and *spirit of wisdom* (Eph. 1:17) (1000). In his commentary on *spirit of meekness* in Galatians 6:1, H. D. Betz, as quoted by Fee, says that “it refers both to the divine and to the human spirit” (*Presence* 121). To both Alford and Betz, the expression *spirit of meekness* refers to Paul’s mingled spirit—Paul’s regenerated human spirit indwelt by and joined to the divine Spirit. Fee, who translates the Greek word for *meekness* as “gentleness,” notes that gentleness is “one of the fruits of the Spirit” in Galatians and that the Lord in His earthly sojourn spoke of His being gentle in Matthew 11:29 (121). Fee suggests that a spirit of gentleness may be interpreted as a “reflection of our Lord himself, whose earthly life of ‘gentleness’ was lived out in the power of the Spirit,” and he concludes that “the Spirit of Christ is therefore understood as reproducing ‘the spirit of Christ,’ in whose ‘spirit of gentleness’ Paul desires to come to them” (121). Because Paul lived in his mingled spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ spontaneously brought forth within him meekness, a characteristic of Christ, as an item of the fruit of the Spirit. By

IT IS ERRONEOUS TO UNDERSTAND A SOULISH MAN AS AN UNBELIEVER, ONE WHO DOES NOT POSSESS THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AND A SPIRITUAL MAN AS A BELIEVER, ONE WHO POSSESSES THE SPIRIT. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A BLOOD-WASHED AND SPIRIT-REGENERATED BELIEVER TO BE A SOULISH PERSON.

THE FELLOWSHIP
OF GOD'S SON
INVOLVES NOT
ONLY OUR ONENESS
WITH THE SON—
THE EMBODIMENT
OF THE FATHER
REALIZED AS THE
SPIRIT—BUT ALSO
OUR ONENESS WITH
ALL THE BELIEVERS.

living in his mingled spirit, which was a spirit of meekness, Paul enjoyed his union with the meek Christ to such a degree that he could entreat the Corinthians through the meekness of Christ, thereby expressing this virtue of Christ (2 Cor. 10:1).

Verses 3 through 5 of 1 Corinthians 5 further show Paul as a person who exercised his mingled spirit to enjoy his oneness with Christ. Here Paul states that though he was absent from the Corinthians in the body, he was nevertheless present with them in the spirit in order to judge an evil person among them and deliver such a one to Satan both “in the name of our Lord Jesus” and “with the power of our Lord Jesus” (v. 4). In verse 4 Paul says to the Corinthians, “You and my spirit have been assembled.” In Fee’s view, since “the person in Christ has ‘received the Spirit of God’ (2:12-13), has ‘become one $\piνεῦμα$ with the Lord’ (6:17), so that he/she is a ‘temple of the Holy Spirit, whom...one has from God’ (6:19),” Paul’s phrase *my spirit* in 5:4 may be related to “this kind of ‘receiving/having/being joined to the Spirit’ language” (124-125). Hence, Fee notates this phrase as “my S/spirit” (125), a distinct representation of the mingled spirit. Paul executed his judgment upon the evil brother by applying the name of the Lord with His power, acting in his mingled spirit in which he was joined to the Lord, the Head of the Body.

The Fellowship of God’s Son—the Fellowship of the Body of Christ

The Son of God into whose fellowship we have been called is both the only Begotten in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) and the Firstborn among many brothers (Rom. 8:29). Hence, the fellowship of God’s Son involves not only our oneness with the Son—the embodiment of the Father realized as the Spirit—but also our oneness with all the believers—the many brothers of the Firstborn as members of the Body of Christ. The fellowship of the Son, which is the fellowship of the divine life, includes both the believers’ vertical fellowship with the Triune God and their horizontal fellowship with one another. This thought is clearly indicated by John’s words concerning the issue of the eternal life (1 John 1:1-2): “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (v. 3), and “we have fellowship with one another” (v. 7).

Participating in Both the Head and the Body

Both the vertical and horizontal aspects of the fellowship of God’s Son are revealed in 1 Corinthians 10. In verse 16 Paul indicates that the fellowship of God’s Son is the fellowship that we enjoy in partaking of Christ’s blood and His body at His table: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?” Here Paul identifies the bread with the fellowship of the body of Christ, assigning the bread a dual significance related to both Christ’s physical body and His mystical Body.

Our participation in the fellowship of the Lord’s blood and body at His table signifies that the Lord passed through a process so that we may participate in Him. The writer of Hebrews testifies that the Lord partook of blood and flesh, implying that through incarnation He put on a human body with flesh and blood (2:14). In John 6 the Lord’s exhortation that the disciples eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have eternal life (vv. 53-54) foreshadowed His crucifixion, through which His blood was separated from His flesh. This separation is signified by the separation of the bread, a symbol of the Lord’s body, from the cup, a symbol of His blood, at the Lord’s table. The Lord died on the cross, shedding His precious blood and sacrificing His sinless body, not only to redeem us with His blood but also to feed us with His body. Later in the same chapter, by declaring that “the flesh profits nothing,” the Lord explained that what He would give us would not be the meat of His physical body but “the Spirit who gives life” (v. 63), implying that through resurrection the incarnated and crucified Christ was to become the Spirit who gives life. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 15:45 Paul proclaims

that in resurrection the Lord Jesus Christ as the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. As the life-giving Spirit, the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Lord imparts Himself as eternal life into us (Col. 3:4). The fellowship of the blood and the body at the Lord's table signifies that Christ passed through the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit presented to the believers for their nourishment and enjoyment (1 Cor. 11:24-26). To partake of the bread and the cup is to jointly partake of the processed Christ as the life-giving Spirit so that we may be His Body.

As we enjoy the processed Christ as the Spirit of life at the Lord's table, we also participate in the fellowship of Christ's mystical Body. The bread on the table denotes not only Christ's physical body, which was broken through His death for us for the release of the divine life, but also His mystical Body, which was produced in His resurrection through the impartation of the divine life. In this sense, the bread on the Lord's table testifies that on the cross Christ sacrificed His physical body so that in resurrection He might gain His mystical Body composed of all His believers as its members. This truth is indicated by the fact that immediately after identifying the bread as the fellowship of the body of Christ, Paul declares, "Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread" (10:17). Fee points out that Paul interprets "the bread in terms of the church as his 'body'" (*Corinthians* 468-469). Alford concurs, saying, "The bread is the Body of Christ;—we partake of the bread: therefore we partake of the Body of Christ" (1037). Alford's identification of the bread with the Body is supported by verse 17, where immediately after speaking of "one bread," Paul speaks concerning the oneness of the believers: "We who are many are one Body." This declaration anticipates the thought in 12:12, which indicates that the Body of Christ is one and yet has many members, as well as the word in verse 24, which says that "God has blended the body together." Hence, the believers' partaking of the one bread is their participation in the fellowship of the unique Body of Christ. Since the fellowship of God's Son is the fellowship of His mystical Body, by partaking of the Lord's table, we have fellowship not only with the processed Christ as the Head of the Body but also with the believers as the members of the blended Body (v. 24). This is in accordance with Paul's word that he and his fellow apostles are firmly attached not only unto Christ but also with the believers in Christ (2 Cor. 1:21).

Andrew Murray offers insightful comments on the believers' union with Christ and with one another in the context the Lord's table:

Union with the Lord Jesus, the Head, involves at the same time mutual union with the members of the body. He that really eats the body of Jesus and drinks His blood, is incorporated with His body, and stands thenceforth in the closest relationship to the whole body, with all its members. We have fellowship, not only in His body which He gave up to death, but especially in His body which He brought again from the dead—that is, the Church. "We who are one body; for we all partake of the one bread."

Many a one has sought after closer connection with the Lord and not found it, because they would have the Head alone without the body. Many a blessing has been missed and lost at the Supper, because the unity of the body was never considered. Yes: would that were it thoroughly understood; Jesus must be loved, and honored, and served, and known in His members. As by the circulation of the blood every member of our body is kept unceasingly in the most vital connection with the others, so the body of Christ can increase and become strong only when, in the loving interchange of the fellowship of the Spirit and of love, the life of the Head can flow unhindered from member to member. (96-98)

The fellowship of God's Son encompasses both the believers' enjoyment of Christ the Son and the enjoyment that the believers have with one another. We need to enjoy the

THE FELLOWSHIP
OF GOD'S SON
ALSO ENCOMPASSES
THE ENJOYMENT
THAT THE BELIEVERS
HAVE WITH ONE
ANOTHER. WE NEED
TO ENJOY THE RICHES
OF THE GLORY OF
GOD'S INHERITANCE
IN THE SAINTS.

THE ENJOYMENT
OF CHRIST IS NOT
INDIVIDUALISTIC
BUT IS IN AND OF
THE BODY. THUS,
TO BE CALLED INTO
THE FELLOWSHIP
OF CHRIST IS TO
BE INVITED TO A
FEAST—A CORPORATE
ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST.

riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, which are the riches of the glorious Christ wrought into the saints (Eph. 1:18; 3:8; Col. 1:26-27; Heb. 1:3). Nothing in ourselves is worthy of God's inheritance and the believers' enjoyment. Only Christ in us as the hope of glory is worthy to be inherited by God and enjoyed by the believers (Col. 1:27). We should learn to enjoy Christ dwelling in the saints as the excellent and powerful treasure in their earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7). This enjoyment will enable us to consider one another more excellent than ourselves and regard the virtues of others (Phil. 2:3-4). The fellowship of God's Son into which we have been called is a universal, mutual enjoyment of Christ in all the believers, wherein they may partake of the unsearchably rich Christ constituted into the saints through the work of the Holy Spirit.

A Corporate Partaking of Christ with the Fellow Members of the Body

The fellowship of the Body of Christ, as an aspect of the fellowship of God's Son, is actually a corporate partaking of Christ by the members of His Body. The corporate nature of such partaking can be seen in the believers' shared participation in the bread and the cup at the Lord's table in 1 Corinthians 10. This is affirmed in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, where Paul describes this fellowship as a feast: "Our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed. So then let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." In this portion of the Word, Paul draws from the history of the children of Israel in the Old Testament to set forth principles applicable to the New Testament believers. Just as the Israelites held the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a continuation of the Passover (Exo. 12:15-20), so also the believers should enjoy Christ as the real Feast of Unleavened Bread as a continuation of their initial experience of Christ as their Passover. In 1 Corinthians 5:7 Paul speaks of Christ not merely as the Passover lamb but as the Passover itself. This indicates that Christ is the reality not only of the lamb but also of every aspect of the Passover, including the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs. The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth should refer to Christ Himself. He is the One who is unleavened, that is, sinless, because He knew and committed no sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22). The Lord Jesus is also the reality (John 14:6). As the bread of life, He is the true bread for His believers to eat and live because of Him (6:35, 32, 57). By partaking of such a Christ, who alone is pure, without sin, and full of reality (1 John 3:3; Heb. 4:15; John 1:14), the truthfulness of Christ is wrought into us (2 Cor. 11:10) so that we may love another and worship God in truthfulness (1 John 3:18; 2 John 1; John 4:23-24). Christ was sacrificed on the cross, thereby redeeming and reconciling us to God. Now we may enjoy Christ as our feast before God by feeding on Him as the sinless life supply of sincerity and truth. The corporate character of the believers' participation in Christ as the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is buttressed by the description of Christ as "our feast" and the use of *us* in the imperative: *Let us keep the feast*. The enjoyment of Christ is not individualistic but is in and of the Body. Thus, to be called into the fellowship of Christ is to be invited to a feast—a corporate enjoyment of Christ. He becomes our banquet in which we partake of Him as a source of the unleavened life, sincerity, and truth. Then we can have an unleavened church life and become the corporate expression of God in His attributes of sincerity and truthfulness (2 Cor. 1:12; 2:17; Rom. 3:7).

The Formation, Constitution, and Building Up of the Body

In order to live in the fellowship of the Body of Christ, we must have revelation concerning the formation, constitution, and building up of the Body. Thus, when Paul sought to help the self-seeking Corinthians develop a concern for the Body, he presents a revelation concerning the believers' corporate existence and living as members of the Body. Verses 12 and 13 of 1 Corinthians 12 say, "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. For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or

Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.” These verses reveal that the church as the Body of Christ is the corporate Christ—Christ as the Head organically joined to the believers as the members of His Body; that the Body was formed when the believers were baptized in, that is, joined with, the life-giving Spirit as the reality of Christ; and that the Body is constituted by the believers’ continual drinking of the Spirit. The Body of Christ is not a human organization composed of Christians with common religious interests or identical doctrinal beliefs. Neither is it a metaphor for the church as an assembly of believers. It is an organic corporate entity, the issue of the life union between the believers and Christ as the Spirit. Hence, the believers’ membership and fellowship in the Body rest upon their life union with Christ as the Spirit in their regenerated spirit (6:15, 17). Furthermore, remaining in the fellowship of the Body hinges on the believers’ constant participation in the Spirit.

The reality of the Body of Christ is nothing less than Christ as the life-giving Spirit constituted into the believers. Hence, the building up of the Body is accomplished by the believers’ mutual dispensing of Christ as the Spirit into one another. This thought is most emphatically presented in 1 Corinthians 14, where Paul repeatedly stresses that the church as the Body of Christ is built up through the practice of prophesying in the meetings of the church (vv. 12, 26): “He who prophesies speaks building up”; “He who prophesies builds up the church”; “I desire that...you would prophesy...that the church may receive building up” (vv. 3-5). The prophesying that Paul speaks of here is not primarily in the sense of foretelling, that is, predicting future events; rather, it is in the sense of telling forth the Lord, that is, speaking for the Lord and speaking Him forth. Paul’s declarations call to mind similar words spoken by him in chapter 2; that is, that spiritual persons receive the things of the Spirit of God, know the depths of God concerning the all-inclusive Christ, and speak these things in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words (vv. 10, 13). Hence, genuine prophets should be spiritual persons who exercise their spirit to announce the riches of Christ by speaking Spirit-inspired utterances for the dispensing of Christ as the Spirit into others.

Paul exalts prophesying as the most profitable gift for building up the church as the Body of Christ by exhorting the believers to desire earnestly to prophesy (14:1, 39). In verses 23 and 24 Paul affirms every believer’s obligation and capacity to prophesy: “If...the whole church comes together in one place, and...all prophesy.” Similarly, verse 31 says, “You can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.” For the believers to prophesy one by one is for them to render the supply of life to their fellow members in the Body, and for them to learn and be encouraged refers to their receiving the supply of life from others. This points to a life of mutuality in the Body of Christ, a life of supplying the members of the Body and being supplied by the members. Paul emphasizes mutuality as a fundamental principle of the Body by describing a proper meeting of the church as one in which “each one has” (v. 26). One believer may have a psalm; another believer may have a teaching; yet another believer may have a revelation. In such a church meeting, each believer should exercise his function in the way of mutuality by bringing a portion of Christ and ministering His riches to others for the building up the Body (v. 26). The riches of Christ are deposited in the church as His Body; hence, we can experience the full enjoyment of Christ only if we live in the Body. The believers’ mutual enjoyment and impartation of Christ as the life-giving Spirit into one another consummates the building up of the Body of Christ.

Living in the Fellowship of the Body

To live in the fellowship of the Body is to live in the consciousness of the Body. Christ is the Head of the Body; thus, the more we participate in Him, the more we become conscious of the Body. As our consciousness of the Body grows, we will honor God’s placement of each member in the Body and recognize the indispensability of every member (12:18). This saves us from a sense of superiority, a prideful consideration that

THE BODY OF CHRIST
IS CHRIST
CONSTITUTED INTO
THE BELIEVERS.
THE BUILDING UP
OF THE BODY IS
ACCOMPLISHED BY THE
BELIEVERS’ MUTUAL
DISPENSING OF CHRIST
AS THE SPIRIT INTO
ONE ANOTHER.

IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF
THE BODY OF CHRIST,
THERE CANNOT BE
DIVISION, BECAUSE
DIVISION ANNULS THE
ONENESS OF THE BODY.
DIVISIONS AMONG
THE BELIEVERS ARE
CONTRARY TO THE
FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S
SON INTO WHICH THEY
HAVE BEEN CALLED.

one has no need of other members of the Body (v. 21). It also saves us from a sense of inferiority, a self-centered consideration that one is not of the Body (vv. 15-16). Instead of despising others' function or that of our own, we will treasure every member's organic function as a gift distributed by the Spirit for the benefit of the Body (vv. 4-11).

A developed consciousness of the Body will also cause us to suffer when one member suffers and to rejoice when one member is glorified (v. 26). What each member does or chooses not to do impacts the entire Body, for we are "members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). This principle is illustrated when Paul warns that a little leaven—a sin committed by an individual believer—leavens the whole lump—the entire church (1 Cor. 5:6). Since the believers' physical bodies are members of Christ, that is, members of the Lord who "is a mystical Body" (Alford 1008), committing a sin with their bodies affects the rest of the Body (6:15-18; 12:27; Eph. 5:30). Hence, every member's individual failure causes damage to the Body, and every believer's personal overcoming releases a supply to the Body (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-12). In order to live in the fellowship of the Body, we need to know the mutual relatedness and organic interdependence among the members of the Body. The Body of Christ is not merely "a community whose members feel or should feel solidarity with one another" (Hollander 469). It is a divine-human organism in which the members are organically identified with one another both in joy and sorrow because they are joined to another in the divine life through their union with Christ. To suffer or rejoice with fellow members of the Body is not merely to empathize with one another in the natural life; instead, it is to care for one another by taking the feeling of Christ the Head for His members as our own. We need to practice such mutual care for one another so that there will be no division in the Body (1 Cor. 12:25).

Participating in the Undivided Christ as the Believers' Unique Portion

In the fellowship of God's Son as the fellowship of the Body of Christ, there cannot be division, because division annuls the oneness of the Body. For this reason, immediately following his declaration in 1 Corinthians 1:9 that God had called the Corinthian believers into the fellowship of His Son, Paul implores that there should be no divisions among them and laments the strifes that apparently existed (vv. 10-11). Divisions among the believers are contrary to the unique fellowship of God's Son into which they have been called. When Paul tells us that through God "you were called into the fellowship of His Son" (v. 9), *you* includes all believers, because Paul addresses 1 Corinthians not only to the church in Corinth but also to "all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours" (v. 2). Though there may be innumerable believers throughout time and space, there is only one fellowship into which they have been called, because it is the fellowship of the Son, who is the "one Lord, Jesus Christ" (8:6). This fellowship is unique because Christ is unique and not divided (1:13).

The Corinthians were divided because of their preference for a particular minister of Christ, most likely based on their cultural background or religious tradition (v. 12; 3:3-4). Hence, Paul was burdened to point out to them that they had not been called into the fellowship of any gifted person, human philosophy, theological doctrine, religious practice, or cultural heritage; instead, they had been called into the fellowship of, the participation in, God's Son, who is both God's center and the believers' portion. In 1 Corinthians 1:2 Paul mentions that our Lord Jesus Christ is "theirs and ours." Paul's utterance suggests that Christ is not only the Lord of all the believers for their submission under His rule but, more significantly, all the believers' shared portion for their mutual participation in Him. Elsewhere, Paul echoes this thought when he reveals Christ as "the allotted portion of the saints" (Col. 1:12). Just as God allotted a portion of the good land of Canaan to the Old Testament Israelites for their inheritance (Josh. 14:1), so also God the Father has allotted the Son, the all-inclusive Christ typified by the good land, to the New Testament believers as their portion for their enjoyment

(Acts 20:32; 26:18). As the believers' allotted portion given to them by God, Christ belongs to all the believers and is thus the same unique portion to them (1 Cor. 10:3). The Son as God's center should be our focus, and Christ as God's allotted portion should be our enjoyment. In order to be one with God for the fulfillment of His heart's desire, instead of allowing any persons, doctrines, philosophies, or practices to be an object of our attention, we must concentrate wholly on Christ as our center and enjoy Him exclusively as our portion.

Because the division among the Corinthians was caused by the appreciation of one minister of Christ over others, Paul beseeches them through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to "speak the same thing" and be "attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion" (1:10). Paul not only beseeches the Corinthians through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the name above every name (Phil. 2:9), but also goes on to remind them that they have been baptized into the name of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:13). F. F. Bruce points out that "to be baptized into the name of Christ is hardly distinguishable from being 'baptized into Christ' (Gal. 3:27; cf. Rom. 6:3), i.e. being incorporated into him (cf. 1 C. 12.13)" (33). Here Paul highlights both Christ's unique name and the believers' union with Him, because in order to keep the oneness and avoid divisions, the believers must partake of Christ as their common portion through their union with Him. The way to keep the oneness of the Body of Christ is not to compromise by accepting one another's differences in the natural life. Rather, it is to participate in Christ as the life-giving Spirit, thereby allowing Him to saturate our inward parts and be manifested through our outward speaking. Consequently, we will be in genuine harmony and one accord, possessing the same mind—the mind of Christ—and the same opinion—the opinion that expresses His thoughts—to speak the same thing, that is, Christ, the unique subject and content of the New Testament ministry (Acts 1:14; 4:32; Rom. 12:16; 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 2:2). Hence, through our joint partaking of Christ, we not only eliminate divisions but also become the reality of the unique Body of Christ, the corporate expression of Christ wrought into the believers.

Conclusion

In addressing the many specific problems that confronted the Corinthian believers, many of which we might also confront today, the apostle Paul applies the all-inclusive Christ as the unique solution to every problem in their Christian life and church life. At the outset of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul points them to their being called into the fellowship of God's Son, that is, into the mutual participation in the Son. The intrinsic significance of the fellowship of God's Son frames the central message of 1 Corinthians. The fellowship of God's Son into which we have been called is the enjoyment of this person in an organic and coinhering union with Him, through which we become one with Him in our inner being, living, and service. In our experience the fellowship of the Son is presented to us as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of the Body of Christ. The fellowship of the Son is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit because Christ the Son passed through a process of incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit, who is mingled with our spirit in order to make the person and work of Christ real to us. The fellowship of the Son is the fellowship of the Body of Christ because through death and resurrection Christ produced His mystical Body, which is comprised of many members. As those who are organically joined to Christ as the Head and to one another as fellow members, we should focus on Him as our unique center, feast on Him as our common portion, minister Him as the life supply to one another, and thereby become His unique, enlarged expression. The fellowship of the Son is the believers' joint partaking of Him as the life-giving Spirit in their regenerated spirit for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ as His organic corporate expression. Such a rich fellowship is able to transform soulish, fleshly, and fleshy believers, who are self-centered, individualistic, and divisive, into persons who, following the pattern of the apostle Paul, participate in

IN ADDRESSING
THE MANY PROBLEMS
THAT CONFRONTED
THE CORINTHIAN
BELIEVERS, THE APOSTLE
PAUL APPLIES THE
ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
AS THE UNIQUE
SOLUTION TO EVERY
PROBLEM IN THEIR
CHRISTIAN LIFE
AND CHURCH LIFE.

MAY THE FAITHFUL
GOD WHO HAS
CALLED US INTO THE
FELLOWSHIP OF HIS
SON PRESERVE US
IN THIS FELLOWSHIP
UNTIL IN HIS
FAITHFULNESS HE
WILL CONFIRM US,
MAKING US
UNREPROVABLE IN
THE DAY OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Christ's inward parts through their organic union with Him by walking in the mingled spirit to become those who care for the Body of Christ, living in the consciousness of the Body, building up the Body, and keeping the oneness of the Body.

May the faithful God who has called us into the fellowship of His Son preserve us in this fellowship until in His faithfulness He will confirm us, making us unreprouvable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:8). Every genuine believer has been called by God into the fellowship of His Son. May we be shown mercy by the Lord to be faithful to heed God's call to remain in the fellowship of His Son, abiding in an organic union with Him by contacting Him as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, so that we may build up the Body of Christ in reality and oneness for the accomplishment of God's purpose to have the Body of Christ as the expanded expression of His beloved Son. **LFC**

Works Cited

- Alford, Henry. *The New Testament for English Readers*. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983. Print.
- Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1949. Print.
- Bruce, F. F. *1 and 2 Corinthians*. London: Oliphants, 1971. Print.
- Campbell, J. Y. "KOINONIA and Its Cognates in the New Testament." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51.4 (1932): 352-380. Print.
- Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. Print.
- . *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.
- . *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007. Print.
- Furnish, Victor Paul. "Paul and the Corinthians: The Letters, the Challenges of Ministry, the Gospel." *Interpretation* 52.3. (1998): 229-245. Print.
- Gaffin, Richard B., Jr. *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1978. Print.
- Häuser, Götz Ludwig. *Communion with Christ and Christian Community in 1 Corinthians: A Study of Paul's Concept of Koinonia*. Durham E-Theses. Durham University, 1992. Web. 8 Jan. 2014. <<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/767/>>.
- Hollander, Harm W. "The Idea of Fellowship in 1 Corinthians 10.14-22" *New Testament Studies* 55: 456-470. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. Print.
- The Jerusalem Bible. Garden City: Doubleday, 1966.
- Lee, Witness. Footnotes. Recovery Version of the Bible. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 2003. Print.
- . *Life-study of 1 Corinthians*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1984. Print.
- Milne, Bruce. *We Belong Together: The Meaning of Fellowship*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1978. Print.
- Murray, Andrew. *The Lord's Table: A Help to the Right Observance of the Holy Supper*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1897. *Google Book Search*. Web. 22 Feb. 2014.
- Nee, Watchman. *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*. Vol. 13. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1992. Print.
- Panikulam, George. *Koinōnia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979. *Google Book Search*. Web. 12 Mar. 2014.
- Vine, W. E. *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine*. Vol. 2. Glasgow: Gospel Tract Publications, 1985. Print.