

The Crystallization THE APOSTLES' ORGANIC TEACHING

The apostles' teaching is an organic component of the economy of God which is the unique focus of the New Testament. The healthy teachings of the apostles contain, convey, and impart the divine life of the Triune God as the unsearchable riches of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ. As such, the apostles' teaching—the unique, divine revelation in the New Testament—concerns three organic persons: the Triune God, the all-inclusive Christ, and the church as the organic Body of Christ. These three persons are intrinsically related to life. The Triune God is a living Being full of life (1 John 1:2; John 11:25; Rom. 8:2), whose very life has been made available to His redeemed and regenerated tripartite elect through Christ's wonderful process of incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection (Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25; John 10:10-11, 15, 28; Rom. 5:10; 2 Tim. 1:10). Now Christ is our life (Col. 3:4), and because He lives we also can live (John 14:19; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 4:9), not merely as individuals but as blended members of His organic Body (1 Cor. 12:12, 24, 27; Eph. 3:6).

The source of the apostles' strictness in regard to their teaching is the merciful and loving imperative within God's heart to impart His divine life. In order to be identified as the apostles' teaching, which believers should allow rather than refuse (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2 John 9-11; Titus 3:9-10), our teaching must further God's economy through the release of the divine life in healthy words, healthy speech, and healthy teachings.

Healthy teaching, teaching that is in line with and faithful to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42; Titus 1:9), ministers the supply of life to the members of God's household, nourishing them and healing them. Healthy words and healthy speech are filled with and dispense the divine life to others. The divine revelation of God's economy in the New Testament is actually a body of healthy teachings—teachings that bring us into contact with the living God and dispense the life and reality of God into us through healthy words and speech. Any teaching that distracts the believers from the center and goal of God's economy is not, and cannot ever be, healthy. Instead of nourishing and healing the believers, those who teach different things sow seeds of death and poison into others, spreading germs of doctrinal diseases, which deprive the children of God of the truth, lead them into degradation, and contribute to, or even directly cause, spiritual death.

In contrast to such teachings, Paul's teaching in Ephesians is intrinsically and organically related to the economy of God. His explicit and implicit presentation of his teaching effectively demonstrates that the economy of God is the source, content, and issue of his teaching. Paul's example should govern our teaching because apart from our participation in the economy of God our words and teaching will be winds that toss and carry the believers away from the goal of the building up of the Body of Christ.

Sadly, there are many contemporary teachings which carry away and distract believers from the economy of God. These teachings do not reveal, impart, or reproduce the living God within the members of the Body of Christ. Instead, many genuine believers are led astray, some naively and others willfully to satisfy their itching ears, by teachings that merely emphasize ethics and law-keeping, Christian psychology, entertainment, doctrines, signs and wonders, outward forms, rituals, and liturgies. In addition, teachings that promote the pursuit of gifts distract believers from the living Christ; teachings about end-time prophecies and heaven enervate the Body in its pursuit of Christ; and teachings about prosperity inflame the believers' hearts for mammon rather than Christ. Other teachings, equally as damaging to the economy of God, also abound.

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, and it stands on the word that is firm in its presentation of the economy of God (2 Tim. 2:19; 2 Pet. 1:10). This economy is succinctly presented in 1 Corinthians 6:17, which unfolds God's good desire to have an organic union with man through the mingling of the divine Spirit and the human spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ as the corporate expression of the Triune God. There is an organic relationship between the economy of God and the teaching of the apostles: The organic link is the Triune God Himself. The economy of God is the Triune God; it is God actively coming to man. And the teaching of the apostles is the economy of God being carried out in all wisdom and prudence, applying and imparting the Triune God into the saints for the building up of the Body of Christ.

by the Editors