

WEEK 8 — OUTLINE

The Local Ground of the Church

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 8:1; 13:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:11

<< DAY 1 & DAY 2 >>

I. The ground of the church is the key to knowing the church in today's chaotic situation; in order to know the church, we must recognize the ground of the church (Matt. 16:18; 18:17).

II. We need to know the difference between the ground of the church and the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 1:2; 3:10):

- A. The foundation is the lowest part of a building; the ground is the base, the site, where the building is placed.
- B. Since the church is the dwelling place of God, the building of God, it needs not only a foundation but also a ground, a site; this site is the locality in which the church is established (1:2; Rev. 1:11).

III. The ground is much more important to a local church than its condition (1 Cor. 1:2, 11-13):

- A. Condition is relative and may change, but the ground is absolute and cannot be altered.
- B. The assessment of a church should never be based on its spiritual condition but on its ground.
- C. Whether a church is proper, or genuine, does not depend on the condition of the church but on the ground of the church.

IV. 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 Cor. 1:2; 12:27):

- A. Both the universal Body of Christ and the local churches are uniquely one.
- B. The Body is universal, and this universal Body has only one expression in a city; thus, there should be only one church in a city (Rev. 1:11; Acts 8:1; 13:1).
- C. There is one unique Body of Christ in the universe, and there is one unique local church in each locality; this unique oneness is the basic element of the church life:

<< DAY 3 >>

1. The organic Body is undivided and indivisible; this unique Body is expressed in many local churches in the divine oneness as it is with the Triune God and in the divine nature, element, essence, expression, function, and testimony (Rev. 1:11; John 17:11, 21, 23).
2. There are many local churches, yet they all have one divine nature, one divine element, one divine essence, one divine expression, one divine function, and one divine testimony because they are one Body (Rev. 1:11-12, 20).

V. According to the divine revelation in the New Testament, the church ground is constituted of three crucial elements:

- A. The first element of the constitution of the church ground is the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ, which is called “the oneness of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3)—the oneness for which the Lord prayed in John 17:
 1. Since the oneness of the Body of Christ is the oneness of the Spirit, the oneness practiced in a local church must be in the move of the Spirit and under the government of the Spirit.
 2. The church ground on which a local church is built must be constituted with and prevail in the oneness executed by the Spirit.
- B. The second element of the church ground is the unique ground of the locality in which a local church is established and exists (Rev. 1:11; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5):
 1. In the New Testament the proper ground of oneness ordained by God is the unique ground of one church for one locality (Rev. 1:11).

<< DAY 4 >>

2. The New Testament presents a clear picture that all the local churches—as the expression of the universal church, the universal Body of Christ—are located in their respective cities (Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:4, 11):
 - a. The churches are established in different cities by taking a city as the boundary and ground of each local church.
 - b. The sphere and limit of a local church must be exactly the same as that of the city in which it is located (v. 11; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).
3. The church is constituted of the universal God, but it exists on earth in many localities; in nature the church is universal in God, but in practice the church is local in a definite place, such as “the church of God which is in Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2).
- C. The third element of the church ground is the reality of the Spirit of oneness, that is, the reality of the Spirit, who is the living reality of the Divine Trinity (1 John 5:6; John 16:13):
 1. It is by this Spirit that the oneness of the Body of Christ becomes real and living.

2. It is by this Spirit that the ground of locality is applied in life and not in legality.
3. It is by this Spirit that the genuine ground of the church is linked with the Triune God (Eph. 4:3-6).

« DAY 5 »

VI. We need to see that the ground of the church, the genuine ground of oneness, is intrinsically related to life (Psa. 133:1, 3; 36:8-9):

- A. The eternal life of God is commanded by God as a blessing to those who dwell together in oneness in the church life (John 3:16; Eph. 4:18; Psa. 133:1, 3).
- B. Life is the essence of oneness; without life, there can be no oneness (John 10:10b, 16b).
- C. The oneness in God's economy, the great oneness revealed in entirety in the Scriptures, can be preserved only by life.
- D. The only way that oneness can be maintained is by life, in life, and with life (Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11; 12:4-5; 15:6).

« DAY 6 »

VII. In the Lord's recovery, we take the lead to stand on the unique ground of the church, the genuine ground of oneness (Matt. 16:18; 18:17):

- A. First Corinthians 1:2 speaks of the church at Corinth—this shows the locality of Corinth 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; thus, the church in Corinth was built on the ground of the city of Corinth.
- B. The practice of the church life in the early days was the practice of having one church for one city, one city with only one church; in no city was there more than one church (Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11):
 1. This is the local church with the city, not the street or area, as the unit.
 2. The jurisdiction of a local church should cover the whole city in which the church is located; it should not be greater or lesser than the boundary of the city.
 3. All the believers within that boundary should constitute the one unique local church within that city.
- C. We need to realize that the church today must be in oneness and must be built on the ground of oneness (Eph. 4:3; 1 Cor. 1:2):
 1. The genuine oneness is the ground of the church.
 2. May the Lord grant us more light concerning this precious oneness.

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.

[The ground of the church] can be said to be the key to knowing the church in today's chaotic situation. If someone desires to know the church, he must know the ground of the church.

Every matter, whether according to fact or according to principle, depends first on its ground and then on its condition....Condition and ground are two separate matters. (Lessons for New Believers, p. 213)

Today's Reading

In determining the correctness of a church, the matter of condition is secondary; the primary matter is the ground. Sadly, people's knowledge of the church is mainly based on the condition of the church, and they neglect the ground of the church. When speaking concerning a certain Christian group, they feel that there is no problem if the people are zealous, holy, and spiritual. This is to know the church based on condition, not on the ground. This is dangerous.

Condition is relative, but the ground is absolute. Some may say that a Christian group has no problem because its condition is good. However, condition is a relative matter because there is no standard for measuring a good or bad condition.

Moreover, conditions may change. Someone may not love the Lord today, but perhaps tomorrow he will love the Lord very much. A particular group may not be spiritual today, but next year they will become very spiritual. Therefore, the assessment of a church can never be based on its spiritual condition but on its ground. Its ground is absolute and can never change.

This does not mean that we should not be spiritual and good. We need to ask the Lord for His mercy that our condition would progress and improve day by day. Whether a church is proper does not depend on its condition but on the ground of the church.

Let me say a few solemn words. If the Lord delays His coming, we will one day go to the Lord, and this testimony will spontaneously fall on the shoulders of the young ones. If we do not stand firm on the ground of the church with absolutely no deviation, these young ones will be confused regarding the church. Not only so, there will be divisions among us. If this word is tragically fulfilled one day, please remember that the reason for such a division is that we have paid attention to spirituality and put the ground aside.

In regard to knowing the church, if we depart from the ground and focus our attention on anything else, regardless of how good it is, danger awaits us in the future. Sooner or later, there will be division. No doubt we should pay attention to spirituality and the pursuit of life, but we should set our pursuing feet firmly on the ground of the church. This is our safeguard against any division. Whenever our hearts pursue spirituality and our feet are set on spirituality, division will follow. Once we leave the ground, our pursuing and our spirituality will turn into something dangerous.

I do not know if these words are clear enough. Whether a church is proper does not depend on its condition but on the ground. If the ground is correct, the church is proper even if the condition is poor. If the ground is not correct, the church is improper no matter how good and spiritual its condition is. This is a crucial point.

This matter is not for ourselves; it is for God's recovery at the end of this age. A strong recovery involves fierce warfare. We must see that the ground is much more important to the church than its condition. If we desire to know the church, we must know the ground of the church. (Lessons for New Believers, pp. 214-216)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1965, vol. 2, "The Ground of the Church and the Meetings of the Church," ch. 1; The Ground of the Church and the Service of the Body, chs. 2-3

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place...

3:10 According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. But let each man take heed how he builds upon it.

The church must have a ground. What do we mean by the ground? The ground is where something is placed...The church, being something so great in the universe, needs a definite place, a site where it can be placed. The church is real, concrete, great, and weighty. In order for the church to be expressed in the universe, it must be on a site; this site is its ground. Without a ground, speaking of the church is vanity because there is no way for the church to be displayed. In order for the church to be displayed, there must be a ground. This is a principle, a law. (Lessons for New Believers, pp. 216-217)

Today's Reading

The Bible says that the church is a house built by God as His dwelling place. In order to build a house, there must be a base. This base is the ground. We must differentiate the base of a building from its foundation. The foundation is the lowest part of a building, but the base is the piece of land that is underneath the foundation. Therefore, as the house built by God, the church needs a ground.

When discussing the ground of the church with people, some quote 1 Corinthians 3:11, which says, "Another foundation no one is able to lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." From this verse they concluded that the Lord Jesus is the ground of the church. Their speaking has confused the ground with the foundation. The ground and the foundation are two absolutely different things. The foundation is the lowest part of a building, and the ground is the base upon which the building is placed. Since the church is the dwelling place of God, the building of God, it not only needs a foundation but also needs a ground.

Some people are "wandering" Christians; they do not belong anywhere but come and go from place to place. They are like the wandering stars spoken of in Jude 13....As a Christian, we need to be stable and settled. In order for us to be settled, we need a place, a ground. Because conditions change, we cannot be settled merely based on a condition. We can be settled only in a place. Therefore, both the church and even individual believers need a ground. (Lessons for New Believers, p. 217)

The local ground of the church is basically the unique oneness of the Body of Christ practiced in the local churches. Both the universal Body of Christ and the local churches are uniquely one. There is one unique Body of Christ in the whole universe, and there is one unique local church in each locality, respectively. This unique oneness is the basic element of the church life. (The Crucial Points of the Major Items of the Lord's Recovery Today, pp. 21-22)

Today the situation regarding the church is cloudy. But for us the sky is clear. We are members of the Body, and the Body is universal. This universal Body has just one expression in a city. Thus, there should be just one church in a city. It was this way in Jerusalem, in Antioch, and also in Ephesus. But it is not this way in our locality today. Therefore, we must exercise our discernment to discover who is meeting on the proper ground of oneness.

We need to be clear that the standing of the church does not depend upon any terms or conditions but only upon the ground of oneness. The ground of oneness is the ground of locality. Wherever we Christians are, we should be the church in that place. If we are in London, Paris, New York, or Los Angeles, we should simply be the church in that city. Today the situation is confused and divided. Thus, we need to be recovered back to the genuine oneness. The genuine oneness is the unique oneness, the oneness of the ground. (CWWL, 1977, vol. 3, "The Spirit and the Body," pp. 460-461)

Further Reading: Lessons for New Believers, lsn. 16; CWWL, 1977, vol. 3, "The Spirit and the Body," ch. 19

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 3 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

The organic Body is undivided and it is also indivisible (1 Cor. 1:13a). It is not autonomous. This unique Body of Christ is expressed in many local churches (Rev. 1:11) in the divine oneness as it is with the Triune God (John 17:11, 21, 23) and in the divine nature, element, essence, expression, function, and testimony. There are many churches, yet they have one divine nature, one divine element, one divine essence, one divine expression, one divine function, and one divine testimony because they are one Body. (The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ, p. 93)

Today's Reading

According to the divine revelation of the New Testament, the church ground is constituted of three crucial elements.

The first element of the constitution of the church ground is the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ, which is called “the oneness of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3). This is the oneness that the Lord prayed for in John 17. It is a oneness of the mingling of the processed Triune God with all the believers in Christ. This oneness is in the name of the Father (John 17:6, 11), denoting the Father’s person, in which is the Father’s life. This oneness is even in the Triune God through sanctification by His holy word as the truth (John 17:14-21). This oneness is ultimately in the divine glory for the expression of the Triune God (John 17:22-24). Such a oneness was imparted into the spirit of all the believers in Christ, in their regeneration by the Spirit of life with Christ as the divine life; this oneness has become the basic element of the church ground. (A Brief Presentation of the Lord’s Recovery, p. 28)

Since the oneness of the Body of Christ is the oneness of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3), the oneness practiced in a local church must be in the move of the Spirit and under the government of the Spirit. Hence, this Spirit is also a basic element of the church ground....The church ground on which a local church is built must be constituted with and prevail in the oneness executed by the Spirit and the oneness safeguarded by the locality. (The Crucial Points of the Major Items of the Lord’s Recovery Today, p. 22)

The second element of the church ground is the unique ground of the locality in which a local church is established and exists. The New Testament presents us a clear picture that all the local churches, as the expression of the universal church—the universal Body of Christ—are located in their respective cities. Hence, we see the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), the church in Antioch (Acts 13:1), the church in Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1), the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2), and the seven churches in Asia in seven respective cities (Rev. 1:4, 11). Every city as the boundary in which a church exists is the local ground of that church. Such a unique ground of locality preserves the church from being divided by many different matters as different grounds. (A Brief Presentation of the Lord’s Recovery, pp. 28-29)

All the believers in Christ are the components of the Body of Christ. Practically, they are scattered in many cities on this earth. Spontaneously, they are separated into many units in each city, respectively, according to their dwelling. According to the New Testament pattern set up and ordained by God and according to the principle of the New Testament revelation concerning God’s economy of the church, in each city in which the believers dwell, it is not allowed to have more than one unit as a local expression of the unique Body of Christ, nor is it permitted to have a local church in a certain city without the proper fellowship in the Body of Christ with the other local churches. (1993 Blending Conference Messages concerning the Lord’s Recovery and Our Present Need, p. 22)

Further Reading: Young People’s Training, chs. 14-15; The Crucial Points of the Major Items of the Lord’s Recovery Today, pp. 21-22

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.

The New Testament presents a clear picture that all the local churches as the expression of the universal church, the Body of Christ, are located in respective cities....Revelation 1:11 shows us the seven churches in Asia in seven respective cities. The city is the ground on which the church is built.

Actually, the many churches are simply the one universal church appearing in many cities. We may use the illustration of the moon. There is one moon but it appears in different localities. When we are in San Diego, it is the moon in San Diego, and when we are in Taipei, it is the moon in Taipei....It is the same with the church. There is one church appearing in many localities. (1993 Blending Conference Messages concerning the Lord's Recovery and Our Present Need, p. 36)

Today's Reading

Asia was a province of the ancient Roman Empire in which were the seven cities mentioned in Revelation 1:11. The seven churches were in those seven cities respectively....The churches are established in different cities by taking a city as the boundary and ground of each local church. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2153)

I do not believe that anyone would write Revelation 1:11 as it is. Every one of us would probably put all seven names after one "to." But the Lord did not do it in this way. He told John to send this book to the seven churches. Then He said to send it to this city and to that city. This clearly shows us that one church equals one city and represents that city.

When something was written and sent to the church in Ephesus, it was sent to the city of Ephesus, because the church in Ephesus represented that city in the eyes of the Lord. If we read Revelation 1:11 again, we will realize that this is what it means. This verse tells us clearly and definitely that a church in a place must be equal to the city in which the church is located, and it corresponds with Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5. In these two verses we see that to ordain elders in every church is to ordain elders in every city, and to ordain elders in every city means to ordain elders in every church. This makes it abundantly clear that the sphere and limit of the church must be exactly the same as that of the city. In other words, the boundary, the jurisdiction, of the church is identical to that of the city. (CWWL, 1968, vol. 1, "The Practical Expression of the Church," pp. 397-398)

The church is constituted of the universal God, but it exists on earth in many localities, one of which was Corinth. In nature the church is universal in God, but in practice the church is local in a definite place. Hence, the church has two aspects: the universal and the local. Without the universal aspect, the church is void of content; without the local aspect, it is impossible for the church to have any expression and practice. (1 Cor. 1:2, footnote 2)

The third element of the church ground is the reality of the Spirit of oneness, expressing the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ on the unique ground of locality of a local church. Briefly, the third element of the church ground is the reality of the Spirit, who is the living reality of the Divine Trinity (1 John 5:6; John 16:13). It is by this Spirit that the oneness of the Body of Christ becomes real and living. It is also through this Spirit that the ground of locality is applied in life and not in legality. And it is by this Spirit that the genuine ground of the church is linked with the Triune God (Eph. 4:3-6). (A Brief Presentation of the Lord's Recovery, p. 29)

Further Reading: The Practical Expression of the Church, chs. 6, 8-9; A Brief Presentation of the Lord's Recovery, pp. 28-31

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity!

3 Like the dew of Hermon that came down upon the mountains of Zion. For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: life forever.

When we are really poor, we need mercy. But when we are in oneness, we have something more than mercy. This is the dew, the sufficient grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the moving of the oil, and the grace of the Lord Jesus is the dew.

The more we meet together, fellowship with each other, and love one another, there is spontaneously within us a sweet flow of the Spirit, so gracious, so good, and so pleasant. At the same time we sense the strengthening within, the watering, the refreshing, the comforting and empowering. This is the grace. We have the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in the oneness, and we also have the grace of the Lord Jesus. As the Body we need the oil, and as the dwelling place we need the grace. Without the grace we are very dry. But with the grace we are watered and refreshed. (CWWL, 1968, vol. 1, "The Practical Expression of the Church," p. 422)

Today's Reading

In the local church we are being watered day by day with grace, just as the fresh dew every morning. To my sense, there are no evenings in the church life. Even the evening meetings are still in the morning. Whenever we are at the Lord's table in the evening, I always sense that it is morning, because the dew is there. We do not have night, but morning with the dew. This is what accompanies the oneness of the church life.

Praise the Lord! The oil and the dew are the result of the commanded blessing of life. The Lord not only gives us the blessing, but He commands the blessing. It seems that the Lord on the throne orders the blessing upon those who are on the ground of oneness. I am not speaking what I do not know. I am telling you what I have experienced for the past forty years. You cannot imagine how much I have enjoyed the oil and the dew in these past years, and I am still enjoying it....What is the way for such an enjoyment? It is simply by keeping the oneness. So many today excuse themselves by saying that it was easy in the time of the apostles, but now it is not so easy. They say that it is impossible to keep the oneness, so we must not talk about it; it is enough to talk about the Lord Jesus and help others to know Him. They even say that the more we speak about oneness, the more divisions we will have. But if we are not in the oneness, we will be short of the oil and the dew. Then it will be difficult for the Lord to command the blessing of life. (CWWL, 1968, vol. 1, "The Practical Expression of the Church," pp. 422-423)

The issue of partaking of the tree of knowledge is division. Life, on the contrary, is the essence of oneness. The oneness in God's economy, the great oneness revealed in entirety in the Scriptures, can be preserved only by life. Without life, there can be no oneness.

The one corporate man created by God was destined to produce a great number of descendants. How could these descendants remain one? By education? By some kind of power? By organization? The only way that oneness can be maintained is by life, in life, and with life. If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, all his descendants, even though they number in the millions, would have been kept in oneness. But because Adam partook of the tree of knowledge, the essence of division was injected into him, and his descendants were divided. The essence of Babel that is manifested in Genesis 11 was put into man in Genesis 3. This indicates that divisiveness and divisions are the issue of taking into our being something other than life. This element is the factor, source, and essence of division. The essence of oneness, on the contrary, is life. Only life can keep us in oneness. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," pp. 244-245)

Further Reading: The Genuine Ground of Oneness, chs. 2, 6-7

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Acts 8:1 ...And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers...

A number of [Christians] have seen something of the truth of oneness. But the problem is they are not willing to pay the price. Returning to the ground of oneness would cause many to lose their position, name, reputation, or popularity. By the Lord's mercy, we have chosen to take the narrow way of the cross and to stand on the ground of oneness. We have no choice except to take the Lord's choice, even though we may be defamed, despised, and criticized.

Praise the Lord for all the spiritual and heavenly things that have become our experience on this ground! Here in the local, unique oneness we have the Lord's presence, the altar, the house, and the feasts. Nothing can compare with the enjoyment of the spiritual riches on the proper ground. How happy I am to be with you all in the local oneness! (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," p. 351)

Today's Reading

Unless the Lord leads us to make a genuine migration to another locality, we should simply remain in our local church, not moving to suit our taste or preference. Let us simply stay in the church where the Lord has placed us. We praise the Lord for the vision concerning the destruction of the high places and the recovery of the local oneness. Hallelujah for the revelation of the local oneness and its recovery! It is our privilege to have a share in this recovery today. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," pp. 351-352)

First Corinthians 1:2b speaks of the church at Corinth. This shows the locality of Corinth 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). For its existence, expression, and practice, the church surely needs a place, and that place according to the New Testament is a locality. The church in Corinth was built in Corinth....The church in New York is built on the ground of the city of New York. Thus, the locality spontaneously becomes the church ground.

Brother Watchman Nee pointed out that God was very wise in His way of building up the church on the local ground. There are a great number of God's chosen people. Everywhere around the globe there are believers in Christ, and they should not be scattered but gathered together to be a church. If there were not the proper limitation of the ground, there would be no limitation to the setting up of churches. (The Divine and Mystical Realm, p. 81)

The practice of the church life in the early days was the practice of having one church for one city, one city with only one church. In no city was there more than one church. This is the local church, with the city, not the street or the area, as the unit. The jurisdiction of a local church should cover the whole city in which the church is located; it should not be greater or lesser than the boundary of the city. All the believers within that boundary should constitute the one unique local church within that city. (Rev. 1:11, footnote 1)

God is one, and the man created by God was also one. This unique man was placed in front of the unique tree of life. After the corporate man created by God had been divided into nations, God selected one man, Abraham. Then, centuries later, He produced one church. Ultimately, God will have one eternal city with one throne, one street, one river, and one tree. In each of the four great acts of God, therefore, we see the principle of oneness. This should cause us to realize that the church today must be in oneness and must be built on the ground of oneness. Oneness is the very ground of the church. May the Lord grant us more light concerning this precious oneness. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," p. 242)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," ch. 10; The Divine and Mystical Realm, ch. 6

<< WEEK 8 — HYMN

Hymns, #831

1

The unity of Church is but
The saints in oneness living;
The Spirit which indwelleth them
This oneness ever giving.
Thus it is realized and called
The unity of Spirit;
'Tis based upon the common faith
Which all the saints inherit.

2

This precious faith of all the saints,
Is constituted solely
Of Christ and His redemptive work,
Which are unique and holy.
In this the saints are truly one,
Together all agreeing,
And it is from this common faith
The Church came into being.

3

The Church within the universe
Is one as Christ's possession;
The Church must therefore locally
Be one in her expression;
For all her elements are one—
One God, one Lord, one Spirit,
One faith, baptism, Body too,
One hope all saints inherit.

4

This oneness is the Church's ground,
The ground of common standing,
The only ground of unity
The Spirit is demanding.
The Church in actual practice thus
May keep her vital union,
And her expressions locally
Be built up in communion.

5

Lord, help us ever strive to keep
This unity by taking
The Church's ground of unity,
The Body-life partaking,
That all Thy heart's profound desire
May fully be effected,
And God's eternal purpose may
Completely be perfected.