

The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON XCIII : UNITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS (4:1-16)

Ephesians 4:16 —

in whom all the body ys coupled and knet togedder in every ioynt wherwith one ministreth to another (accordinge to the operacion as every parte hath his measure) and increaseth the body vnto the edyfyinge of it silfe in love. (Tyndale's New Testament, 1524)

By whome al the body being coupled and knit together by euery ioynt, for ye furniture therof (according to the effectual power, which is in the measure of euery part) receiueth increase of the body, vnto the edifyinge of itselfe in loue. (Geneva Bible, 1599)

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifyinge of itself in love. (King James Version, 1769)

from whom the whole body, being fitly joined together and united, through the supply of every joint, according to the working in the measure of each single part, the increase of the body doth make for the building up of itself in love. (Young's Literal Translation, 1898)

from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love. (Revised Version, 1885)

from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love. (American Standard Version, 1901)

from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love. (Revised Standard Version, 1952)

from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (New King James Version, 1982)

from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (New American Standard Version, 1995)

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (New International Version, 2011)

from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (English Standard Version, 2011)

ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξησιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ (Stephanus Greek NT, 1550)

ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξησιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ. (NA28 Greek New Testament)

v. 16 — **HOW THIS RELATES TO THE ENTIRE PASSAGE** — “[V]erses 7-16 are the final section of the first half of chapter 4 entitled ‘Walking in Unity’ (vv. 1-16). Verses 1-6 give the basis of the unity to which Paul calls them, and then it lists the seven elements of unity. In verses 7-16, Paul states that each believer is given a gift according to the measure of Christ (vv. 7-10). Further, he demonstrates that the ascended Christ has the right to give gifts. In the last portion of this section (vv. 11-16), Paul explains the distribution of the gifts. The foundational gifts were given (v. 11) to enable all believers to minister (v. 12) toward the goal of edifying the body of Christ (v. 13). The distribution of the gifts has a twofold purpose: negatively, that the individual believer might not fall prey to any wind of doctrine presented by deceitful people (v. 14); and positively; that the individual believer might be able to grow in Christ with respect to all things (v. 15). Paul concludes that the church enables itself to grow in love as its individual members use the gifts that have been measured out to them (v. 16).”

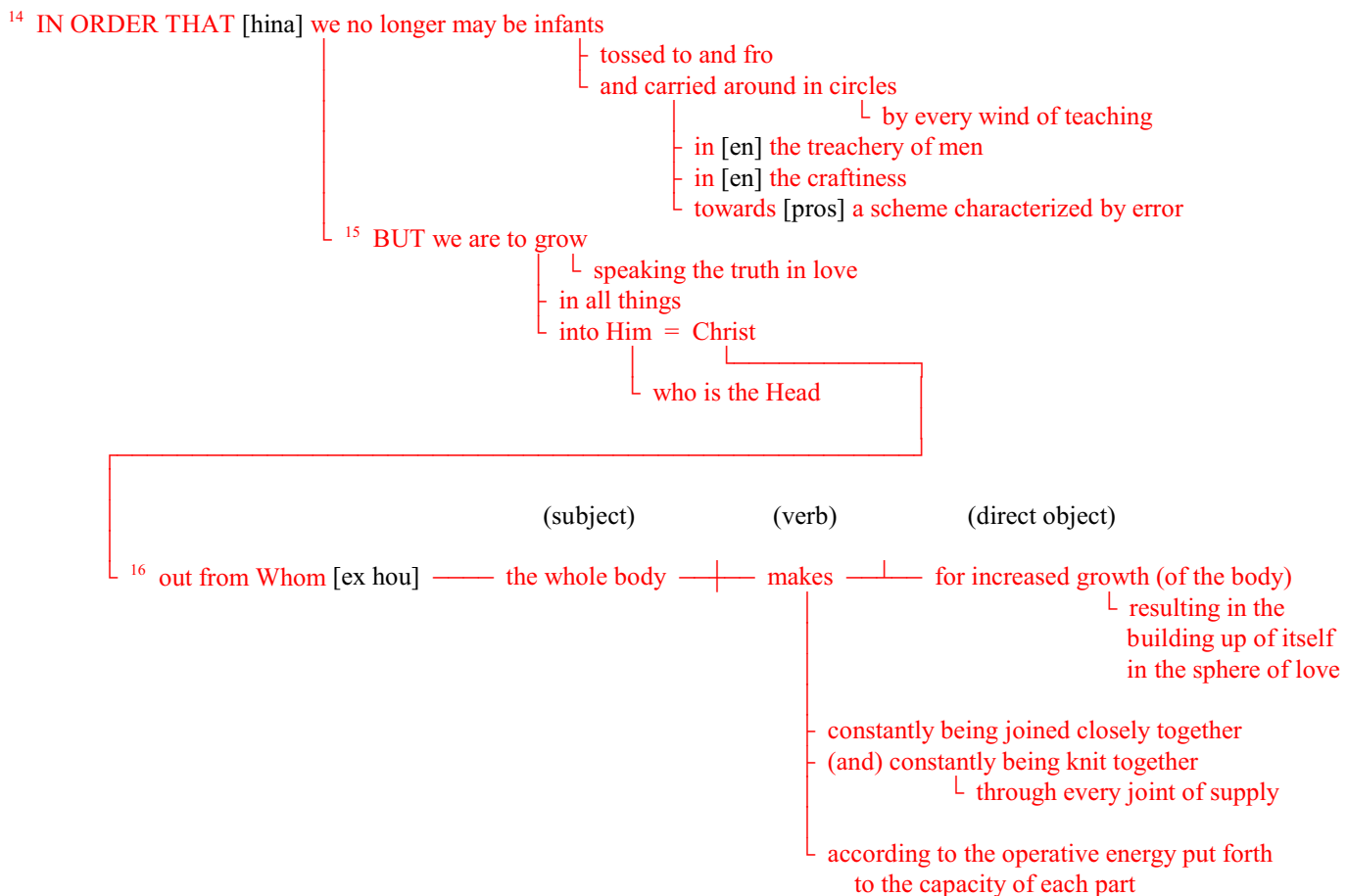
[Hoehner, 578f] “Paul now skillfully concludes the section by returning to the theme of Christ’s gifts to every believer so that each one might contribute to building up the church. He does this by placing special emphasis on two themes, both articulated in terms of the metaphors of a growing body and building that he has been using since verse 12.... In 4:7-16 Paul demonstrates that the same power made available to him to fulfill the important responsibility that God has given him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles has also been given to every individual within the church to work for the church’s unity and maturity. Christ has attained victory over the cosmic enemies of God and his people, and now, in a way that is consistent with the picture of God’s victory in Ps. 68, Christ is distributing the spoils of that victory to his people. He has given every believer a role in supporting the church’s growth. Some engage in apostolic activity, others in prophesying, others in evangelizing, others in shepherding, and still others in

teaching. The purpose of all this activity is to equip God’s people to build up the church. The ultimate goal of the church’s construction and growth is its unified commitment to doctrinal truth and to the experience of the knowledge of Christ. The more mature the church becomes, the more effective it will be at refuting false teaching and maturing into the body of Christ. For this to happen, each connection within the body must lovingly contribute to the body’s growth.” [Thielman, 286, 288]

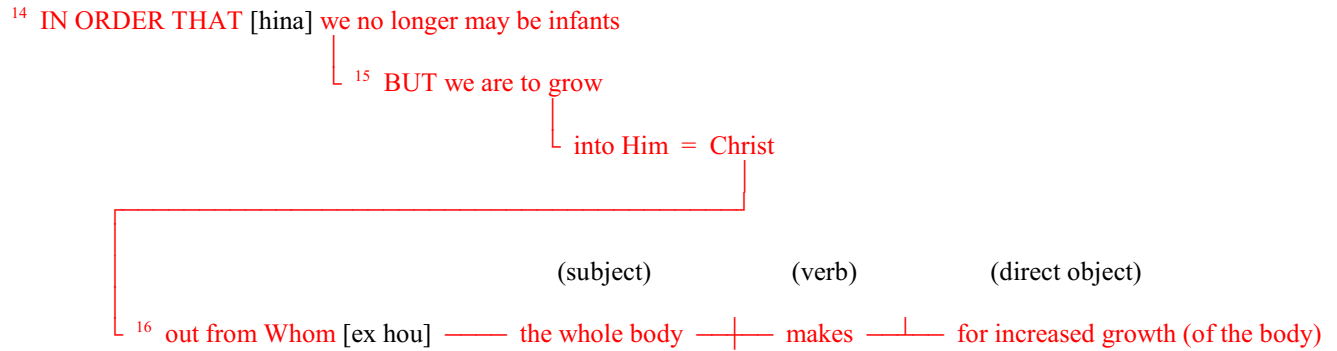
SUMMARY OF vv. 13-16 / HOW THESE VERSES RELATE TO EACH OTHER — *“In this section one observes that there can be unity in diversity. Although there is oneness of structure, there is variety in function. The unifying force is the oneness of purpose, that is, the use of gifts for body edification, not self-edification. The use of the gifts will provide growth for individual members and the corporate body to prepare both to meet their Lord.”* [Hoehner, 579] “The temporal clause of v 13 further defines this last aspect in terms of all the Church’s members attaining a goal, which again three prepositional phrases explain from three different angles — unity of faith and knowledge, maturity, and a maturity which is measured by the fullness of Christ. As if this were not enough, the purpose of the building up of the Church and of the gifts instrumental in this process is now elaborated negatively in v 14 by means of a [hina] clause, which indicates the need to move away from a present immaturity in the readers’ reception of teaching, and positively in v 15 through the addition of a participial clause, which speaks of their growing up into Christ who is the head. The concluding verse, v 16, consists of a relative clause, which recalls in summary fashion the already mentioned purposes of the growth and building up of the body, the Church, while underlining that these processes have their source in Christ and that they require the activity of each part of the body.” [Lincoln, 226]

WHILE THE GENERAL SENSE CLEAR, THE DETAILS ARE CONFUSING — *“The general sense is clear though many details are not (Chrysostom describes it as obscure). The church is to grow from Christ its head and will grow in love. Growth has been the hidden agenda from v. 11. Much of the verse’s obscurity arises out of its use of medical words. Modern physiology and anatomy have a different view of the human body and use terms differently from the ancient world; ancient ideas have to be translated into modern terms and none may correspond exactly. Even if it was possible to find the proper corresponding terms we do not know whether [Paul] was using his terms in accordance with correct contemporary usage. Scientific terms often pass into ordinary speech and are used loosely. Even if... Luke the doctor was with him when he wrote, that gives no guarantee of accuracy for Ephesians is written not for medical experts but for ordinary people.”* [Best, 409] “The idea, therefore, appears to be that the body is fitly framed and knit together by means of the joints, every one of them in its own place and function, as the points of connection between member and member and the points of communication between the different parts and the supply which comes from the Head. The joints are the constituents of union in the body and the media of the impartation of the life drawn by the members from the head.” [Salmond, 337]

CONCLUSION OF A LONG SENTENCE — As we come to the end of a long sentence Paul began in v. 11, even though I read and re-read and re-read verse 16, I could not determine the point Paul was trying to make. So I turned to my Bible Study aids, especially focusing on the sentence wiring diagrams (available in BibleWorks). While not diagramming this last portion of Paul’s sentence in detail, this is how we can generally break down this portion of Paul’s sentence:



Removing the extra modifiers, we find Paul to be saying this:



<p>from whom</p> <p>the whole body,</p> <p>joined and held together</p> <p>by every joint with which it is equipped,</p> <p>when each part is working properly,</p> <p>makes the body grow</p> <p>so that it builds itself up in love.</p>	<p>ἐξ οὗ [ex hou]</p> <p>πᾶν τὸ σῶμα [pan to sōma]</p> <p>συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον [sunarmologoumenon kai sumbibazomenon]</p> <p>διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας [dia pasēs haphēs tēs epichorēgias]</p> <p>κατ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους [kat energeian en metrō henos hekastou merous]</p> <p>τὴν αὐξῆσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται [tēn auxēsin tou sōmatos poieitai]</p> <p>εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ [eis oikodomēn heautou en agapē]</p>
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FROM CHRIST AS A PERSON, NOT AS THE HEAD — *out from whom* — ἐξ οὗ [ex hou] — “The ‘from whom’ provides a sharp contrast with the ‘into him’ of the previous verse. The church not only grows into a Christlikeness, but also derives its ability to do so from the resurrected and ascended Christ himself.” [Clinton Arnold, Ephesians, 270] A. T. Robertson notes ‘out of whom’ denotes Christ as ‘the source of energy and direction.’ [Robertson, Word Pictures] “ἐξ οὗ [ex hou, ‘out of whom’] refers back to Christ (v. 15); whatever is described in v. 16 connects with Christ, but in what way? If Christ as head is the primary reference, we would have had ἐξ ἧς [ex hēs, ‘out of which’] but, though the head may be a source of growth, the growth mentioned here is from Christ as person rather than as head. Physiologically growth does not come from the head; head and trunk grow together. Whether or not the ideas of Christ as head and as body had been originally distinct ... it is a natural association since human bodies always have heads.” [Best, 410] “The preposition with the masculine relative pronoun ἐξ οὗ [ex hou], ‘out of whom, from whom,’ denotes the source of the growth of the whole body. It relates back to the immediately preceding noun, namely, Christ (not ‘the head’). Christ is the origin as well as the goal of the body’s growth.” [Hoehner, 569] “ἐξ οὗ [ex hou, ‘from whom’] refers back to Christ (v. 15). The growth mentioned here is ‘from Christ as person rather than as head.’ ... Christ is not only the goal of the body’s growth (v. 15); as the head who rules over the body he is the ultimate source (from him) of its growth, for he supplies all that is necessary for its well-being, including its unity, nourishment, and progress.” [O’Brien, 313]

THE BODY GLORIFIES CHRIST — “All our increase should tend to exalt more highly the glory of Christ. This is now proved by the best possible reason. It is he who supplies all our wants, and without whose protection we cannot be safe. As the root conveys sap to the whole tree, so all the vigor which we possess must flow to us from Christ. There are three things here which deserve our attention. The first is what has now been stated. All the life or health which is diffused through the members flows from the head; so that the members occupy a subordinate rank. The second is, that, by the distribution made, the limited share of each renders the communication between all the members absolutely necessary. The third is, that, without mutual love, the health of the body cannot be maintained. Through the members, as canals, is conveyed from the head all that is necessary for the nourishment of the body. While this connection is upheld, the body is alive and healthy. Each member, too, has its own proper share, — according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.” [Calvin, 287f]

OUR STRENGTH COMES FROM CHRIST, NOT THE WORLD — “The unity which belongs to the church has not come because it has harmonised itself

MODERN CHRISTIANS
 HOPE TO SAVE THE
 WORLD BY BEING LIKE
 IT,
 BUT IT WILL NEVER
 WORK.
 THE CHURCH’S POWER
 OVER THE WORLD
 SPRINGS OUT OF HER
 UNLIKENESS TO IT,
 NEVER FROM HER
 INTEGRATION INTO IT.”
 ~A. W. Tozer



That very church which the world likes best is sure to be that which God abhors.

~ Charles Spurgeon

AZ QUOTES

to the norms of society, or subjected itself to the powers, or accepted false teaching, or undervalued its own diversity, but arises out of its position in relation to God and Christ (vv. 4-6); the church may have an organisation but it is not simply a social organisation; it is the body of Christ.” [Best, 376] When we forget that and take upon ourselves the trappings of the world, we are no longer one of the Lord’s churches but merely a social club.

THE WHOLE BODY MAKES THE BODY GROW

— πᾶν τὸ σῶμα ... τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται [pan to sōma ... tēn auxēsin tou sōmatos poieitai] —

This is the main gist of this verse, as shown in the sentence diagrams above. “The whole body’ serves as the subject of a verb that does not appear until twenty words later.” [Arnold, 270] Each translation tries to capture this sense, although I like the NKJV / NASV and ESV’s translations best:

- ‘all the body ... increaseth the body’ (Tyndale)
- ‘all the body ... receiveth increase of the body’ (Geneva)
- ‘the whole body ... maketh increase of the body’ (KJV)
- ‘the whole body ... the increase of the body doth make’ (YLT)
- ‘all the body ... maketh the increase of the body’ (RV, ASV)
- ‘the whole body ... makes bodily growth’ (RSV)
- ‘the whole body ... causes growth of the body’ (NKJV, NASV)
- ‘the whole body ... makes the body grow’ (ESV)

EPHESIANS 4:16 WITH COLOSSIANS 2:19 — Many have observed the correlation between Paul’s comments here and those in Colossians:

Ephesians 4:15,16

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (ESV)

Colossians 2:19

and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. (ESV)

“(Christ) from whom the whole Body, being constructed and assembled through every supplying joint according to the proper activity of each individual part, achieves bodily growth, and so builds itself up in love. The similarity between verse 16 and Col. 2.19 is very close: the head from whom the whole body, supplied and assembled through joints and ligaments, will grow (as to) the growth of God’. The four words or phrases in italics are identical; two others are almost so, ‘joints’ (‘every joint’) and ‘supplied’ (‘supplying’). ‘Ligament’ may be missing, but it has already been used (in a metaphorical sense) of the ‘bond’ of peace at Eph. 4.3. Ephesians also uses the verb ‘grow’ (v. 15) and the noun ‘growth’ in close relation (v. 16), though not quite as close as the ‘grow (with) the growth’ of Col. 2.19. Finally, there are two participles qualifying body in both texts: ‘assembled’ appears in each, while [Paul in] Ephesians repeats the word he has already used at 2.21, ‘constructed’ or ‘fitting together’ (in reference to the Church as a building).” [Muddiman, 208] “The thought is identical with that of Col. 2:19 (the wording of which indeed is closely followed): from the head, Paul says there, ‘the whole body, supplied and fitted together through the joints and ligaments, grows with the growth that comes from God.’ It is not from the head, important as it is, that the natural body receives all the supplies requisite for health and development; but it is indeed from the living Christ that his people receive (through the Spirit) all that they need to make them effectively his people.” [Bruce, 353]

PAUL USES ‘BODY’ TWICE IN THIS VERSE, BOTH TO REFER TO OUR CHURCHES — *all the body, the whole body* — πᾶν τὸ σῶμα [pan to sōma] — Paul uses the word ‘body’ twice in this verse, probably to make his theme explicit since there is so much distance between its first mention. Had Paul used a pronoun (‘itself’ or some other such word) it would have caused ambiguity as to what he was referring. As mentioned in the last lesson, each of these times the word ‘body’ is a metaphor of our churches.

THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE BODY AS A GROUP, NOT THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE BODY — “Paul’s focus is on the growth of the body as a whole, not on the need for individuals to become mature in Christ, however necessary this may be. Both the subject of the sentence, ‘the whole body’, and the final expression, ‘for its own upbuilding in love’, clearly affirm this corporate emphasis. Although the distinct contribution of each member to the life and development of the whole is highlighted through the clause as each part does its work, the stress still falls on the corporate growth of the body.” [O’Brien, 313] “When believers speak the gospel to one another the body is built up, or grows.... *Growth is into Christ, basically the*

same idea as v. 13c, and is of the church as a whole and not primarily of its members as individuals.” [Best, 408] “Paul’s vision for the church is that each member of the group will actively contribute to the growth of the body and thus facilitate its growth to maturity. The ultimate goal far transcends personal spiritual growth because the entire body is in view.” [Arnold, 270]

causes growth of the body, makes the body grow — τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται [tēn auxēsin tou sōmatos poieitai] — While Paul uses very common words here, the connotations of what he says is very rich. The word for ‘grow’ [τὴν αὐξήσιν, (tēn auxēsin)] merely means ‘to grow, to increase in size, whether of animate beings or of plants’; e.g., ‘Consider the lilies, how they grow’ (Luke 12:27); ‘and the child grew’ (Luke 2:40). The form of the word used by Paul in our verse is only used here and in the parallel verse Col 2:19 to refer to our churches: ‘from whom the whole body ... grows with a growth that is from God’ (Col 2:19; both ‘grow’ and ‘growth’ are forms of our word). [BDAG Lexicon; Friberg’s Lexicon; Louw-Nida Lexicon]

THE WHOLE BODY IS TO BE ACTIVE IN PROMOTING ITS GROWTH — The word ‘makes’ [ποιεῖται, (poieitai)] is a present tense / indicative mood / middle voice verb, meaning the word is reflective. What Paul means by using this word is that ‘**the whole body promotes its own growth, the body’s growth comes from within as a living organism, the body causes (brings about, procures) the growth of the body.**’ [Hoehner, 577; Abbott, 127; Arnold, 272; Vincent, Word Studies] Some very good quotes that brings forth the ramifications of that concept:

“Our verse stresses the togetherness of those in the body, but it is not stressing the growth together of laity and ministers guided by the latter. The church is more than the passive object of ministerial activity. Each individual has an important contribution to make if unity is to be maintained and growth to take place.... Though it is not the body’s own power which creates growth but Christ, the body through its members has a part to play in that growth; at least if it does not assist but remains quiescent, it will prevent it.” [Best, 410, 413]

“It is also important to note that this passage makes it clear that the ministry of the church is not the obligation of a few but rather the responsibility of every believer. The distinction between the clergy and laity is a human creation. This is due primarily to a confusion between gift and office.” [Hoehner, 579]

“Paul therefore ends the section as it began, with a reference to Christ’s gift of power to every believer in a portion equal to that believer’s role in building up Christ’s body. The Christ who gives these gifts, we are reminded, is the Christ who has conquered all the evil forces of the universe, wherever they are located. He is, therefore, powerful enough to equip the church to keep false teaching at bay, maintain its unity, and reach its destiny of full union with him.” [Thielman, 288]

ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE BODY HELPS THE GROW, IT ALL DEPENDS UPON CHRIST — While the body causes its own growth, this must be balanced with the preceding in this same verse.

“Isolated from the context it would appear that the body of believers produces its own growth. However, the context makes it clear that it is not the believers’ inherent ability that produces growth but their utilization of the gifts that Christ gives to each of them. Furthermore, immediately preceding the subject ‘the body’ the prepositional phrase ‘from whom’ clearly indicates that the head, Christ, is the source from which the church draws its ability to produce or cause growth.” [Hoehner, 577]

“Through the proper functioning of the parts, the whole body is to be active in promoting its own growth, although ultimately it is Christ who is seen as providing the means for the body to carry out such activity. From this perspective, relating Christ as head to the Church as his body becomes an appropriate way to sum up the main thrust of vv 7-16. As the one who has been exalted to sovereign rule over all things, Christ is in the position and has the power to supply his Church with the leadership, the life, and the love that are the requisites for its growth.” [Lincoln, 262]

“Yet the church is not a passive recipient of God’s work; the entire body actively participates in facilitating its own growth.... Paul is saying that the body causes its own growth, but this whole clause is a relative clause stressing that the growth is ultimately ‘from Him.’ The end result is a dynamic image of the individual members of the body receiving nourishment from Christ, and they, in turn, serve other parts of the body with the strength and grace they have received from Christ.” [Arnold, 270]