

CHRIST, OUR LIFE

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THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN IN RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION.

So....Let me ask you a question John :

You wrote : "There is no individual son who is the equivalent of "the Christ." As the fulness of God is in Christ, the fulness of Christ is resident corporately in His body, the church (not the institutional organization), of which we are members."

But does not Paul say "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" ? If it is Christ that lives in me,,,,, does not all His fullness live in me also? Does not everything He is now reside in me? I'm asking .

You seem to imply that all that Christ is, is only in His fullness in the Body (members or sons) of Christ . Not in each individual But that would mean that Christ does not fully live in me only one part of Him. And which part would that be John. It seems that Paul would've said it that way if that were the case. "Not I that live, but part of Christ that lives in me". Do we have the whole of Christ in us, or part of Him which in turn makes the whole body of Christ complete in the sum of us all or corporately???

Kurt

John's answer:

The answer to your question, Kurt, is that Christ lives in me as a member of His body, not in me as a separate, disconnected part. Christ, the life of the body, is present in each member, but present in the context of my relationship to the other members, so that it is both a resident and a flowing life, flowing from the head to the body to us all, in us all, flowing through each of us to one another. It is not a matter of PART of Christ being in me, it's a matter of the one Christ being resident in the one body by the one Spirit, to be enjoyed in all His fulness by all the members.

In Jonathan Mitchell's translation (still a work in progress) of the NT, Jonathan includes the singular and plural found in the Greek, which, for instance, when translated as "you" in English, could mean you (singular), or you all (plural). The Greek, with unvarying precision, always presents what God has for us in Christ to "all you folks," as Jonathan would translate it, and then makes it clear that, "all you folks" are one corporate, single whole.

The progression of the presentation of the economy of God presented in scripture, moving from the gospels to the Book of Revelation, can be summed up as: God in Christ (the gospels), Christ in the Spirit (Acts), the Spirit in the church/body (the epistles), and the church/body in glory, (Revelation). Does that include Christ in me as an individual?

Yes, of course. But to repeat, He is in me, not in a way that makes for independent individualism, but in the way of vital, unique, dependent individuality of a member in particular of the body of Christ.

Bottom line, Christ is never equated with any one individual in scripture, except Jesus of Nazareth, but He is really equated with His body. The statement by Paul, which is marvelous, in, I believe, 1Cor. 12:12. says that the body IS Christ, but none of us individually can say, "I am Christ." "For as the body has many members, and the many members are one body, so also IS Christ." Wow! I'll take my piece-of-the action of that. Christ is a multi-membered body, and we are those members, and that same Christ, was manifested only once in and as an individual, and that was, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some dear ones today speak of themselves as Christ, based upon, they say, that they have the anointing (Christing) that has been given them.

But though their intention is to fully affirm all the implications of His indwelling, they are in error, and that error will lead them to a strange place spiritually down the road a ways.

I have ministered in a conference within a "loop" of Christian fellowship where there is a real revelation of "Christ in you, the hope of glory," but they have followed their founder in exclaiming "Christ as me." And, whether he intended it or not, that, along with other voices,

is being interpreted in such a way as to lead people to say, "I am Christ."

I have said for years, that the understanding of Christ in us must be based upon the understanding of us in Christ. In Paul's theology, being in Christ is foundational, from which he proceeds to teach about Christ being in us. So, the question is: Can I say to you, "Kurt, you are complete in me." No, of course not. You and I are complete in Him.

That's why there's such a parallel in the teaching of Paul and John; very explicit in Paul with His body of Christ teaching, but very implicit in John with his emphasis on loving one another. John asks us how we can claim to love God and hate our brother, because John is ever balancing the vertical relationship with God by the horizontal relationship with our brethren. Only in that relationship, and I repeat; only in that relationship is there the experience of His fulness.

I have observed, over the past 50 plus years of following the Lord, how there is a tendency, when the institutional church does not do justice to a truth. And certainly, it (institutional Christianity) has pussy-footed around the truth of Christ in us as our life, that many times, what occurs is a mixture of reaction to their failure and a response to the Spirit.

Response to the Spirit keeps us on track, but reactive thinking causes the pendulum to swing in the opposite direction to the other extreme, and reactive thinking is actually powered by the thing it reacts to. Feel free, brother, if there is something still unclear in all this, to write to me again and, for that matter, again and again. But, I will dare to be so bold as to say, regarding this issue, "Be ye followers of me, as I am of the Lord Jesus."