

# **NORDIC-BALTIC ONLINE CONFERENCE**

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Hosted by the churches in Norway

Outlines

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**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE LOCAL CHURCHES**

Message One

**The Body of Christ—the Intrinsic Significance of the Church**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:4, 16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27

- I. The economy of God is for the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 3:9-11; 4:16:**
  - A. The eternal economy of God is to produce an organic Body to be an organism to God for His increase and expression by God becoming man that man might become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5.
  - B. We are here to carry out God's eternal economy with the purpose of gaining the Body for His Son, Christ, and this Body has to be consolidated into the local churches—Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
- II. All the problems of the church today are due to ignorance concerning the Body of Christ; we need a spirit of wisdom and revelation with the enlightening of the eyes of our heart to see the Body—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:24b-27; Eph. 1:17-23.**
- III. The church as the house of God, the kingdom of God, and the bride of Christ takes the Body of Christ as its intrinsic factor; the Body is the church, the house of God, the kingdom of God, and the counterpart of Christ—1 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 19:7.**
- IV. The Body is the intrinsic significance of the church—1 Cor. 12:27; 1:2:**
  - A. Without the Body of Christ, the church is lifeless and is a mere human organization—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1, 16b.
  - B. The church without the Body means nothing; if there were no Body, the church would have no meaning.
- V. The highest peak of the Lord's recovery that can really, practically, and actually carry out God's economy is for God to produce not many local churches in a physical way but an organic Body to be His organism—Gal. 1:2; Eph. 4:4, 16:**
  - A. The local churches are mainly physical, but they should be for something spiritual, and this spiritual thing is the Body of Christ—Rom. 16:4, 16; 12:4-5.
  - B. The local churches are not the goal of God's economy but a procedure to reach God's goal—the universal Body of Christ—1 Cor. 14:33b; Col. 2:19.
  - C. Eventually, the local churches will be over, and only the Body of Christ will remain forever as the unique tabernacle of God and the unique bride of the Lamb—Rev. 21:2-3, 9.
- VI. Since the Body of Christ is uniquely one universally, the fellowship of the Body of Christ is also uniquely one universally—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3, 7; 1 Cor. 10:16-17:**
  - A. Just as there is the circulation of blood in the human body, so there is a circulation in the Body of Christ—a circulation which the New Testament calls fellowship—1 John 1:3, 7.
  - B. The fellowship of the Body of Christ is the stream of the divine life; as the stream of the divine life flows within us, there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3, 7.
  - C. The divine fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ; by being restricted in this fellowship, the Body of Christ is kept in oneness—1 Cor. 1:9; 12:12-13, 27.
  - D. The unique fellowship of the Body of Christ is related to the unique oneness of the Body of Christ—6:17; 10:16-17; 12:20:

1. The fellowship, the circulation, of the divine life in the Body brings all the members of the Body into oneness—Eph. 4:3-6.
  2. This oneness is the oneness of the Spirit and also the oneness of the Body of Christ—vv. 3-4; 1 Cor. 12:12-13.
  3. The unique fellowship is the genuine oneness of the Body of Christ as the unique ground for the believers to be kept one in Christ—Eph. 4:3-6.
- E. The fellowship among the churches is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16-17:
1. Because there is one Spirit, there is only one Body, and there is only one circulation of life in the Body; this circulation is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:4; 1 John 1:3, 7.
  2. A local church is a part of the unique Body of Christ, and the fellowship of the Body is universally one; in fellowship there is no separation—Rev. 1:11; 2:7a.
  3. No church or region should isolate itself from the fellowship of the Body.
  4. The local churches should fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Col. 4:16.
  5. Among all the churches that compose the one universal Body of Christ, there is no organization, but there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Phil. 1:5.

## Message Two

### **The Unique Body of Christ Expressed as the Local Churches**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:22-23; 2:22; Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1, 4, 16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:16; 12:13, 27

#### **I. God's economy as God's plan, His administration, is to produce a Body for His Son—Eph. 3:9; 1:22-23:**

- A. The Body of Christ fulfills God's desire for His expression and for the destruction of Satan—Gen. 1:26.
- B. The Lord has an urgent need on earth: He needs the reality of the Body to be expressed in the local churches—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27:
  - 1. What the Lord wants today is not only the churches on the ground of locality—one locality, one church—but also the Body as His fullness.
  - 2. Unless there is a substantial expression of the Body, the Lord Jesus will not return—Eph. 1:23; 4:16; 5:27, 30; Rev. 19:7.

#### **II. The Lord's recovery is based upon the truth that Christ has only one Body—Eph. 1:23; 4:4:**

- A. The one Body is the one church of God manifested in many localities as many local churches—1 Cor. 10:32b; Rev. 1:11, 4.
- B. The recovery is for the Body, not for any individual or merely for any individual local church—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19.
- C. To know the Body is the proper recovery of the Lord; the Lord desires to recover the Body of Christ and the oneness of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:4.
- D. All the problems of the church today are due to ignorance concerning the Body; the biggest problem is not knowing the Body and not caring for the Body.

#### **III. A local church is an expression of the Body of Christ in a certain locality—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32b, 17; 12:12-13, 20, 27:**

- A. The church revealed in Matthew 16:18 is the universal church, the unique Body of Christ, whereas the church revealed in 18:17 is the local church, the expression of the unique Body of Christ in a certain locality.
- B. The one universal church—the Body of Christ—becomes the many local churches—local expressions of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:16.
- C. The unique Body of Christ is expressed in many localities as the local churches—Eph. 4:4; Rev. 1:4, 11:
  - 1. The Body is the source of the local churches—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22.
  - 2. The universal Body is like the father to all the churches, and all the churches are like the children to the father—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:4.

#### **IV. All the local churches are the unique Body of Christ in the universe—Eph. 4:4:**

- A. Every local church is part of the unique, universal Body of Christ, a local expression of this Body—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
- B. Universally, all the local churches are one Body, and locally, every local church is a local expression of the universal Body; therefore, a local church is not the Body but only a part of the Body, an expression of the Body.
- C. The universal Christ has a part of Himself in every local church; every local church is a part of Christ, and all these parts constitute the Body—Eph. 1:23; 2:22.

**V. For the church to be real and practical, there is the need of the local churches—Matt. 16:18; 18:17:**

- F. Without the local churches we cannot have the universal church, for the universal church is composed of all the local churches.
- G. We cannot live directly in the universal church; it is impossible for us to live in the universal church without living in a local church—Rev. 1:11; 2:1.

**VI. The local ground of the church is basically the unique oneness of the Body of Christ practiced in the local churches—Eph. 4:4; 1 Thes. 1:1:**

- A. Both the universal Body of Christ and the local churches are uniquely one.
- B. There is one unique Body in the whole universe, and there is one unique local church in each locality respectively.
- C. This unique oneness is the basic element in the church life—Acts 1:14; 2:46; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; 2:1-2.

**VII. The churches in different localities are for the universal expression of Christ—Eph. 1:23; Rev. 1:4, 11; 22:16a.**

- A. The churches are local, but they do not express a “local” Christ.
- B. A local church that makes everything local and that expresses only its locality has become a local sect, a local division.
- C. All the basic things for the Body are not local—the Spirit, Christ, God, the Bible, the apostles’ teaching, and the apostles’ fellowship.

**VIII. In our consideration the Body should be first and the local churches should be second—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph. 4:4, 16; 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 12:12; 1:2:**

- A. Local churches are the procedure God takes to reach the goal of His economy—the Body of Christ—Rom. 16:1, 4, 16; 12:4-5.
- B. We must pay more attention to the Body of Christ than to the local churches.
- C. Our thought needs to be revolutionized: We should consider our local church as a part of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:16-17; 12:12-13, 20, 27.

Message Three

**The Church of God—the Church in the Triune God**

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16; 1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1

**I. The church is the church of God—“the church of God which is in Corinth”—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16:**

- A. The expression *the church of God* indicates not only that the church is possessed by God but also that the church has the nature of God, that it is constituted with the element of God:
  - 1. The church is *of* God because it is produced of God as the source and has God as its nature and essence, which are divine, universal, and eternal.
  - 2. God is the nature and essence of the church; therefore, the church is divine.
  - 3. The content of the church essentially is God Himself.
- B. First Corinthians 1:2a speaks of “the church of God which is in Corinth”:
  - 1. The church in Corinth could be called the church of God because the divine essence which makes the assembled believers the church of God was actually there.
  - 2. The locality of Corinth was for the existence, expression, and practice of the church; such a locality becomes the local ground of the local churches on which they are built respectively—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11.
  - 3. The church is constituted of the universal God, but it exists on earth in many localities:
    - a. In nature the church is universal in God, but in practice the church is local in a definite place.
    - b. The church has two aspects—the universal and the local—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22:
      - (1) Without the universal aspect, the church is void of content.
      - (2) Without the local aspect, it is impossible for the church to have any expression and practice.
- C. A genuine church is of God, on its local ground, and with the saints as the constituents—1 Cor. 1:2:
  - 1. Those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, are the constituents of the framework of the church.
  - 2. *To the church of God equals to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus*; this indicates that the church is a composition of the saints and that the saints are the constituents of the church.
- D. A genuine church is related with all the saints who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place around the globe—v. 2:
  - 1. We are related by God to every kind of Christian, and no matter where we are, we cannot be isolated from them.
  - 2. Being related with all the saints keeps us from being sectarian, isolated, or divided.
- E. The genuine church has been called by God the Father into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ—v. 9:
  - 1. In this fellowship we partake of and enjoy the Son of God as the embodiment of the Triune God—Col. 2:9.
  - 2. In order to call us into the fellowship of the Son, the Triune God passed through a process—the Father’s selecting, the Son’s redeeming, and the Spirit’s sealing—Eph. 1:3-14.

## II. The church is in the Triune God—"the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"—1 Thes. 1:1:

- A. In 1 Thessalonians 1:1 we have the revelation of the tremendous fact that the church is in the unique God and that this God is our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
  - 1. The church is not only of God and of Christ; the church is in God and in Christ.
  - 2. It is important for us to see that the church in our locality is of God and in God, of Christ and in Christ.
- B. For the church to be in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ means that the church is in the Triune God—Matt. 28:19.
- C. The church is composed of human beings, but they, the believers, are in the Triune God—1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1.
- D. The church is a group of human beings who have been born of God the Father with His life and nature and who have been brought into the organic union with Christ:
  - 1. For the church to be in God, God must become our Father, and we must have a life-relationship with Him—1 John 3:1a:
    - a. In 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the word *Father* indicates a relationship in life; in God the Father, we have been born again, regenerated, and now, as His children, we have a life-relationship with Him—John 1:12-13.
    - b. The church being in God the Father implies that the church is in God's purpose, plan, selection, and predestination—Eph. 1:4-5.
    - c. The church in God the Father is the church in the One who is the unique initiator and originator—Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Matt. 15:13.
  - 2. To be in the Lord Jesus Christ is to be united with Christ organically in all that He is and has done—1 Thes. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:30:
    - a. In the Lord Jesus Christ we have the termination of everything of the old creation, for to be in Christ is to be in His death, the death which terminates all negative things—Rom. 6:4.
    - b. The title *Christ* in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 denotes all the riches of resurrection; thus, to be in Christ is to be in resurrection—Rom. 8:10-11.
- E. The church is in the processed Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the One who has become the life-giving Spirit with the Father and the Son—1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:17, 23.
- F. If we see that the church is in the Triune God, we will be different both in our concept and in our activity—Isa. 55:8-9; Eph. 1:17-18a; Col. 1:9, 29.



Message Four

**Practicing the Church Life  
in the Consciousness of the Body of Christ**

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2, 9; 10:16-17; 12:12-27

- I. The local churches are many in existence but are still one Body universally in element—Gal. 1:2; Eph. 4:4:**
- A. In element all the churches are one; we are one church, one Body, one new man, and thus we cannot be autonomous—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; 2:15.
  - B. In the spiritual element all the churches should be blended together as one.
  - C. In the eyes of the Lord, all the churches are one; the Lord has only one Body—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23.
  - D. All the churches are and should be one Body universally, doctrinally, and practically—1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33b; 16:1.
- II. In the church life we should learn to have the consciousness of the Body; as members of the Body, we should have a feeling for the Body—1 Cor. 12:12-27:**
- A. In order to have the Body life, we must care for our fellow members and must be full of feeling for the Body—Rom 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:26-27.
  - B. We should take the feeling of the Head as our own feeling—Acts 9:4-5:
    - 1. Paul took care of the Body of Christ by taking Christ's feeling as his own feeling; Christ's feeling became his feeling for the Body—Phil. 1:8.
    - 2. If we as members have the feeling of the Head in everything and care for the Body, we will take the Body as the rule in our mind, thoughts, words, and actions—Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19.
  - C. Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individual thought and action are ruled out.
  - D. We should deny ourselves and identify ourselves with the Body—Matt. 16:24; Rom 12:4-5, 15; 1 Cor 1:2; 12:12-27:
    - 1. By doing this, there will be no separation or disconnection from the Body.
    - 2. If we do this, the life we live will fully be the Body life, and the Lord will gain the expression of the Body—Eph. 4:15-16; 1:22-23.
  - E. Our enjoyment of Christ causes us to become conscious of the Body of Christ—Col. 2:16-17, 19:
    - 1. What we enjoy of Christ is actually something of the Head; thus, when we enjoy Christ, He causes us to become conscious of the Body.
    - 2. The more we enjoy Christ, the more intense is our desire for the Body.
    - 3. Since the Christ we enjoy as our everything is the Head of the Body, the more we enjoy Him, the more we become Body-conscious.
- III. Whatever we do involves the Body; therefore, whenever we do something, we must have a proper consideration of the Body—2 Cor. 8:21; Eph. 4:16:**
- A. We should not do anything without taking care of the Body—1 Cor. 12:12-27.
  - B. We need to consider how the Body would feel about what we are doing and consider how the Body, the recovery, will react.
  - C. How we behave ourselves depends upon the degree of our seeing the Body.
  - D. If we are in one accord only in our local church and do not care for the other churches, this kind of one accord is a sect, a division—Acts 1:14; 15:25.
  - E. If we take care of the Body and are concerned for the Body, there will be no problems—Eph. 4:4, 16.

- IV. Among all the churches that compose the one universal Body of Christ, there is no organization, but there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16-17; 11:29:**
- A. All the churches on earth are one Body, and within this one Body, there is the circulation of the divine life—the fellowship of the Body—1 John 1:3.
  - B. Fellowship is related to oneness; the circulation of the divine life in the Body brings all the members of the Body into oneness—Eph. 4:3-4; Rom. 16:1-23.
  - C. The local churches should fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ.
  - D. Any local church that does not keep the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ is divisive and becomes a sect.
  - E. If we realize what the fellowship among the churches is, we shall not have the concept that a local church should be altogether independent:
    - 1. According to the nature, essence, and intrinsic element of the church, no local church can be independent; to be independent is to be in darkness.
    - 2. Whoever has the intention, either consciously or unconsciously, to separate his area from the fellowship of the Body of Christ eventually will suffer darkness, confusion, division, and death.
  - F. Although the administration of the church is separate and equal locally (Acts 14:23), the fellowship of the church is one universally; there are separate churches in many cities, but there is one fellowship in the entire universe.
  - G. If we isolate ourselves from the fellowship of the Body, we are not qualified to partake of the Lord's body, because the one loaf on the table in the Lord's supper signifies the entire Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:29:
    - 1. Our joint partaking of the one bread makes us all one; this indicates that our partaking of Christ makes us all His one Body—10:17.
    - 2. When we come together to partake of the Lord's table, we need to realize that the bread, the loaf, signifies all the churches—11:29:
      - a. If the church in our locality or the churches in a particular region are isolated from the fellowship of the Body, we lose the ground and also the right to partake of this loaf.
      - b. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we come to practice the fellowship of the Body—10:16.
- V. All the local churches should be absolutely one in the realm of five crucial things: 1) the growth of life for the testimony of Jesus Christ; 2) the preaching of the gospel; 3) the spreading of the Lord's recovery; 4) the building up of the Body of Christ; and 5) the accomplishment of God's eternal economy—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19; Matt. 24:14; Eph. 3:9; 1:10.**

## Message Five

### Overcomers Keeping the Principles of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:3-6; Phil. 1:19; 1 Cor. 12:12-22; Col. 2:19; Rom. 15:6; Psa. 133

- VII. The overcomers are Body conscious and Body centered; they are daily saved in Christ's life by the Spirit through the work of the cross from every aspect of the self, the enemy of the Body—Rom. 5:10; Matt. 16:24; cf. *Hymns*, #280.**
- VIII. The overcomers see the Body, know the Body, care for the Body, honor the Body, and do the work of the Body; they keep every principle of the Body of Christ, as the continuation and extension of Christ on earth, for the full expression of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 3:18-19; 4:1-6:**
- A. We must see the crystallized significance of the Body of Christ; this crystallized significance is that the Triune God and His chosen and redeemed people are constituted into one entity, which is the Body of Christ—vv. 4-6:
    - 1. The oneness of the Body is the oneness of the Triune God, and the coordination of the Body is the coordination of the Triune God—John 17:21; Eph. 4:3-6; Matt. 12:28; Heb. 9:14; Psa. 133.
    - 2. This oneness and coordination are in the Spirit, who is the reality of the Triune God and of the Body; since this Spirit is in our spirit, whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do must be by the Spirit in our spirit for the Body—John 16:13-15; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 1:9; Eph. 4:1-4a.
  - B. We must receive and enjoy the supply of the Body—Phil. 1:19; Col. 2:19:
    - 1. Because the Head is Christ, and the Body is also Christ, to refuse the help of our fellow members is to refuse the help of Christ; therefore, we must allow the members of the Body to minister to our needs—1 Cor. 12:12-22.
    - 2. The prayer of the Body renders the life supply, the supply of the Body, to the members in need so that they may live Christ for His magnification—Phil. 1:19-20; Acts 12:5, 12; Eph. 6:18-20; 1 Thes. 5:25.
    - 3. The fellowship of the Body renders the life supply, the supply of the Body, to the members in need so that they may enjoy Christ as the light of life for His glorification—1 John 1:3-5; John 1:4-5; Phil. 2:15; Isa. 60:1, 3, 5.
  - C. We must experience the protection, limitation, and ministry of the Body:
    - 1. The Body of Christ puts on the whole armor of God, which is the totality of all the specialties of the members; spiritual warfare is an integrated warfare of all the members, not the isolated warfare of individuals, so we must all hide under the Body's protection and accept its safeguard—Eph. 6:10-20; Matt. 16:18; Exo. 17:11-13; Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33; Deut. 32:30a.
    - 2. As members of the Body, we must see our position in the Body and allow ourselves to be limited by the other members; we must be delivered from our individualistic life and function in the Body according to God's will and measure—1 Cor. 12:14-22; Eph. 4:7, 16; 2 Cor. 10:13-15.
    - 3. As members of the Body, we should fellowship and function in the Body to be channels of life to supply the other members; this kind of supply is the ministry, the function, of the members so that the life of the Body can flow in an unhindered way—1 John 1:3; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 14:4b, 31.
  - D. We must honor Christ as the Head of the Body, the authority in the Body; the authority of the Head is the oneness of the Body—Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16:

1. The Lord has given us His life of submission to the Father; when we are filled with Christ as the Spirit of life, we are filled with Him as our submission—John 5:19, 30; 7:18; Phil. 2:5-8; Rom. 8:2; cf. Exo. 21:1-6.
2. The Spirit is the “nerve fiber” of the Body of Christ, carrying the thoughts of the Head to all the members; when we yield to the authority of the Spirit, we are yielding to the Head—Rom. 8:27, 6; 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:30.
3. Since the Christ we enjoy as our everything is the Head of the Body, the more we enjoy Him, the more we become Body conscious and the more we love the other members of the Body—Col. 1:4, 8; 2:19.
4. Since we are members of the Body of Christ, we should have a feeling for the Body, taking the feeling of the Head as our own feeling—Phil. 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:25b-26.
5. Only the Lord is our Head, and only He has the authority to direct the moves of the members of His Body—Acts 2:36; 9:5; Col. 1:17-18.
6. Because Christ is our Head, we do not exalt ourselves and do not seek to please ourselves or others; we seek to please Him alone—2 Cor. 4:5; 5:9.
7. We hold Christ as our Head by giving Him the preeminence in all things and staying intimately connected to Him by consulting Him in all things, growing up into the Head in all things for the growth of the Body, and functioning out from the Head by all means for the supply of the Body—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.
8. When we hold Christ as the Head, we cannot have different interpretations of the Scriptures, because the Body has one mouth to speak the same thing that the Head speaks; the unique teaching of the Head is the teaching of God’s economy by the one ministry for the building up of the Body—Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 4:12.
9. The mutual relationship of the members of the Body passes through the Head first; thus, when we hold the Head, we cannot have a natural relationship or special fellowship with any individual or group; when we hold the Head, we are blended together, and our relationship with the Body is out from the Head in the divine oneness—1 Cor. 12:24-25; Phil. 2:2.

**IX. Everything we have is in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body; may the Lord have mercy upon us and grace us in making a resolution to be the overcomers who keep every principle of the Body for the building up of the Body to consummate the New Jerusalem—Judg. 5:15-16; Rev. 21:2.**