

Do You Want to Understand God's Government? Look At Yourself!

All of us crave to understand God's form of government — the way we ought to interact with one another — or at least the way we should. We also understand that this form of government is based on the *love* we have for one another (*agape*, or “generosity, kindly concern, being faithful in, delighting in”), and is the identifying sign of God's true people (John 13:35). This love is that “new commandment” stated just a verse earlier in John, that we “love one another,” and have that deep, selfless concern for our fellow servants in Christ. Love is also called the “great commandment,” that is, to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36-40). This way of selfless concern for others, of doing to others what you wish others would do to you, is so profound that Jesus made a point of twice stating that this way is the essential meaning of the entire Law and Prophets (Matthew 7:12, 22:40). Such love, John stated, is not burdensome, for these laws bring blessings upon obedience (I John 5:3).

One Body

As we attempt to perfect this understanding of how to love one another, we are brought face-to-face with a rather startling revelation. Directly before the “Love Chapter” of I Corinthians 13 there is almost an entire chapter dealing with the gifts of the spirit, gifts given to each of God's people: “But one and the same spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (I Corinthians 12:11). Moreover, these gifts are likened to parts of the human body: hands, eyes, feet, and so forth. Is this an accidental association, or is there profound meaning implied in Paul's words?

As is usually the case, profundity is the norm with God and His word. We will explore this reality that the human body, its parts and its functions, picture how we as Christians must interact with one another. This should come as no surprise, because we already know that the body is the place where God

dwells. Is it not logical, then, that how the body is structured, and how it works harmoniously, is a direct and vivid picture of government within the *eclesia*?

“For we, though many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread” (I Corinthians 10:17).”

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (I Corinthians 12:27).”

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have been made to drink into one spirit” (I Corinthians 12:12-13).”

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another” (Romans 12:4-5).

God's Elect Likened to the Body

Paul delivers a major point for us to ponder in II Corinthians 12:1-3 and Romans 12:4-8, when he relates spiritual gifts, given to us as God directs, to parts of the body. Each of these is given *as He directs*; we have no part in the decision-making process (I Corinthians 12:18). Those gifts are surely given in conformity with what we are — for He made us and knows us perfectly — but we were not in control of that creation, nor can we dictate to Him what He should do! (Of course, we can ask Him in prayer.)

The body is a magnificent “organic machine”, which is to be expected since it is made in the image of Elohim. The wisdom and technology inherent

within it surpass anything we can imagine. It is an integrated whole, where each cell — of which there are about 10 trillion — and each tissue and organ work in harmony to facilitate the best possible functioning of the whole.

The body is the epitome of, and incomparable representation of, love in its highest context, even as Paul emphatically stated that this love is "... a more excellent way" (I Corinthians 12:31). Paul goes on to elucidate love in I Corinthians 13, directly after describing each of us as part of the spiritual body in

Parts of the Body (I Corinthians 12)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The body is unified, with many members (v. 12-14). ● The body is Christ (v. 27). ● God gives greater honor to the parts that lack honor (v. 24). ● Each part has the same care for the others as for itself (v. 25). ● All parts suffer together, and rejoice together (v. 26). 	
Foot	Less honorable parts
Ear	Unpresentable parts
Eye	Presentable parts
Hand	

I Corinthians 12. Love surpasses all of these gifts of the spirit and their typified body parts because it encompasses and surrounds them all. Love, in reality, is exemplified by the body of man!

Man is in the image of Elohim (Genesis 1:27), and God *is* love (I John 4:8). He shows that giving without hoping for a return is the mindset of the elect (Luke 6:35), even as Yahweh commanded His people to treat the needy with respect.

“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren ... you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. (Deuteronomy 15:7-8).

It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:36), and the early ecclesia after the first Pentecost “... sold their possessions and goods, and divided

them among all as anyone had need” (Acts 2:45).

Therefore, man in the image of Elohim displays love, if properly understood. Let us look at this magnificent creature He has made.

The Body of Man

While it is impossible to separate the integrated functions of the human body, we can separate the various cells, tissues, and organs and examine each separately. Physiologists have, over the centuries, grouped the organs of the body into several systems,

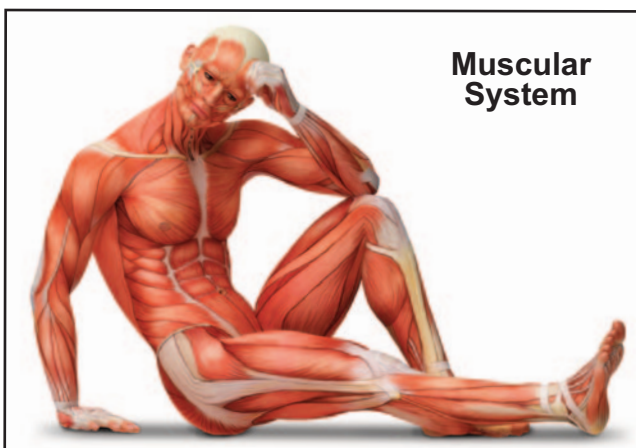
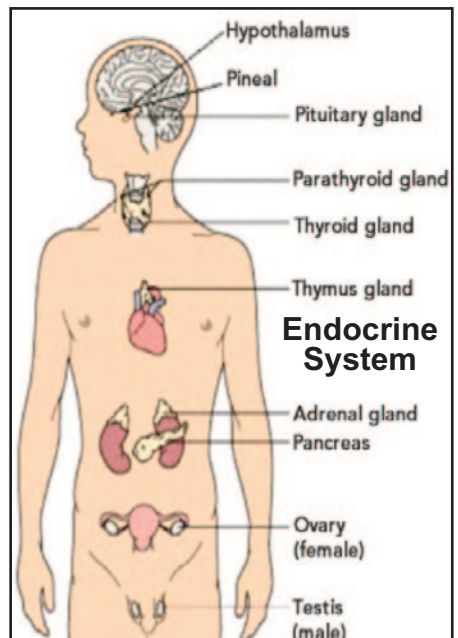
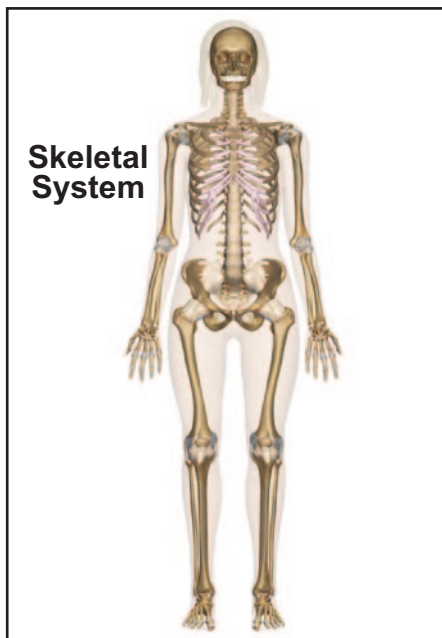
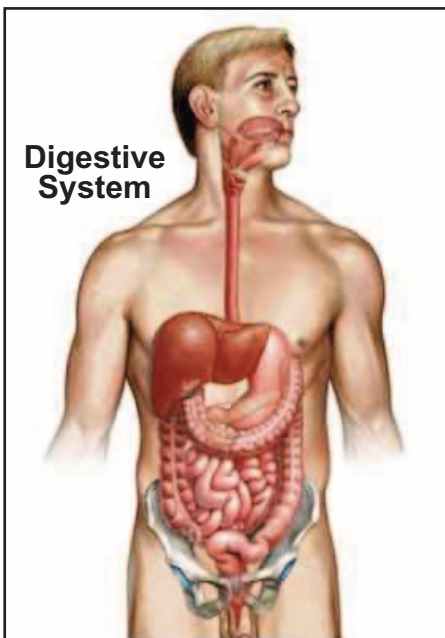
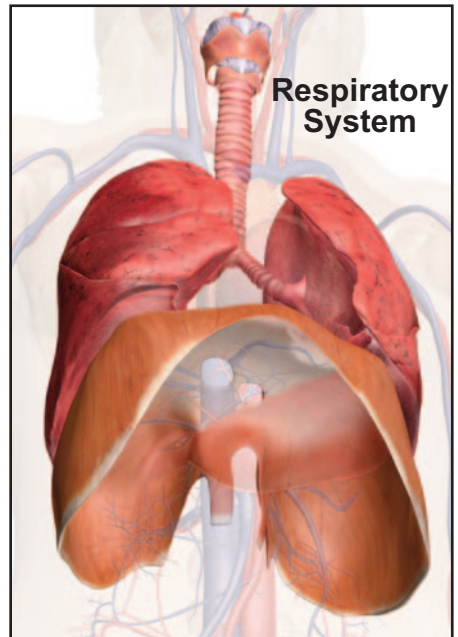
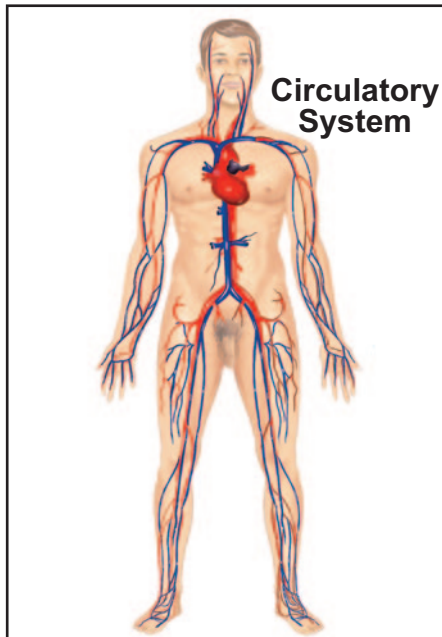
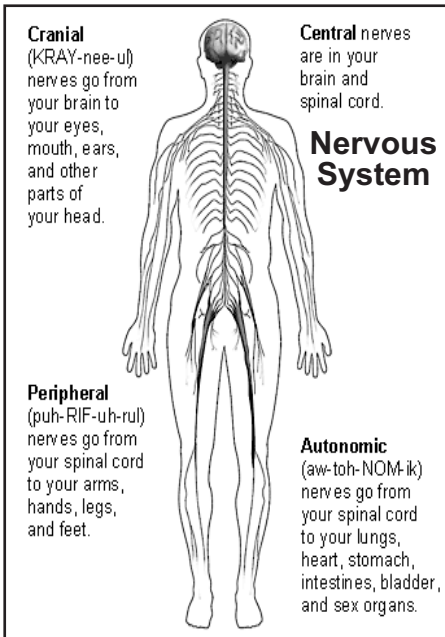
Gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All originate from the same spirit (I Cor. 12: 4). ● Each operates for the profit of all (I Cor. 12:7). 	
<u>The function</u>	<u>According to faith</u> → <u>The person</u>
Wisdom [I Cor. 12]	Apostles [I Cor. 12]
Knowledge	Prophets
Faith	Teachers
Healing	Miracle workers
Miracle working	Healers
Prophecy	Helpers
Discerning spirits	Administrators
Speaking in tongues	Speakers of tongues
Interpreting tongues	Interpretors of tongues
Teaching [Rom. 12]	Ministers
Ministry	Exhorters [Rom. 12]
Exhortation	Givers
Giving	Leaders
Mercifulness	Mercy givers
Leading	

as shown on the next page.

These systems and their tissues and organs are covered and protected from dehydration and disease organisms by the skin, which is by far the largest single organ of the body. Each cell of each organ contains the entire genetic makeup of the person, which originated from a single cell and divided repeatedly until the 10 trillion total cells were achieved ..., “... made in secret” (Psalm 139:15), as David put it.

A Functioning Unity

These various cells and organs do not sit lifeless, but, as Adam was created from the elements of the earth and lay lifeless on the ground, Elohim “...



breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). The lifeless cells became energized with activity, motion, and vitality by the spirit essence that God placed within him. He became the functioning unity that characterizes Elohim Himself. All parts worked together in amazing harmony to make it possible for the man to sense the environment around him, to move and work at various endeavors, and to accomplish projects and goals as devised by a mind that was also programmed like the Creator’s own mind.

In order to live, this living being had to perform an incredible number of tasks, such as gathering and eating food, drinking enough water, maintaining a

reasonable temperature to avoid overheating or hypothermia, and ultimately reproducing so the species could continue through succeeding generations. Such tasks were simple in the Garden of Eden, designed by the Creator to grant mankind the most idyllic environment possible, for not just survival, but for enjoyment and fulfillment. Outside of the Garden, however — after sin had entered in — environmental stresses were multiplied, and provisions for food, clothing, shelter, and safety were greatly compromised. As Elohim told Adam after sinning, “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat from it all the days of your life In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground ...” (Genesis 3:17, 19).

The earth is a planet replete with climatic extremes that test the mettle of man as never before, with variations of heat, cold, floods, droughts, wind, and insults from pathogen and disease, wars, murders, and soils that often fail to yield a fair increase. Moreover, the quality of foods have eroded through improper plant breeding and food processing, exacerbated by the population moving from the self-sufficient countryside to the captivity of urban centers.

Scientists are struck by the complexity and unity



The weathered skin of the cowboy is an adaptation that allows the person to better cope with the harsh sun and weather, which the sheltered businessman would find hard to endure.

of *Homo sapiens*, such as Alexis Carrel in *Man the Unknown* (Halcyon House, New York, 1935), who stated, “Man cannot be separated into parts.” The cells congregate into societies, called tissues and organs, some cells fixed — as those of the skin, liver, and lungs — and some mobile, like the red blood cells and leucocytes. Even the mind cannot be sepa-

rated from the body, and, as Carrel stated,

“Thus, envy, hate, fear, when these sentiments are habitual, are capable of starting organic changes and genuine diseases. Moral suffering profoundly disturbs health. Business men who do not know how to fight worry die young. The old clinicians thought that protracted sorrows and constant anxiety prepare the way for the development of cancer. Emotions induce, in especially sensitive individuals, striking modifications of the tissues and humors [blood].”

Accommodation and Adaptation

A characteristic almighty God has built into the human body is its capability to adapt to various external and internal insults, and to accommodate them. Alexis Carrel made the point well.

“Man is made composed of soft, alterable matter, susceptible of disintegrating in a few hours. However, he lasts longer than if made of steel. Not only does he last, but he

ceaselessly overcomes the difficulties and dangers of the outside world. He accommodates himself ... to the changing conditions of his environment. He persists in living despite physical, economic, and social upheavals. Such endurance is due to a very particular mode of activity of his tissues and humors [blood]. *The body seems to mold itself on events.*

Instead of wearing out, it changes. Our organs always improvise means of meeting every new situation. And these means are such that they tend to give us a maximum duration. The physiological processes, which are the substratum of inner time, always incline in the direction leading to the longest survival of the indi-

vidual.”

Through all of our sufferings, joys, and agitations of the modern world our organs do not modify their inward processes and rhythm to any great extent. As Carrel put it,

“There is an impressive difference between the regularity of the phenomena taking place within our body and the extreme variability of our environment The tranquility of the tissues is assured by the converging efforts of all the functional systems. And the more irregular and violent our life, the greater are these efforts. For the brutality of our relations with the cosmos [outer] world must never trouble the peace of the cells and humors [blood] of our inner world.”

Therefore, the blood always remains at a pH of 7.41 (arterial blood) to 7.36 (venous blood), and retains a proper salt content, even if we eat a large meal, run for five miles, or sit in the burning heat of a desert. The gains and losses of water and salts are exactly counter-balanced by mechanisms in the body. These mechanisms extend over the entire body, to maintain constant blood pressure, volume, pH, and salinity as the walls of the arteries and veins dilate or contract, the heart increases or decreases its rate of beating, salts and water are added or absorbed by body cells, and nerves coordinate these changes throughout the body.

The body’s organs are correlated by circulated blood and lymph, and the nervous system. ***Each part of the body adjusts itself to the other parts, and the other parts to the body.*** As Alexis Carrel pointed out,

“Each part [or the body] seems to know the present and future needs of the whole, and acts accordingly. The significance of time and space are not the same for our tissues as for our mind. The body perceives the remote as well as the near, the future as well as the present”

When insulted by an injury or loss of blood — from a cut or a blow — all organs of the body turn

towards the end to be attained, the reconstruction of the destroyed structures. The blood clots with fibrin to close the breach and starts regenerating the artery wall. A broken bone results in a clot forming, swelling, and more active circulation to bring in nutrients to regenerate the break ... first forming cartilage to temporarily unite the bone ends, and then replacing the cartilage with bone cells. ***Tissues become what they have to be in order to accomplish the common task. Each tissue is capable of responding at any moment of the unpredictable future to all changes and accidents within the body, in a manner consistent with the interests of the entire body.***

Moreover, the body has *built-in redundancy*, so that if one repair mechanism is compromised another is waiting to take its place. For example, if the skin is deeply scraped, the connective and epithelial cells will conspire to shrink the size of the wound, form a scar, and fill the breach from the edges; if either cell type is restricted, the other will take over, accelerate, and continue the healing process. ***If one of the regenerating mechanisms fails, it is replaced by the other.***

Similarly, if one endocrine gland produces insufficient hormones, another will attempt to make up the difference. A weak heart valve will lead to an enlarged heart to compensate for the inefficiency and maintain blood pressure. Impaired kidneys lead to elevated blood pressure so a larger volume of blood can pass through them and still remove toxins. As diabetes develops, more insulin may be secreted to reduce blood sugar as the body attempts to adapt itself to a defective function.

The body can adapt only within certain limits, and if insults extend beyond those limits disease will result. As Carrel emphasized, individual cells act in the interest of the whole — after all, their very lives are at stake, at the mercy of the body that sustains them — just as bees work for the good of the hive. ***They seem to know the future, and anticipate needed changes.***

The Body of Christ and Mutualism

Our Creator has a lot to say about how the body of Christ must work together harmoniously to achieve the greatest health for the entire spiritual organism, just like the human body and its organs ac-

commodate each other by adapting to the harsh realities of the environment, seeking to achieve optimum health and the longest possible life.

“... submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21).

“... so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another” (Romans 12:5).

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another ...” (Romans 12:10).

“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart ...” (I Peter 1:22).

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing” (I Peter 3:8-9).

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders, Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility ...” (I Peter 5:5).

Mutualism is a form of symbiosis wherein both symbionts are benefitted, a very apt synonym for love. It is the very manner, as we have seen, in which the various cells, tissues, and organs of the body work together for the common good, to maximize health and longevity, to prosper the existence of the organism. ***Scripture makes plain the need for mutualism in the ecclesia, in particular associating with and benefitting the weak and humble.***

“Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion” (Romans 12:16).

“... fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:2-5).

“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s” (I Corinthians 10:24).

“Give none offense, neither to the Jews nor to the gentiles, but to the church of God; even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of many, that they may be served” (I Corinthians 10:32-33).

“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to building up” (Romans 15:1-2).

The Body ... God’s Government in You!

We have seen how the human body is a perfect type of God’s government. As we understand its workings better we can better understand how we ought to interact with and serve one another.

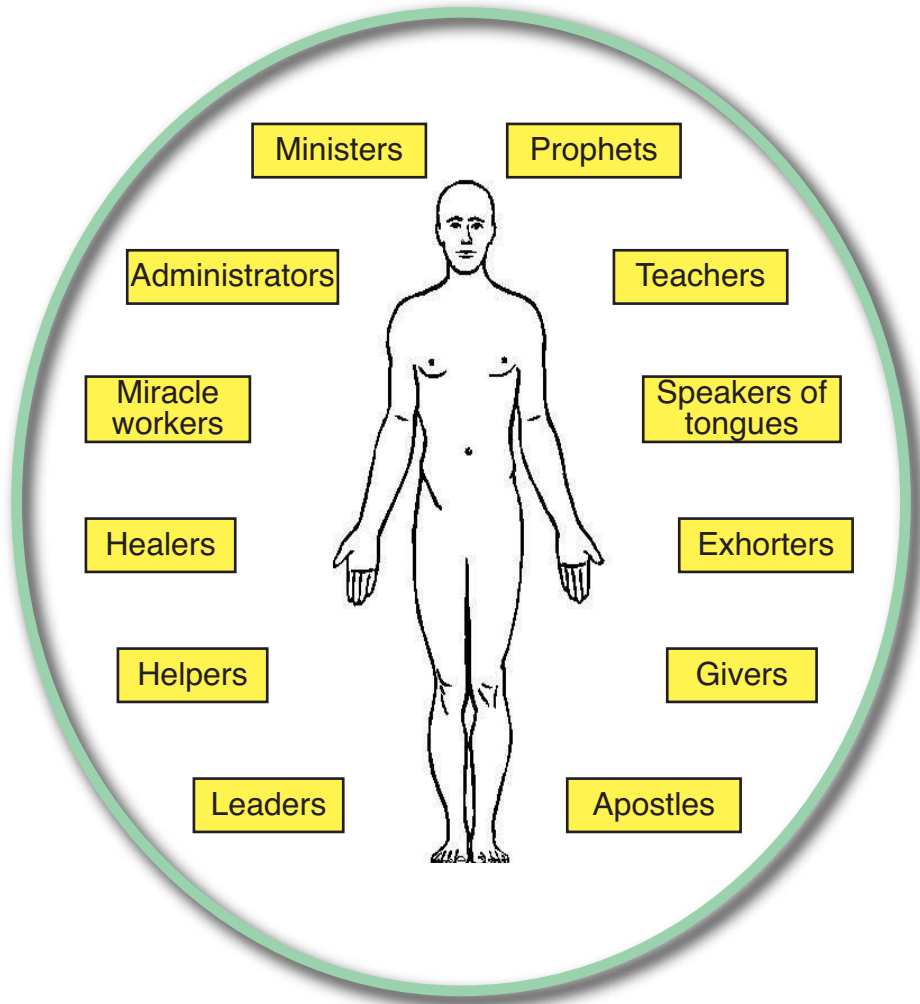
1. Each part of the body serves every other part; we are all interconnected, or *one* through the spirit in us, as Paul wrote (I Corinthians 12:12).
2. We serve one another with our gifts (body parts) to assure the greatest health and longevity to the whole organism (*ecclesia*, the collection of the saints).
3. If one member suffers, we all suffer with him or her; if one prospers, we all prosper along with that member. No part is separate from another.
4. As each part of the body adjusts itself to all of the other parts, so the members of the ecclesia ought to adjust to the others for the greatest possible harmony of the whole. Yet, we must not offend others with the liberty that we have, like Paul would not eat meat in the presence of a vegetarian whose weakness he did not want to offend (Romans 14:20-21).

5. Each one of God's elect should be content with the gift(s) he or she has been given, for they cannot be changed through our own power, but are granted through His mercy and wisdom.

6. As the body heals itself by the various tissues and mechanisms, repairing the injury or infection, so the ecclesia must heal its problems through the power of the spirit flowing through each member. That healing

power to each cell is carried by the blood [like the spirit] ... for the life is in the blood (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14; Deuteronomy 12:23).

7. If one part of the body becomes weak or fails, it is the responsibility of other members to "fill the breach" and compensate for the weakness, to adapt to the new situation out of love for the brethren to strengthen the entire spiritual organism.



Exercising the Body of the Ecclesia

How shall we provide for the full use of our spiritual body, the ecclesia?

1. We must identify our spiritual gift(s) and use them for our brethren.
2. We must live with energy and vitality in exercising these gifts. We cannot attain Sonship in the Kingdom of God without much suffering (Romans 8:17), and are on a strait, narrow, and difficult pathway that leads to life (Matthew 7:14). We are becom-

ing conditioned to hardships that mould our character — we seldom change without such stress — and prepare us to withstand the assaults of this life. As Alexis Carrel pointed out,

“...hardships make for nervous resistance and health. We know how strong physically and morally are those who, since childhood, have been submitted to intelligent discipline who have endured some privations and adapted themselves to adverse conditions During the early period of the develop-

ment of the United States, the men who built the railroads, laid the foundations of the large industries, and opened the West to civilization *triumphed over all obstacles by their will and their audacity.*”

Contrarywise, those who live soft lives of leisure, having all of their needs supplied and seldom having to fight for them, have not had their adaptive functions challenged much, and find them atrophied for lack of use. Idleness leads to degeneration. The adoptive functions must be kept constantly at work to build strong physical bodies, just as the organs of the ecclesia must continually be challenged through sufferings to develop the qualities God desires in us: patience, kindness, joy, peace, moderation, humility, and every other fruit of the spirit.

We cannot, however, be challenged by conditions to which the body cannot adapt: ceaseless agitation, polluted air, foodless and adulterated foods, noise, excessive wealth, intellectual confusion, and such like. In cases where these conditions exist, we must modify what we do and change the environment around us. *We need stress.* As Carrel stated,

“They [people] need a way of life involving constant struggle, mental and physical effort, physiological and moral discipline, and

some privations; such conditions inure the body to fatigue and to sorrows. They protect it against disease, and especially against nervous diseases. They irresistibly drive humanity to the conquest of the external world.”

3. As the body always strives to maintain inner peace and equilibrium, so we must maintain that peace of mind within ourselves and the entire Body of Christ. Note especially Plilippians 4:6-8.

4. Utilizing the spirit means actively pursuing God’s word, our prayers, meditation, fasting, and fellowship each day. We can and we must multiply the fruits of God’s spirit in our lives.

The human body indeed pictures the government of God in every way. By examining your own body you can see how you ought to relate to your brethren. *You are the living, walking type of the proper governmental structure within the ecclesia, destined to be translated into the very substance of the heavenly in due course.* Thank God that He has placed within you that powerful witness of who He is and how we ought to love our brethren, and even lay down our lives for them.