

## **THE WAY TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENT TURMOIL IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

Editor's Note: The following excerpts were prepared from the published ministry of Brother Witness Lee for those attending the International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones held in Whistler, BC, Canada, October 5-7, 2006.

### **EXCERPTS FROM: *THE PRESENT TURMOIL IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY AND THE DIRECTION OF THE LORD'S MOVE TODAY***

#### **TURMOIL AMONG THE CHILDREN OF GOD**

Now I would like to point out to you the turmoils among the children of God in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

#### **TURMOIL AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, AS RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF NUMBERS**

Immediately after the children of Israel were formed into a nation through the building up of the tabernacle and the raising up of the priesthood with its service for their worship of God, that is, after their theocratic government was established, they began to journey in the wilderness (Num. 10:12-13). After only three days (v. 33) they had their first occasion of turmoil, in Taberah, where the children of Israel were murmuring evil (11:1-3). After this murmuring, the mixed multitude lusted exceedingly for flesh to eat (v. 4). Later, Miriam and Aaron, Moses' elder sister and brother, rebelled by speaking against Moses because he had married a Cushite woman (12:1-15). Because of their rebellion, Miriam became leprous and had to be quarantined for seven days so that this leprosy would not spread. Not long after this turmoil, they journeyed to Paran (12:16), and the problem of unbelief arose. At this juncture, the children of Israel wept, cried, and complained concerning entering the good land. They considered that if they entered into the good land, they would become prey for the giants (13:32-33; 14:3). They even wanted to return to Egypt (14:4). They had forgotten the tyranny and slavery that they had suffered in Egypt.

Numbers 15 is a very peaceful chapter, having no record of any turmoil. But in chapter sixteen, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rose up with two hundred fifty leaders of the assembly to oppose Moses (vv. 1-3). This was a great turmoil. The peace of chapter fifteen did not last very long. Prior to this rebellion, a certain amount of fermentation had taken place among the leaders. The punishment for this rebellion was threefold. First, God caused the earth to open up and swallow up the three leaders with their families (Num. 16:32). Thus, they were the first ones in history to go down alive—body, soul, and spirit—into Sheol (v. 33). Second, fire came forth from Jehovah and consumed all two hundred fifty leaders (v. 35). This kind of burning could have been accomplished only by God Himself. Third, a plague came in and killed fourteen thousand seven hundred in one day (vv. 46-49). Following this threefold punishment, God commanded each tribe to bring a rod, and He commanded Moses to lay them before the testimony (17:1-5). The man whose rod budded would be the man whom God had chosen. The next day Aaron's rod not only budded but also brought forth almonds (v. 8). This was a miracle of resurrection. Nevertheless, even this threefold punishment with the miracle of resurrection did not subdue the rebellious people (vv. 12-13).

The following chapters in Numbers contain turmoil after turmoil, problem after problem. It is no wonder that a man such as Moses, of whom the Lord testified that he was the meekest man on the earth (12:3), became angry, calling the children of Israel rebels (20:10). Although it is

understandable why Moses became angry, his word and attitude toward the children of Israel, issuing from his anger, offended God. When the Lord spoke to Aaron and Moses, He said that the two of them had rebelled against His word (v. 24). Because of this failure, Moses and Aaron had no share in entering the good land. What a tragedy!

The last big turmoil and failure in the book of Numbers occurred when the children of Israel committed fornication and idolatry corporately (25:1-3) by the snare of Balaam's teaching (31:16) with Balak's plot. Because of this failure, twenty-four thousand died by a plague (25:9). After this failure, God came in to renumber the children of Israel in Numbers 26. After forty years of purging, purifying, and filtering, 601,730 were numbered in the second numbering. This number is only 1,820 less than that of the first numbering. The primary difference between the first numbering and the second numbering was that those numbered in the second numbering were altogether new. Although Moses helped to renumber the children of Israel, he was not renumbered. Of those who were numbered in the first numbering, only Joshua and Caleb were renumbered. By the time of Numbers 26, God had gained a new people, a people who had been purged by God's judgments through His divine dealings. Thus, they were purified. This is the history of the Old Testament. Through all the turmoil in the wilderness, the children of Israel were fully purged, purified, and filtered.

### **TURMOIL AMONG THE LORD'S PEOPLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus selected twelve of His disciples and appointed them to be apostles (Luke 6:13). One among the disciples selected by the Lord Jesus was Judas, who also became a betrayer (v. 16). During the apostle Paul's lifetime, the church life passed through turmoils that were full of problems.

I have been in the church life since 1932, and I was with Brother Nee for eighteen years. During those eighteen years with Brother Nee, turmoil came in every five or six years. In 1949 I went to Taiwan. From 1949 until 1989 there have been three different times of turmoil, including the present one. The rate has decreased from once every five or six years to once every twelve years.

Turmoil is the destiny of the progressing church, the pilgrim church. While the church is journeying on this earth as a corporate pilgrim, it is destined to suffer turmoil. We need such turmoil for our purification. According to our point of view, turmoil is not very good, but according to our real situation, turmoil is needed. Therefore, we should not expect to remain free from turmoil in the church life all the time. In Acts 20, after Paul had a long talk with the elders of the church in Ephesus, he warned them of fierce wolves who would come in among them, not sparing the flock (v. 29). In verse 30 he said that men would rise up from among them to speak perverted things to draw away the disciples after themselves. In the past three years, some have risen up among us to speak perverted things.

An article entitled "Being Realistic" was published in a periodical entitled *The Word and the Testimony*. The author of this article is John So, and the editors of the periodical are John Ingalls and Bill Mallon. This article insinuates that I am like the Japanese army when it invaded and occupied the Philippines in the Second World War. This implies that I invaded the church in Anaheim, taking it and possessing it in order to make it "the church of Witness Lee." The article goes on to indicate that the meeting on Ball Road in Anaheim is no longer a local church, because it has lost its ground. According to this article, the ground of the church in Anaheim has become a person (Witness Lee) and his work and ministry, and it is now occupied by us, just as the site of the temple in Jerusalem is occupied today by the Moslems. Is this not a perverted word?

In another portion of this article, under the heading "The Nicolaitans," I am categorized by innuendo as a Nicolaitan. In the way of innuendo, I am also likened to Balaam, who peddled the word of God in order to make money.

This article by John So also likens me to Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess and killed all the prophets of God, making herself the unique oracle of God. Is this not a perverted word that fulfills Acts 20:30?

## **THE PRESENT TURMOIL IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

The present turmoil among us can be considered a rebellion, a rebellion with a conspiracy. I have been quiet for more than two years. You have probably never heard me speak concerning this matter. On occasion I have expressed something related to this matter in the elders' meetings, but not in a very clear way. Since the ones who initiated this rebellion have made it so obvious, even through the printed page, I feel that after such a long period of silence I should let you know some of the facts. But in this message I will say only a little bit in principle. For the details in full, see the book entitled *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*. It is published by Living Stream Ministry and is free of charge.

### **INSTIGATED BY THE EVIL ONE**

Having thoroughly considered during the past two years the things that have happened in the rebellion, I came to the conclusion that this rebellion is the work of the devil, the evil one (Matt. 13:19), because nearly everything brought out by the rebellious ones was not logical or reasonable, and some of the ways by which they did things were inhuman.

### **CARRIED OUT BY THE PERVERTED ONES**

A rebellion such as the one we are encountering now in the Lord's recovery is not only instigated by the evil spiritual source but also is carried out through human instruments. In Paul's charge to the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20:30, he warned them that from among themselves men would rise up to speak perverted things to draw away the disciples to be their followers. In the past nineteen centuries, Paul's warning has been fulfilled repeatedly. I would say that the present rebellion among us is another fulfillment of Paul's warning. Many words that have come out of those who are participating in this rebellion should be considered as "perverted things."

### **WITH THE WINDS OF TEACHING**

A number of the teachings put out by the four leading ones in this rebellion, especially in the past three years, are truly winds of teaching (Eph. 4:14), such as the Lord Jesus building up the church by Himself directly (implying not through others), absolute autonomy in the local churches, no delegated authority, no spiritual father, and democracy instead of theocracy. These winds of teaching have damaged some of the dear saints in the Lord's recovery, who need the help through the light of the proper teachings of the New Testament, which are the teachings of the apostles (Acts 2:42).

### **A TEST TO THE FAITHFUL ONES**

This illogical and unreasonable rebellion is a test to the faithful ones. Any saint who knows the New Testament teachings logically and reasonably and who is faithful to the Lord according to His holy and unchanging Word would not care for the unbridled speakings in the present turmoil. So, the rebellion is truly a test to the faithful ones for their approvedness (1 Cor. 11:19).

### **A PURIFICATION TO THE RECOVERY**

A rebellion always brings about some sifting among God's people. This sifting can be considered as a kind of purification exercised by the Lord's sovereignty to purify His collective people. Further-

more, the occurring of a rebellion also renders some purification to the faithful ones in their intention, their motive, their purpose, their aims, and other matters. To some extent I have been purified. During the turmoil, when I heard that people slandered me and defamed me, as the Lord said in Matthew 5:11, "Blessed are you when they reproach and persecute you, and while speaking lies, say every evil thing against you because of Me," I checked with the Lord to find out if I was wrong. By such checking, I was purified.

### **THE PROPER WAY TO TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

Now we need to see the proper way to take care of the problems in the Lord's recovery.

#### **WITH A GENUINE AND SINCERE CONCERN FOR THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

To take care of the problems in the recovery, we must have a genuine and sincere concern for the Lord's recovery, without any biased view concerning any matter. Furthermore, we should not have any element of self-interest, self-plotting, self-esteem, and self-consideration. We must be unbiased, fair, and pure, without any background that would affect us. We must abandon our self-esteem and self-consideration. We all have our own prestige, and we like to highly esteem ourselves. We also expect that others will esteem us highly. As long as we seek self-esteem in the church life, we become a problem. Perhaps we are always considering, "What about me, my position, my future, and my interest?" If we are considering ourselves all the time in this way, we are unable to take care of problems in the Lord's recovery. In order to take care of the problems, we must be pure, tested, and checked by the Lord. When we have a pure, genuine, and sincere concern for the Lord's recovery, we are qualified to take care of the problems. Otherwise, we become a problem.

#### **THROUGH THE PROPER AND COMMON FELLOWSHIP OF THE BODY**

The proper way to take care of the problems in the Lord's recovery is through the proper and common fellowship of the Body. We should have a common fellowship, not the fellowship of a small nucleus or small circle. This kind of fellowship should be in love. If we are short of love, we are disqualified. The proper and common fellowship of the Body is without any private circle, without any party spirit, and without any hidden secrecies. Many of these negative items have been practiced by those in the center of the present turmoil. They came together in small, private circles to plan, plot, and conspire. They even proposed secret conferences to several brothers.

In Acts 15 a proper, open conference with the leading ones took place in Jerusalem to consider the matter of circumcision and the faith. It was a big problem among the churches at Paul's time, but the brothers did nothing secretly, and they did not form parties. Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem in order to have a proper fellowship with the elders and the other apostles (vv. 2-21).

#### **AVOIDING ANY ATTEMPT AT CONSPIRACY**

To take care of the problems in the Lord's recovery, we must avoid any attempt at conspiracy. We must do things face to face, keeping everything in the light. We should do things openly and avoid doing anything behind a person's back. To do something behind a person's back or in a small group by way of conspiracy is absolutely devilish and very evil.

As children of the light (Eph. 5:8), we should keep everything in the light, not doing anything in darkness or in secrecy. We are serving the Lord. Why is there the need to do anything in darkness? We should also condemn any seeking of sympathy. Some today are not only seeking sympathy but also hunting for sympathy. We should also abandon backbiting, evil speaking, and death spreading. Backbiting is cruel, evil speaking is slandering, which is the devil's main work to destroy God's people, and death spreading is to work with Satan, the source of death, to spread the germ of spiritual

death to deaden God's people. For keeping the oneness in the Lord's recovery, we must abandon all these devilish evils.

### **HOLDING TO THE UNIQUE GOAL**

If we are to take care of the problems in the Lord's recovery, we must hold to the unique goal. Whatever we do should be for the edification of the saints, for the benefit of the churches, for the building up of the Body of Christ, for the keeping of the oneness of the Body, and for the spreading of the Lord's recovery. These are the crucial points in what we call the central lane. For the saints' edification, we have to sacrifice our seekings; for the churches' benefit, we have to ignore our interest; for the Body of Christ's building up, we have to give up any kind of personal preference; for the keeping of the oneness of the Body, we have to drop all kinds of personal insistings; and for the spreading of the Lord's recovery, we have to forget about our territories. It is only in this way that we can cleave to the unique goal of the Lord's recovery.

### **ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES**

The way to take care of the problems in the Lord's recovery should also be according to the Scriptures without twisting and without any interpretation out of context, without any mixing in of human ideas, without any element of tradition, but with an open and seeking spirit. If we hold such an open and seeking spirit, the problems can be taken care of properly. To avoid twisting the Scriptures, we must be very objective in our realization of any portion of the holy Word. To avoid having any interpretation of the Scriptures that is out of context, we must not be biased in our subjective knowledge or personal feelings. To avoid the mixing in of any human ideas, we must reject our natural thoughts, our natural learning, and our natural doings. And to avoid having any element of tradition, we need to be under the light of the pure revelation of the holy Word. All these will keep us in an open and seeking spirit. Then we can discern and judge things concerning the Lord's recovery according to the Scriptures.

### **THE HIDDEN DIVISIVE FACTORS IN THE PAST**

The present trouble among us had its beginning in the past, but the fermentation or leavening process was not significantly manifested until 1985. This fermenting process has continued over the past few years and has become fully exposed this year (1989). In August of this year, the brothers who are taking the lead in the present trouble began to publish a paper called *The Word and the Testimony* in open opposition to the Lord's recovery and ministry.

From 1984 to 1986 I called three urgent elders' trainings. The first was in February 1984, the second in September 1985, and the last in February 1986 (see *Elders' Training, Books 1-8*, published by Living Stream Ministry). My opening word in two of these three elders' trainings was concerning the danger of division.

### **THE INTENTION TO DO AN EXTRA WORK IN THE UNIQUE WORK OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

The present problem among us came out of something which was hidden in the past. One of these hidden things was the intention to do an extra work in the unique work of the Lord's recovery. In the recovery there is a definite work which is for the building up of the local churches unto the building up of the universal Body of Christ. This is the work. But among us, there was a case of someone who wanted to do an extra work within the work. This person would not leave the recovery or give up the church life. Instead, he insisted on having a particular work of his own, by his own effort, within the recovery. This was a divisive factor.

## THE TENDENCY TO KEEP SEPARATE TERRITORIES

Another hidden divisive factor is the tendency to keep separate territories. The Lord's work and move for the accomplishment of God's eternal economy is uniquely one. If we consider any region in which we are participating in the Lord's unique work as our particular territory, this will be a cause or a factor of division. Even the tendency to keep a separate territory should be uprooted. We should work for the Lord within His measure (2 Cor. 10:13-16), but we should not consider what the Lord has measured to us as our particular territory. Our local work in our region should be for the Lord's universal Body. In the New Testament we cannot see such a thing as jurisdiction in the Lord's work.

## THE WAY OF NOT HAVING ONE'S WORK MINGLED WITH OTHERS' WORK

In the past there was the hidden factor of working in a way of not having one's work mingled with others' work. The New Testament unveils to us that Peter's work for the Lord, mainly in the Jewish land, and Paul's, mainly in the Gentile world, were all for the one Body of Christ, without any distinction or separation. Rather, they were one in the carrying out of God's New Testament economy. The effect of Peter's work was realized in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12), and Paul did go to Jerusalem to fellowship with the apostles and elders there (Acts 15:2, 4; 21:17-20a). This kind of fellowship, like the blood circulation of our physical body, helps the Body of Christ in the circulation of the divine life. It mingles the different pieces of our work for the Lord's recovery into one move. If our work is void of this kind of fellowship, this may develop into another factor of division.

## THE HIDDEN EXPECTATION OF BEING A PROMINENT FIGURE IN THE LORD'S WORK

There was also the hidden expectation of being a prominent figure in the Lord's work. We cannot deny that this "gopher" of ambition was among us. If you are ambitious and have the capacity, your capacity may neutralize your ambition, and there may be no problem. The problem among us today is that a number of brothers have ambition but do not have the capacity. Ambition plus incapacity is a real problem.

If all the ambitious brothers had the capacity, their capacity could swallow up the ugliness of their ambition. But if they have ambition without the capacity for their ambition, their ambition with their incapacity causes them to become dropouts. If you desire to be a prominent figure and you have that capacity, you may become such a person. If all the churches are helped by you and all the churches listen to you, you may become a prominent figure. But if you do not have the capacity and you want to become prominent, this is when a problem comes in.

We can see the difference in capacity with Barnabas and Paul in Acts. Barnabas was used by the Lord to bring Saul, who became Paul, into the ministry (Acts 9:26-27; 11:22-26). Furthermore, in Acts 13 Barnabas's name was mentioned first when the list of prophets and teachers in Antioch was recorded and when the Spirit set Barnabas and Saul apart for the work. Shortly after they went out, the matter of capacity arose. At the beginning of the journey, Barnabas was always mentioned first (vv. 2, 7); then Paul's name began to be mentioned first (vv. 9, 13, 16, 46, 50). Paul's name was mentioned first because his capacity to meet the need at that time was greater than Barnabas's, and he eventually became the leading speaker (14:12). Paul began to take the lead on their journey because he had a greater capacity. Barnabas did not have the capacity that Paul had. Later, Paul wrote fourteen Epistles. Who could speak as much, as deeply, or as high as Paul spoke? Of all the writers of the New Testament, Paul was the only one to use the term *the Body of Christ*. The other writers did not use this term or the term *economy*, because they did not have as great a capacity as Paul.

When Paul and Barnabas returned from their trip to Antioch, a big problem arose concerning circumcision, and the church in Antioch sent them to Jerusalem to fellowship so that the problem could be solved (Acts 15:1-3). After the problem of circumcision was solved and they returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, they wanted to make another journey (v. 36). At this juncture Barnabas wanted to bring his cousin, John Mark (v. 37; Col. 4:10), on the journey. But Paul would not agree to

bring Mark along, because Mark had left Barnabas and Paul in a negative way on their first ministry journey (Acts 13:13 and note 1). Barnabas's desire that Mark go with them was simply according to his own feeling. As a result, Barnabas and Paul separated from each other (15:39). From that point on, even though Barnabas might have gone out to visit the churches, his ministry was finished as far as the holy record in Acts is concerned.

According to my understanding, the problem between Paul and Barnabas consisted mainly of two points. First, Barnabas might have had some hidden unhappiness within him, because he took the lead at the beginning and later Paul began to take the lead since Barnabas had a smaller capacity. This was not an easy matter to overcome. If Barnabas had been happy about this development, that would have been a great mercy to Barnabas. Second, according to the record in Acts 15, Barnabas did not keep a proper principle in taking John Mark with him. Apparently, he did this only because of his own personal feeling concerning his cousin. This violated the spiritual principle. Barnabas should have submitted to Paul's way of not taking John Mark in order to allow Mark to learn the lesson. Instead of submitting to Paul, Barnabas took his own way, and this resulted in a separation between him and Paul. Paul had a greater capacity than Barnabas, and because of this, he eventually was the one to take the lead in the ministry.

For more than twenty-five years in this country, I never told people that I was an apostle. But in these past few years, some brothers began to talk considerably about apostles and have said that there are not one, but many apostles among us. This is a shame! In a meeting of the church in Anaheim on August 28, 1988, one of the sixteen points concerning the standing of the church in Anaheim, a point presented by a certain brother, was that there are many apostles among us today, not just one. He said that he would give a list of these apostles to any of the saints who were interested. One brother asked for and received such a list from that brother. The list included seven names, with a question mark beside one of the names, and it did not include the name of the one who gave the list.

Shortly after I received news concerning this list, I went to Taipei, and I gave a message there concerning the three different kinds of apostles (see *A Timely Trumpeting and the Present Need*, pp. 25-29, published by Living Stream Ministry). The seven brothers on that list were all under my ministry. According to the truth concerning the kinds of apostles, this would make them apostles like Timothy, Titus, and Silas, who were produced by the Lord's directly appointed apostles. After this message was published, another word came out saying that there are no apostles today. This is similar to what John Nelson Darby taught. Later, still another word came out saying that there are only twelve apostles—the eleven, who were selected by the Lord Jesus, and Paul. It was said that the selection of Matthias by lot in Acts 1 was wrong. But according to the Bible, when Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost (2:14), he stood up with the eleven, which included Matthias.

This kind of speaking is based on whatever would be a benefit to the speaker and does not have the standard of truth. This is a basic problem.

#### **THE NEGLIGENCE REGARDING THE KEEPING OF THE ONE ACCORD IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

Another great divisive factor in the past has been the negligence regarding the keeping of the one accord in the Lord's recovery. In the elders' training in February 1986, my burden was to ask the elders to take care of the one accord in the Lord's recovery. More than four hundred brothers signed a letter written to me, assuring me that they would endeavor to keep the one accord (see *Elders' Training, Book 8, The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 154-155, published by Living Stream Ministry). But in the past three years of rebellion, a few brothers condemned that letter and even said that a part of that letter is heretical. Two of them wrote to tell me that they would remove their signatures from that letter. This shows that either they were not clear about the real meaning of the one accord or they despised it.

The above-mentioned factors of division hidden in the past are a strong proof that there was a negligence regarding the keeping of the one accord in the Lord's recovery. The present turmoil among us is not a matter of right or wrong but an issue and a full manifestation of this negligence. This manifestation has progressed to the extent that some of the rebellious ones told people definitely that they will fight until they put me down. This shows strongly that they would not care for the one accord. This is surely a hidden factor of division.

The present turmoil among us did not develop in only one day. Ice in a river accumulates over a period of time before it becomes several feet thick. In the same way, in our situation there has been a certain amount of accumulation of unpleasant things over a number of years. At the beginning I had no realization concerning any opposition or criticism, because I was busy in Taipei. But when I came back in December 1987 and the brothers came to make certain demands according to their plan, I began to realize that something was terribly wrong. Their plan was actually their conspiracy.

In principle, turmoil and problems among the Lord's people come from two sources, a human source and a satanic source. After observing and considering the situation among us over the past three years, I believe that this turmoil is initiated by Satan, the evil one, the enemy (Matt. 13:19, 28). It is something from the realm of darkness to destroy the ministry and to shut the door to the new way. Satan hates the ministry, and he also hates the new way. The ministry with the new way is the great blockade to the enemy in his evil device, so Satan and the evil spirits moved quite strongly to do something. As a result, some of the brothers were captured and used by the evil spirits to do things which are altogether illogical, unreasonable, and inhuman. They told people that I am old, I am no longer able to judge things clearly. This is a lie. All such things show strongly that this turmoil is of the devil.

However, in spite of the turmoil, by the mercy and grace of the Lord, most of the churches around the globe are still going on positively. The reports of their present situation, given by their elders who were present in the elders' meetings, are quite encouraging. These reports are printed separately as a book entitled *The Present Situation of the Churches in the Recovery throughout the World*. Please do your best to obtain a copy from the Living Stream Ministry office, free of charge. (*The Present Turmoil in the Lord's Recovery and the Direction of the Lord's Move Today*, pp. 9-24)

EXCERPTS FROM:  
***THE PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH LIFE***  
***ACCORDING TO THE GOD-ORDAINED WAY***

In this term of training I have a deep consideration for all the trainees, especially the young ones. I also believe that what I am going to fellowship with you in this message will be a help to all the saints in the Lord's recovery. I believe you have heard that beginning in September 1987 a group of brothers who had been among us for many years became very dissenting. In the past four years they have spoken and even written a number of things that are divisive and very misleading. During this time I adopted the attitude that I would not fight with them. Thus, I did not say much, but, on the positive side, I received a burden from the Lord to put out more and more messages on the divine Word. Beginning in the summer of 1988, after they had begun their conspiracy, my speaking increased. First, in 1988 I put out the *Life-study of Leviticus*. Then from 1989 through 1991, I released, consecutively, the life-studies of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Daniel and Zechariah, and Jeremiah and Lamentations. Presently, I am ready to finish the life-study of the Old Testament Prophets by covering the Minor Prophets in the coming summer training. During the same period, besides all the life-studies on these books of the Old Testament, I have held a number of conferences in different cities, including Seattle, Cleveland, Atlanta, Pasadena, San Diego, Taipei, Berkeley, and Anaheim. In all these conferences I passed on some crucial messages for the recovery.

In this message and the next I would like to take the opportunity to make the present situation in the Lord's recovery clear to all the saints. Then we will know where we are and will also know how to face the present situation. I say again that I have no intention to fight with anyone. For all the years of my ministry I have never done the Lord's work in the way of stressing things on the negative side. On the contrary, I have always done the work by ministering things on the positive side. Therefore, in this message what I am going to say is not something negative but something very positive.

In the previous message we covered four points of the prerequisite of the practice of the church life according to the God-ordained way. In this message we will continue with the fifth and sixth points.

**TO HAVE A CLEAR VIEW CONCERNING THE PRESENT SITUATION  
OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

The fifth point of the prerequisite is to have a clear view concerning the present situation of the Lord's recovery. Since we are in the recovery, we should know the present situation of the recovery. We should not be indifferent but should know the real situation. This requires that we get into the intrinsic nature of every problem.

According to God's ordained principle in His creation, nothing can exist without two sides. Even a thin piece of paper has two sides. Not only so, but according to God's ordination, for many things to exist, they need not only two sides but also an outer covering and an inner reality. A walnut is a kind of fruit, but its appearance is tough and rough. The external shell of the walnut is not the real walnut. The real walnut is not the shell but the kernel. When we eat a walnut, we do not eat the shell; we eat the kernel. The shell of the walnut and the kernel of the walnut are two different things.

The book of Jeremiah may be likened to a walnut. I misunderstood this book for many years. When I first read it, I did not appreciate it. Nevertheless, there were two verses in Jeremiah that I could never forget. The first was 17:9, which says, "The heart is deceitful above all things / And it is incurable; / Who can know it?" From my youth I remembered that verse. It helped me not to trust any heart, including my heart, because man's heart is deceitful. The second verse is 13:23, which says, "Can the Cushite change his skin, / Or the leopard his spots? / Then you also may be able to do good, / Who are accustomed to do evil." This verse says that man's sinful nature is unchangeable. Jeremiah likens man's sinful nature to two things: the skin of the Cushite and the spots of the leopard.

ard. The fact that no one can change these two things indicates that man's sinful nature is unchangeable. While I was writing the outlines for the 1991 Winter Training on Jeremiah, I was forced to get into the kernel of Jeremiah intrinsically. It was then that the Lord showed me the intrinsic contents of this book.

#### **BY THOROUGH PRAYER**

The way to have a clear view concerning the present situation of the Lord's recovery is by thorough prayer (Eph. 1:16; 3:14). When you hear the things spoken by the dissenting ones, do not take them at face value. These sayings in themselves are only the "shell"; they are not the "kernel." When you hear anything concerning the Lord's recovery, you should not receive it immediately. Instead, you should bring it to the Lord in prayer. You should not pray only once but should pray again and again concerning what you have heard, until you have prayed thoroughly.

#### **IN A SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION**

In order to have a clear view concerning the present situation, we need to have a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Paul desired to help the Ephesians to know God's economy intrinsically. Concerning this, he prayed twice. In Ephesians 1:17 he prayed that we would have a spirit of wisdom and revelation. He did not pray concerning the mind or the emotion; he prayed concerning the spirit, and this spirit is not a spirit of knowledge and understanding but a spirit of wisdom and revelation. To know God's economy intrinsically, we need more than knowledge and understanding; we need a spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Then, in Ephesians 3:14-19 Paul prayed for "this cause": that we may know Christ in such a way that He will be able to make His home in our hearts. For this particular cause Paul did not pray lightly; rather, he prayed in an earnest and formal way, bowing his knees to the Father.

#### **WITHOUT PREJUDICE**

To have a clear view concerning the present situation of the Lord's recovery, we must be without prejudice. We should not say anything out of prejudice. Rather, we should learn to be quiet and bring every problem to the Lord.

#### **WITHOUT PARTIALITY**

In order to have a clear view of the present situation, we must also be without partiality; that is, in any controversy we should not take sides.

#### **WITHOUT PERSONAL AFFECTION**

We must also learn to view the situation without personal affection. We should learn not to express our personal likes or dislikes concerning anything. We need to know who we are. We are nothing. We are small slaves of the Lord, and in His great house we should not say that we like or dislike certain things. We should say, "If the Lord shows me so, I will take it."

#### **WITHOUT SELF-OPINION BUT FULL OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT**

Finally, we must be without self-opinion but full of spiritual discernment (1 Cor. 14:29b). The English letters o, c, and e are sometimes difficult to distinguish. If we do not exercise discernment, we may read something wrongly. In the Chinese language a number of characters differ only slightly in form. For example, the character for *heaven* and that for *monster* are nearly the same. Thus, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them.

When we attempt to get into the intrinsic nature of the twenty “problems” raised by the dissenting ones, we can see that none of them is simple. Every one is very crucial. And these twenty items show clearly that there must have been a conspiracy among the dissenting brothers. Without a conspiracy, no one could have put forth all these items. To enter into the intrinsic nature of all these items, we must not have any opinion but must be full of discernment.

## **TO DISCERN THE PRESENT PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE DISSENTING ONES**

Because of the rebellion in these past four and a half years, many negative things were spoken by the dissenting ones. A number of these things were distributed in writing, and some have even become slogans. In this message and the next, my intention is to fellowship with you concerning twenty “problems” raised by the dissenting ones.

### **(1) THE PROBLEM OF CONTROL**

The first problem is the problem of control; this problem comprises four items. The main thing for which the dissenters condemned me is that I and the Living Stream Ministry office control the churches.

#### ***“THE CENTRALIZATION OF CONTROL” BY THE TRAINING CENTER***

The dissenting ones used the term “the centralization of control.” When their conspiracy began in September 1987, I was in Taiwan conducting a training for full-time serving ones. In December of that year I came back to the United States. Shortly thereafter, four of the dissenting ones came to speak with me. The first one to speak used this term “the centralization of control.” Prior to that time I had never heard such a term. While I was waiting to discover the meaning of this term, this brother expressed that my training center in Taipei was considered by them to be a center to control all the churches on this earth. He said that this control was to such an extent that all the churches on the earth had to report their meeting times to my training center in Taipei. I had never heard of such a thing. He said that this was my way to control all the churches. He then said that I trained the young people in my training center in Taipei, and eventually they were all instructed and charged to go back to their churches to control the churches for me. Then the fourth brother continued, saying strongly that the training in Taipei should be dismantled into pieces.

#### ***THE CONTROL BY THE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, TAPES, ETC.***

The dissenting brothers also accused me of controlling the churches by my trainings, conferences, messages, tapes, etc. On March 19, 1989, in a word spoken to the church in Anaheim upon his resignation from the eldership, one of the dissenters said, “There has been a pervasive control exercised over the church....The control has not been exercised so much directly, but very much indirectly, through videos, conferences, trainings, and elders’ meetings.” This word implies that whatever I do in my ministry—teaching, training, publishing, and distributing audio and video tapes—is all for the purpose of controlling the churches.

In a very positive sense, I would say that my ministry does “control” people. If you are going to take drugs, my trainings will “control” you. If you are going to lose your temper with your wife, my books will “control” you. It is true that my trainings, conferences, publications, and tapes exercise a considerable “control” over thousands of people around the globe. Without such “control,” many people might have done certain things that would have damaged themselves and their families. In this sense, it is true that my ministry “controls” people.

Any kind of edification exercises some amount of “control.” All the schools, classes, teachers, and professors control their students. Although the “control” exercised by my ministry over the saints

and the churches is very positive, the dissenting ones speak of control in a very negative way to undermine my ministry. This is why I say that when you hear these things, you should not merely react to the outward appearance, to the “shell.” You must bring what you hear to the Lord; then the Lord will lead you to see what the intrinsic thing is within the shell.

### **“A KING,” “THE PHILOSOPHY OF A KING”**

Third, one of the dissenters said that among us there is the problem of “a king.” He also said that there is the problem of “the philosophy of a king” (see *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*, published by Living Stream Ministry, pages 100-101). This means that in their conspiracy the dissenting ones wanted to put down the philosophy of a king. In using the term “the philosophy of a king,” the dissenters mean that in the recovery there is a strong teaching concerning a definite leader among us. The word *philosophy* here means logic or teaching, and the king here refers to a leader.

In the New Testament, in one sense, there is the philosophy, or teaching, of a definite leader among God’s people, and in another sense, there is not such a teaching. Of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, fourteen were written by the apostle Paul. In his Epistles he was very strong to emphasize the leadership. In 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, and Philippians 3:17, Paul entreated the saints to imitate him because he imitated Christ. In Hebrews 13:17 he charged the believers to “obey the ones leading you and submit to them.” Verses such as these indicate that there is teaching in the New Testament concerning the leadership. However, neither the New Testament nor my ministry teaches anyone to be a king. Although the apostle Paul taught strongly concerning leadership, in 2 Corinthians 4:5 he said that the apostles preached Christ Jesus as Lord, and themselves as the believers’ slaves for Jesus’ sake. This indicates that we are not kings but are slaves to serve the saints.

In speaking of “a king,” no doubt the dissenting ones are referring to me. I have been with the saints and the churches in the United States for more than thirty years. To whom have I been a king? Such a statement concerning me is a reviling, not merely a defamation.

### **THE CONTROL OF THE CHURCHES BY THE LIVING STREAM MINISTRY OFFICE**

Fourth, the dissenters have accused the Living Stream Ministry office of controlling the churches. But I would ask, which church has the office controlled? They say that the office gave orders to the churches, commanding the churches to do certain things. However, this kind of accusation is false. The Living Stream Ministry office serves hundreds of churches. The office does not give orders to the churches, but it does ask the churches to coordinate with the office. For instance, in printing our books, it is difficult to decide how many copies we should print. In the initial years we did not have a proper way to make this decision; consequently, we printed more copies of some of the books than were needed. Eventually, the office asked the churches to submit standing orders for books and tapes. This has been a great help to the office. Sometimes, when a church has not submitted its standing order, the office asks the church to turn in its order. This is not the issuing of a command to that church but merely an asking of that church for its cooperation. The ministry office has also had to coordinate among the churches the procedure for the distribution and viewing of the video tapes of the semiannual trainings. It is mainly concerning these kinds of things that the office has communicated with the churches to coordinate with them. Besides these things, I cannot find any evidence that the Living Stream office controls any church. After hearing such an accusation, I asked any church who felt that they were under the control of the office to inform me of this, but to this date no church has confirmed this accusation.

## **(2) HIERARCHY BUILT UP BY THE MINISTRY AND THE MINISTRY OFFICE**

After I returned to Anaheim from Taipei in December 1987, a letter from one of the dissenting ones was waiting for me in my home. In this long letter the writer rebuked me, saying that the nature of the Lord's recovery had changed and that he had no alternative but to withdraw from the work. In a second letter to me he accused me of building up a hierarchy to subdue and control the churches (see *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*, pages 56-57). At the end of December I went to Irving to take care of the winter training there. During the winter training, on a Lord's Day I invited this brother to my apartment. In the presence of approximately six or seven brothers I said to him, "Brother..., in your letter to me (of December 16, 1987) you blamed my office for building up a hierarchy. Please point out to me a real case. Where is such a real hierarchy? I would be the first one to tear it down." He hesitated for awhile and did not speak. Then he answered, "There is the tendency" (see *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*, pages 59-60). In his letter he did not say "there is the tendency." He said emphatically that a hierarchy had been built up. Now he changed and said that there is the tendency. There is a tendency on this earth for everything. I have not died yet, but there is the tendency that I will die. This is the way that the rebellion was going on, without any ethical standard.

Today, outside mainland China there are approximately twelve hundred churches around the globe. I would ask all the churches: If you are a church that is under a hierarchy built up by me or by my office, please tell me. Thus far, no one has pointed out such a thing to me.

## **(3) THE SYSTEM OF THE MINISTRY**

The dissenters have also said that the ministry is a system, and all the churches have been systematized into this entity. The church in Rosemead declared that they would not be in the "system" of Witness Lee. The hall in Rosemead was built with funds from the sale of Elden Hall in Los Angeles, which was bought through my hand. In addition, the Living Stream Ministry gave the church in Rosemead \$100,000 as a gift. Eventually, the rebellious ones in Rosemead took over the meeting hall and evicted in writing the two bona fide elders, Francis Ball and John Kwan. These two brothers were properly appointed elders who had been accepted by the saints, but at the time the rebellious ones were going to take over the hall, they wrote letters to the two elders, telling them that they could no longer set foot on the premises of the church in Rosemead and that if they attempted to do so, they would be forcefully evicted (see *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*, pages 52-55).

## **(4) "MINISTRY CHURCHES," NO LONGER LOCAL CHURCHES**

The opposers also say that the churches that follow the ministry are "ministry churches" and are no longer local churches. The leading ones of the church in Raleigh, North Carolina, came to contact me. They came with a number of books in which they had underlined certain paragraphs. One section they had underlined was in Brother Nee's book *The Normal Christian Church Life* (published by Living Stream Ministry). There Brother Nee said that the missionaries who went to China built up mission churches instead of local churches. Every mission built up churches under its own name. Brother Nee said that it was right for the missionaries to go to China to preach the gospel, but it was wrong for them to build up their denominational churches. They should preach the gospel and build up only local churches. (See *The Normal Christian Church Life*, pages 135, 138-140, 162-164.) Then the leading ones from Raleigh applied this to me, saying that I do not build up the local churches but churches to my ministry. They should not "take the hat from a condemned one and put it on my head."

I have never built up any "ministry church." I have been in the recovery for sixty years, laboring continually. I was also with Brother Nee for twenty years. Neither Brother Nee nor I ever built up a church to ourselves. The churches built up through the Lord's ministry are not "ministry churches." Although Paul's ministry built up a number of churches, it is not right to call any of these churches

“Pauline churches.” Some of the Corinthians said, “I am of Paul,” others said, “I of Apollos,” and others, “I of Cephas” (1 Cor. 1:12); but eventually Paul said that he, Apollos, and Cephas were of the Corinthians, for all were theirs (3:21-22). The missionaries went to China and built up their mission churches, but our ministry has built up not “ministry churches” but local churches. Today it is difficult to find any local church on this earth that has not been built up by our ministry. Therefore, their accusing of me is not fair.

### **(5) THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES**

From the spring of 1988 the dissenting ones began to teach the autonomy of the local churches. Their teaching was based on G. H. Lang’s book *The Churches of God*. They even purchased copies of this book and distributed them to the saints.

The teaching of the autonomy of the local churches is surely erroneous. The church cannot be absolutely autonomous. The United States is a federal country with fifty states. In a sense each state, having its own state government, is an autonomy. Even so, it is not altogether autonomous. All the fifty states have one ministry for the national defense, one ministry of foreign affairs, one constitutional law upheld by the Supreme Court (a federal court), one currency, one postal practice, and a federal highway system that runs through them all. In many things it is impossible for the fifty states to be autonomous.

It is ridiculous to say that the local churches could be absolutely autonomous. All the churches are the one Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4a). Can the parts of our physical body be autonomous? Could the hand be a small autonomy, the shoulder a large autonomy, and the thigh an even larger autonomy? If so, this would kill the body. All the parts of the body have only one circulation of blood. Thus, it is impossible for the Body of Christ to be autonomous. Beginning in the summer of 1988 and continuing through the remainder of that year, I spoke a number of messages exposing the fallacy of the teaching of autonomy (see *A Timely Word*, pages 29-30; *The Body of Christ*, pages 17-19; *A Timely Trumpeting and the Present Need*, pages 33-34; *The Building Up of the Body of Christ*, pages 30-32; and *Further Light concerning the Building Up of the Body of Christ*, pages 29-30, published by Living Stream Ministry). After that, I did not hear much of this wrong teaching out of the dissenters’ mouths. This may indicate they have realized that they do not have the truth.

### **(6) AFTER APPOINTING THE ELDERS, THE APOSTLES KEEP THEIR HANDS OFF THE LOCAL CHURCHES**

The dissenting brothers also said that after appointing the elders, the apostles should keep their hands off the local churches. However, after the apostle Paul appointed the elders in Ephesus, he did not keep his hands off the church there. Rather, he went back again and again to contact the church, and he also wrote the church an Epistle. At one point he remained in Ephesus for three years (Acts 19; 20:31). When he was journeying to Jerusalem in Acts 20, he passed through the region that was close to Ephesus, and he called for the elders from Ephesus to come to him at Miletus (vv. 17-38). There he told the elders that while he was in Asia he was with them all the time and did not withhold from them anything that was profitable, but for three years declared to them and taught them publicly and from house to house, admonishing them with tears (vv. 18, 20, 31). After appointing the elders in Ephesus, Paul certainly did not keep his hands off the church in Ephesus.

If, after setting up the churches and appointing the elders, the apostles keep their hands off the churches, eventually the apostles will have nothing to do. But Ephesians 4:12 says that the apostles are for the perfecting of the saints. To support their teaching, the dissenting ones used Brother Nee’s writing in *The Normal Christian Church Life*, page 66: “Once a church was established, all responsibility was handed over to the local elders, and from that day the apostles exercised no control whatever *in its affairs* [italics added].” Later, in another book, *Church Affairs*, Brother Nee corrected this misuse of his words. On pages 14-26 Brother Nee dwelt on this one thing: he told his co-workers that after they appointed elders in a local church, they had to stay there to teach the elders, to train the

elders, to show the elders, how to care for the church. (See *A Timely Word*, pages 27-29, and *A Timely Trumpeting and the Present Need*, pages 15-18.)

The church in Shanghai was raised up in 1926, not by Brother Nee. The following year Brother Nee went to Shanghai to strengthen and establish the church in Shanghai. From that year, 1927, he never left Shanghai; he stayed there for twenty-five years, until 1952, when he was put into prison. All that time the church in Shanghai was under his hand.

The dissenting ones also said that during the apostles' time there were only twelve apostles: the eleven appointed by the Lord Jesus (not including Matthias), and the twelfth, Paul. Then I began to speak that this was an old teaching put out by the Brethren. Brother Nee adjusted this teaching in *The Normal Christian Church Life*. In that book Brother Nee gave a long word concerning the apostleship (see chapter one, "The Apostles"). Then the dissenters adjusted their speaking, saying that according to God's Word, the apostles are always plural in number. One of them said that there are many apostles today and that he could give the names of a number of these apostles. Later, he gave the names of certain brothers to one of the saints. After I heard this kind of speaking, I went to Taipei, and there I gave a message entitled "The Different Kinds of Apostles and the Relationships between Them" (see *A Timely Trumpeting and the Present Need*, chapter two). In that message I pointed out that in the Bible there are only three kinds of apostles: (1) those appointed directly by the Lord and those constituted directly through the Lord's revelation, such as Peter, John, and Paul; (2) those perfected by others, such as Apollos; and (3) those produced by the Lord's directly appointed apostles, such as Timothy, Silas, and Titus. I also pointed out that according to the Bible the apostles of the third kind, those produced by the Lord's directly appointed apostles, are led and directed by those who produced them. Timothy, Silas, and Titus were not apostles of the first kind but were apostles of the third kind. Likewise, those brothers named by the dissenting one as today's apostles are all my students. Thus, they too are not apostles raised up and appointed directly by the Lord. Eventually, the dissenters changed their speaking again, saying that today there are no apostles.

**(7) SINCE 1984 THE MINISTRY HAS CHANGED FROM LIFE AND LIFE SUPPLY TO BUDGETS,  
NUMBERS, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER PRACTICES, AND THIS CHANGE HAS AFFECTED  
THE NATURE OF THE RECOVERY**

The dissenting ones also said that since 1984 the ministry has changed from life and life supply to budgets, numbers, activities, and other practices, and this change has affected the nature of the recovery. This kind of word was sounded out the most strongly in Europe. They told people that before 1984 Witness Lee was right, but after 1984 he is wrong because he does not teach anything concerning life. Then, at the end of 1988, one of the four leaders of the conspiracy spoke the same words to a group of brothers in San Diego. Those who have heard my speaking since 1984 can testify what a lie this is. Such a lie was part of the strategy of the dissenting ones.

**(8) CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF THE MINISTRY**

The dissenting brothers also raised a problem concerning the teaching of the ministry. In Acts 2:42, Luke, the writer of that book, used the expression the teaching of the apostles. Our interpretation of this expression is that *the teaching of the apostles* comprises the four Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation; that is, the entire New Testament is the teaching of the apostles. Whatever we teach must be according to the New Testament, which is the teaching of the apostles. If so, our teaching also is the apostles' teaching. However, the dissenting ones said that the teaching of the apostles mentioned in Acts 2:42 refers only to the four Gospels, to what the Lord Jesus taught the twelve apostles and charged them to teach to the future new believers. My response to this is that the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the four Gospels is a part of the teaching of the apostles, but it is not the totality of that teaching. In John 16, while the Lord Jesus was teaching the disciples, at one point He said that He had yet many things to say to them, but they were not able to bear them at that time; but when the Spirit of reality came, He would disclose these things to them

(vv. 12-15). This indicates that the Lord had many things to teach Peter and the others, but that was not the proper time. The Lord waited until the Spirit came to disclose the deeper things to some of the disciples. To whom were these deeper things disclosed? Surely they must have been disclosed mainly to the apostle Paul. In Colossians 1:25 Paul said that his ministry was to complete the word of God. God's plan, God's economy, was not revealed mainly to Peter. It was revealed mainly to the apostle Paul and recorded in his fourteen Epistles.

If the four Gospels are the teaching of the apostles, all the Epistles should also be the teaching of the apostles. This is the proper interpretation of the Bible. Now, if whatever we speak is according to the New Testament, our teaching also is the apostles' teaching; it is not our teaching. If it is our own teaching, then it is something other than the apostles' teaching. In 1 Timothy 1:3-4 Paul told Timothy to remain in Ephesus to charge certain ones not to teach different things, things that are different from God's economy. In their deviating speaking concerning the teaching of the ministry, the intention of the dissenters is nothing else than to put my ministry aside.

### (9) CONCERNING THE LEADERSHIP

The dissenting ones also raised questions concerning the matter of leadership. In 1986 I gave a series of messages that were misunderstood and misused by them (see *Elders' Training, Book 7, One Accord for the Lord's Move*, published by Living Stream Ministry). They thought that I meant that I am the leader in the Lord's recovery. Then, in the 1987 Summer Training I gave additional messages to point out that, actually, the New Testament leadership is not a person but is the teaching of the apostles (see *The God-ordained Way to Practice the New Testament Economy*, chapter nineteen, especially pages 172-173, published by Living Stream Ministry). Paul's teaching, the teaching of the New Testament, not Paul himself, was the actual leadership. Today, among us the teaching of those who teach the New Testament apostles' teaching is the leading. The leadership in the Lord's recovery is actually not according to anyone's teaching, but according to the apostles' teaching, which is the teaching of the New Testament.

Today, the saints in the recovery should not follow me; they should follow my teaching, if my teaching is according to the apostles' teaching. In 1934 Brother Nee encountered much opposition in his ministry, and I went to see him. I said to him, "Brother Nee, from the first day that we began to have contact, there was no personal affection between you and me. Nevertheless, I have followed you absolutely, and I do have the assurance that I am following the right way because you have the Lord's revelation. The revelation you pass on is according to the New Testament. Actually, I am not following you personally; I follow the revelation you have released." Then I said, "Brother Nee, even if from today you would give up the way of the Lord's recovery, I would remain in this way."

Do you believe that you are in the Lord's recovery following a man? One of the dissenting ones repented to the uttermost that he listened to only one man. He said that in doing so he had committed a great sin before God. I would like to ask you all: Do you listen to one man's word? Actually, you do not listen to one man; you listen to the teaching of the apostles. I have the assurance that since I began to speak for the Lord, I did not speak anything that was not according to the New Testament principles. Therefore, to follow the ministry is absolutely right; it is not wrong.

The Lord's recovery was raised up in China through Brother Nee's teaching for exactly thirty years, from 1922 through 1952. In those thirty years there was no one else who put out the New Testament teaching. In the 1950s I was sent to Taiwan. Because of his imprisonment in 1952, from that time Brother Nee's speaking ceased. I had no intention to stand up to replace him. I only knew to labor. I put out teaching after teaching, but I did not have the intention that I would be the only one who would teach the churches. After we moved into the hall in Anaheim, I gathered the leading co-workers in the country to have a writers' conference. I encouraged all the co-workers to write something, and they all took my charge to go back to write. Eventually, I found out that very little writing came out of them directly. Nearly all of their writing was a reprinting of my messages. Several localities put out magazines, but most of the messages in those publications were a reprinting of

my teaching, with some being a repeating of Brother Nee's teaching. Realizing that this was the situation, in 1986 I encouraged all the brothers to stop this kind of repetition, and they all complied. Speaking honestly, in the forty years from 1950 through 1990, whose teaching has been available to raise up the church, to build up the church, to feed the saints, and so forth? Of course, the foundation was laid by Brother Nee's teaching, but by whose teaching has the building up been carried out?

In my home I still have a book published by the top theological school in Taiwan. In that book, which encourages people to study the Bible and teaches people how to study the Bible, there is a brief word that says that for the past forty years, counting from 1949, among the Chinese Christians the expounding of the Bible could never go beyond the realm of the teaching of the "Assembly Hall people," that is, the teaching in the Lord's recovery. If we were to take away Brother Nee's teaching and my teaching, where would the church be today? By this we can see the enemy's subtlety, which is just to smear the ministry.

### **(10) CONCERNING THE ONE ACCORD**

Can we be in one accord if we have differences? The answer to this question is "yes." We must be in one accord in spite of the differences. Both in the Gospels and in Acts, we are taught to be in one accord (Matt. 18:19; Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Rom. 15:6). Some would say that we must get rid of all the differences among the believers in order to be in one accord, but this is only to make everything uniform.

In the New Testament churches, there were many differences. In Romans 14 Paul said that we must receive both those who regard a certain day and those who do not (vv. 1, 5-6a). Paul said that we must receive the believers who may differ from us in their doctrinal concepts or religious practices because God and Christ have received them (14:3; 15:7). Since both God and Christ have received them, how can we not receive them? Paul said that some ate only vegetables, while others ate all things (Rom. 14:2-3). We must receive both because God and Christ have received them. In receiving the believers, Paul was very broad and liberal. He was not narrow-minded.

More than twenty-five years ago, there was a sister among us who was Jewish. One day she told me that even when the dishes and forks used for eating pork were washed with detergent, she could still smell the pork on them. There are all kinds of people in the church. We all have been saved, yet we have many differences. Some practice foot-washing or head covering. Some baptize by immersing one time, while others baptize by immersing three times. If all of these different believers were among us, could we have the one accord? I would love to see church meetings of believers in one accord with all kinds of differences. That would be marvelous!

In 1963 in the church in Los Angeles, there were at least four different groups meeting together. In the previous year, I held the first conference in the Lord's recovery in the United States, and I spoke from Deuteronomy 8 concerning the all-inclusive Christ. These messages attracted many people. When others heard about these messages, they invited me to hold conferences in their places. Therefore, when the first conference ended on December 31, the next day I went to Whittier, California and spoke to a group that was composed mainly of Brethren believers. Eventually, they asked me to go to speak to another group in Las Vegas. The group there was an independent Bible church. I visited them on about four different occasions. Eventually, that whole congregation decided to move to Los Angeles in order to join the church there.

This group and at least three other groups came to Los Angeles. One day they all agreed to come together. In the place where we met jointly in Los Angeles in 1963, I put up two banners. The first banner read—"Unity versus Uniformity," and the second banner read—"Unity with Variety." At the beginning in Los Angeles, this was our situation. We had much variety, but we also had the unity.

Later I went away to New York. In my absence, the slogans on the banners did not work. During a meeting, one of the young sisters began to play the tambourine. One of the brothers from the Brethren group told the sister to stop playing it. I received a phone call about this incident while in

New York. When I arrived back in Los Angeles, I spoke with the brother from the Brethren group. I asked him to compare the tambourine with the piano, and he said that he preferred the piano. I said, "Brother, in the eyes of God, what is the difference between these two musical instruments?" He agreed that there was no difference in the eyes of God. I continued by saying, "Since these two instruments are the same in the eyes of God, they should also be the same in our eyes." The brother responded by saying that he could not take the playing of the tambourine. I said, "Brother, since you cannot take the playing of the tambourine, you are unable to live the church life."

The church life must be of unity with variety. To be in one accord does not mean to get rid of all the differences. If this were the case, we could never have the one accord in this age. We must be exercised to such an extent that we keep the unity without caring to have uniformity. We should be happy to see a meeting full of differences, yet without any discord.

In the early days in Los Angeles, some tongue-speakers came into one of the meetings. When they began to speak in tongues in the meeting, some of the brothers looked at me to see what I would do. Eventually, the brothers motioned to me that I should stop them when these ones began to interpret their tongue-speaking. But I said quietly to the brothers that we should let them go ahead. We can take such differences.

A number of years ago, some brothers took the way of the Lord's recovery, but they would not practice the Lord's table. When this matter was referred to me, I said that there was no problem. Whether they liked to have the Lord's table or not, they had been received by the Lord, so we had to receive them. The church in their locality kept this practice of not having the Lord's table for a good number of years. In spite of this, the saints there were really one with the saints in the other localities. There was one accord in spite of the differences. Gradually, the brothers and sisters who did not practice the Lord's table heard about it and wanted to practice it. Today they have the Lord's table regularly. This is an example of keeping the unity with variety.

#### **(11) CONCERNING THE GROUND OF THE CHURCH**

The extract of the definition of the church ground is to keep the oneness of the Spirit inwardly and to take the differences outwardly, not allowing anything but the locality in which we live to separate us into local churches. Ephesians 4:3 says, "Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." Keeping the oneness of the Spirit is inward, whereas the differences are outward. If one brother is a Sabbath keeper and another brother practices meeting on the Lord's Day, the differences between them are outward. We have to keep the oneness of the Spirit inwardly, and we have to take the differences outwardly. This is the essence of the church ground.

The ground of the church involves not allowing anything but the locality in which we live to separate us into local churches (Rev. 1:11). Baptism, speaking in tongues, sprinkling, immersion, and dietary preferences are all differences. But none of these differences should separate us. We should be separated only by the localities in which we live. If we live in Anaheim, we cannot meet together regularly with the saints in New York. This is impossible. If we are in Anaheim, it is also difficult for us to meet with the saints in Los Angeles. Our locality spontaneously separates us. We are separated outwardly, but we are still one inwardly. We are one in the Spirit with the saints in New York, London, and Taipei.

#### **(12) ALL THE TRAININGS BY THE MINISTRY SHOULD BE STOPPED**

The dissenting ones demanded that all the trainings by the ministry be stopped. This was their opinion, but I have my burden. Those who have caused divisions among us have accused me of using the trainings to control the churches.

The rebellion with these ones began in September 1987, while I was in Taipei. Shortly after I came back to the United States in December 1987, four of the dissenting ones came to see me. They made some demand of me and warned me that they would cut off my publications and tapes if I did

not comply with their demand and that the church in Anaheim would take the lead. One of them said to me with a furious tone that the training in Taipei should be dismantled into pieces.

Again I say, they have their opinion, but I have my burden. It is not right to interfere with another person's burden by your opinion. The more I prayed about the training, the more burdened I became. Consider what the situation among the churches in the recovery would be if the trainings were taken away.

When I went to Shanghai for the first time in 1933, Brother Watchman Nee talked with me about the need for a training. A number of us were under his continual training. Eventually, he had two big trainings. In 1948 over eighty people went to his place on a mountain to be trained by him for nearly half a year. In 1949 he had a second big training, and I was there.

The apostle Paul stayed in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31). For two years he spoke the word of the Lord in the school of Tyrannus in order to teach people (19:9-10). Tyrannus might have been a teacher, and Paul might have rented his school and used it as a meeting hall to preach and teach the word of the Lord. I consider his teaching of people in that school to be something like a training. Surely there were church meetings in Ephesus. But if Paul did not do something in addition to the church meetings, why would he have needed to use a place which was like a school? If there were no need for the saints to be trained, why would Paul stay in the city of Ephesus for three years? We have had our trainings mainly based upon Paul's example. We have a burden to train the seeking saints and young saints with the word of the Lord.

### **(13) CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE ONENESS OF THE BODY, RE: DENOMINATIONS**

When the dissenters began to cause trouble in 1987, they claimed that I had changed and that my change had affected the nature of the recovery. I admit that I changed from the old way of gospel preaching to the scriptural way of visiting people. I also told people to turn from having church meetings with one man speaking and the rest listening to meetings in which all can prophesy according to the revelation of 1 Corinthians 14. I changed in these matters, but my change did not affect the nature of the oneness of the Body.

The opposing ones have said that I was right before 1984 but not since then. They said that I used to minister life but that now I minister budgets, numbers, and activities. From September 1987 until now, I have given many messages and conferences. These messages have not been concerning budgets, numbers, and activities, but they are full of the unveiling of the divine truths and the ministry of the divine life.

The opposing ones also said that we have applied the teaching concerning the ground of oneness in a divisive and sectarian way so that we separate ourselves from other Christians. Actually, we receive all the Christians, but we cannot accept the divisions in which they meet. The denominations are not just differences; they are divisions. Hence, we cannot take them. We differentiate, however, between the saints and the denominations. The denominations are one thing, but the saints in the denominations are another thing. We receive the saints who are in any of the denominations and also those in the Catholic Church, but we cannot receive the organization of the denominations.

I spoke concerning this matter many times, and my speaking has been printed. These dissenting ones heard my speaking and have also read the books, but they have neglected these things. They have said that we are too narrow, that we feel that only we are right, and that we do not receive other Christians. This is not a fair statement. We receive all of the Lord's children, the genuine believers in Christ.

#### **(14) CONCERNING THE APOSTLES' EXISTENCE AND HOW THEY RELATE OR WORK TOGETHER**

The dissenting ones have also raised an issue concerning the apostles' existence and how they relate with one another or work together. The existence of the apostles should be under the Lord's sovereign arrangement, and their existence, relation, and work should keep an excellent order in the Body according to the organic function. My working together with Brother Nee was not according to my choice but was under God's sovereign arrangement. There was always an excellent order between us. I fully realized that according to the organic function in the Body, I should be under him.

The organic function can be illustrated by our physical body. When one moves his arm, the shoulder, elbow, hand, and fingers move by keeping an excellent order according to their functions. Suppose the fingers would form a conspiracy and say to one another, "Why should we fingers be under the shoulder?" This would be the same as saying that the fingers should be cut off and placed above the shoulder. This would kill the fingers.

When I came into the work, from the very beginning, all I knew was to labor without any opinion. I realized that I was under Brother Nee according to the organic function in the Body. The dissenting ones who have claimed to be something have cut themselves off. Suppose the eyes said that they no longer wanted to be under the eyebrows. That would be terrible. It not only would destroy their function, but also would destroy the beauty of God's creation. In the Body of Christ a kind of order is spontaneously manifested according to the organic function. This function is not according to any organizational arrangement. Rather, this function is organic. The apostles and all of the saints exist according to God's sovereign arrangement.

You may feel that the church where you are is too difficult. Because of this, you may consider going to another place. But wherever you go, troubles will be there and hardships will be your portion. There is only one place for you to go—the place under God's sovereign arrangement. Anyone who exercises his choice concerning the place for his existence will receive trouble.

#### **(15) DEPUTY AUTHORITY VERSUS THE DIRECT HEADSHIP OF CHRIST**

The opposing ones have also rejected the truth concerning deputy authority, claiming that they are under the direct headship of Christ. This is nonsense. All of the people ruling in the government are deputy authorities under God (Rom. 13:1-7). If a country existed in which the people said that they did not want to have any man ruling over them, but that they just wanted God to be their Ruler, that country would be full of chaos and anarchy. There must be a government with the rule of law through the police and the courts. Deputy authority is not versus God's headship.

In our physical body, there is order. The arm can be considered as a deputy authority to the hand and fingers. The arms are not versus the head. On the earth among human beings, deputy authority is everywhere. In the family there are parents. Even between the parents, there is the father and the mother. These two are not equal. Even among the brothers and sisters in a family, there is an order. Something in our nature tells us that there is such an order. A principal is the head of a school, the teachers are under the principal, and the students are under the teachers. The good students stay in their position, keeping the proper deputy authority.

Throughout society there is deputy authority. To talk about getting rid of deputy authority is nonsense. The police who regulate traffic on the roads are an example of deputy authority. Because of policemen, the traffic is controlled and kept in a good order, thereby reducing traffic accidents and deaths.

According to the divine revelation in the holy Word, there is also deputy authority in God's economy, both in the Old Testament, such as with Moses and the priests who taught the people the divine oracle, and in the New Testament, such as with the elders, who take care of the church (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17; Heb. 13:17), and the apostles, who establish the churches and teach the saints (2 Cor.

10:8; 13:10; 1 Cor. 4:21). In Hebrews 13:17 Paul said, "Obey the ones leading you and submit to them."

#### **(16) FEDERATION OF CHURCHES**

The opposing ones have taught the autonomy of the local churches and have accused us of trying to federate the churches. We need to see that the church is not an organization but an organism. In an organism, you cannot have autonomy or federation. The members of our physical body are organically united as one; they are not federated into one.

To say that all the local churches are separate in administration, in a certain sense, is right, but this is only one side. The church has its local aspect, but it also has its universal aspect, the aspect of the universal Body. Both are needed. I need the universal Body, and I also need the local church. When I stressed that all the churches should be the same and that they should be one, the dissenting ones said that such oneness meant federation.

The Brethren had a dispute concerning this. G. H. Lang taught the autonomy of a local church and condemned J. N. Darby for teaching federation. The local churches, however, should not be independently autonomous because they are all the unique, one organism of the processed and dispensing Triune God. If the church in Anaheim declared that it was a local church, standing independent from and not caring for the other churches, the church in Anaheim would immediately become a local sect. A local church must be one with all the other churches in the Body.

#### **(17) THE PRESENT CHURCHES BEING OLD AND FILLED WITH PROBLEMS**

The opposers also have said that the present churches are old and full of problems. We need to see that the churches mentioned in the New Testament all had problems. The church in Jerusalem was a young church, but it also had the problem of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) and the problem concerning the distribution of food to the widows (6:1). One does not need to be old to have troubles or to become sick. The elders who take care of the churches have to deal with problems continually. As long as you are a living, organic person, each day there is the possibility of sickness.

The Epistles in the New Testament were written to churches with problems. If these churches had not had any problems, we would not have these New Testament Epistles today. Thank the Lord, because the churches had problems in the early days, we have the New Testament Epistles which have become a great help to us today. First Corinthians is a long Epistle of sixteen chapters. Every chapter deals with problems. In 1 Corinthians 11:34, after dealing with a number of problems, Paul said, "And the rest I will set in order when I come." By this Paul was saying, "In this Epistle I addressed eleven of your problems. But there are still a number of other problems. I cannot cover them now, but I will when I come."

I was in the church in Chefoo in 1932 at the beginning of the Lord's recovery in northern China. Basically we knew only that we had to leave the denominations and meet together. We did not have our own hymnal, and we did not know how to choose a hymn. We did not know the proper way to have the Lord's table. We also did not know how to praise the Lord in a high way. Today, however, our practice, our praises, and our hymns are higher. The churches today are much higher than they were sixty or even thirty years ago.

#### **(18) REALITY VERSUS THE DOCTRINE AND SYSTEMATIZED TEACHING OF BROTHER LEE**

The dissenting ones have said that reality is versus the doctrine and systematized teaching of Brother Lee. To their opinion, I have been teaching too much. They have condemned my teaching, my training, and my conferences because they said that these are the means for me to control the churches. Actually, my teaching does not control anyone, but it does regulate us, including me.

One brother in the past pointed out that if a speaker cannot speak something higher than himself, he is a poor speaker. We must learn to teach and preach things which are higher than what we are. Our reality can never match our revelation. Did Paul's reality match his revelation? Did Paul's experiences come up to his revelation? The Lord Jesus Himself is the only one whose reality fully matched His teaching. Apart from Him, no one on this earth can have the real experience to fully match his own teaching. The dissenting ones have also said that my teachings are systematized. This is not true. I have never taught anything in a system.

### **(19) THE CHURCH OF THE SAINTS—DEMOCRACY**

In 1988 the dissenting ones claimed that there should be democracy among us since the church is the church of the saints. In the Old Testament with Israel and in the New Testament with the believers, the government among God's people is neither democracy nor autocracy. It is theocracy, which is government by God Himself. Democracy is better than autocracy in the political realm, but among God's people, neither of these ways should have any place. God's people should have only theocracy. *Theos* (God) is our Ruler. He is living, and today He is the all-inclusive Spirit within us and among us. We have to learn to listen to Him. The church should be under God's ruling.

### **(20) ALL OF THE ABOVE POINTS UNDER THE TEACHING OF THE DISSENTING ONES BECOMING WINDS OF TEACHING WHICH HAVE CAUSED DIVISIONS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

All of the above points under the teaching of the dissenting ones have become winds of teaching which have caused divisions in the Lord's recovery (Eph. 4:14). These winds of teaching have caused divisions in the following places in California—Rosemead, Anaheim, Huntington Beach, San Diego, South San Francisco, Cupertino, and Lomita. There is also a division in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. According to the Bible, there is no base, no reason, no excuse, no justification, and no vindication for any kind of division.

There are three things the church cannot tolerate: division, heresies, and immorality. Divisions damage the Body of Christ. Heresies insult the person of Christ and damage the work of Christ. Immorality damages the humanity of people who were made by God to be the members of the Body of Christ. In Romans 14 and 15 Paul charged us to receive all the believers, embracing all the differences. But in Romans 16 he said, "Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them" (v. 17). Concerning the divisive ones, Paul was very definite and strict. His teaching concerning these divisive ones was also very straight. He exhorted the saints to turn away from anyone who made divisions.

Ephesians 4:14 says, "That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error." Any teaching, even a scriptural one, that distracts believers from Christ and the church is a wind of teaching that carries believers away from God's central purpose. The only way to escape the waves that are stirred up by the winds of teaching is to grow in life, and the safe way to grow in life is to stay in the proper church life with Christ and the church as the safeguard. (*The Practice of the Church Life according to the God-ordained Way*, pp. 19-48)

EXCERPTS FROM:  
***THE FERMENTATION OF THE PRESENT REBELLION***

**THE WAY TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENT REBELLION**

The way to deal with the present rebellion is to reject any kind of division (1 Cor. 1:10), to stand against any wind of teaching and any spreading of spiritual death (Eph. 4:14; 2 Tim. 2:16-17), and to separate ourselves from the contagious ones—exercising to quarantine. Titus 3:10 says, “A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse.” Romans 16:17 says, “Now I beg you, brothers, keep a watchful eye on those who make divisions and causes of falling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.” The Brethren practiced the cutting off of such people. We do not agree with this practice, but we have learned the lesson that there is the need to exercise to quarantine the contagious ones.

**A CONCLUDING WORD**

Since the dissenting ones have made their rebellion so obvious, so public, even by their publications, I feel obliged to present to you all the fermenting events of the present rebellion in the Lord's recovery, that you may be clear about the intrinsic reasons and causes of all the fermentations. In the church, as a corporate body composed of many different persons with their different realizations and views, problems are sometimes unavoidable in the long run. According to the New Testament teaching, such problems should be properly taken care of in the divine love by genuine and thorough fellowship in the Spirit, with constant forgiveness, all-caring forbearance, self-depreciating humility, merciful sympathy, and gracious help in mutuality. Instead of these excellent Christian virtues, what we see in the present rebellion are exaggerated criticisms, cruel backbitings, unreasonable opposings, subtle underminings, wicked defamations, vicious slanders, unethical anonymous letters, bitter attacks, ill-intentioned conspiracies, crafty innuendoes, double-tongued pretenses, fabricated falsehood, flagrant lies, reckless devastations, and unbridled destructions, with unimaginable hatred, fleshly jealousies, and unchristian avengings. These are not the fruit of enjoying Christ, nor are they good for the building up of the saints and the building of the churches. Even to make such a presentation of the facts is not pleasant to me. For quite a long time I have been hesitating before the Lord as to whether I should do this or not, and I have consulted with the brothers about this. They all encouraged me to do it for the preservation of the uninformed ones, for the recovery of the deceived ones, for the establishing of the wavering and bothered ones, and for history. Thus, I feel obligated to do so, after considering what Paul eventually did in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 and 4:14-15 concerning this kind of thing, and even the more that Moses kept a full record of the rebellions in the book of Numbers. I do look to the Lord that He would have mercy on all of us and grant us His sufficient grace that we would endeavor to keep the oneness of His Body at any cost. And I also expect that the brothers who caused the present turmoil and those who are involved in such an illogical and unjustifiable action would reconsider this matter before the Lord to answer this question, which is the question of so many saints who are concerned for the oneness of the Body of Christ: “Is not what you are engaging in divisive, or already a division?” (*The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*, pp. 74-75)

EXCERPTS FROM:  
***THE INTRINSIC PROBLEM IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY AND  
ITS SCRIPTURAL REMEDY***

**THE WAY TO FACE THE DIVISIVE SITUATION**

Based on our study concerning the genuine oneness, the proper one accord, and the tests of these two matters, and based on the listing of some practical truths versus some dissenting accusations, we can come to consider the way to face the present divisive situation among us. This way can be considered a scriptural remedy to meet our present need.

**TO PAY FULL ATTENTION TO THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE CHURCH  
AS THE BODY OF CHRIST AND AS THE HOUSE AND KINGDOM OF GOD**

To face the present divisive situation, we need to pay our full attention to the truth concerning the church as the Body of Christ and as the house and kingdom of God. First Timothy 3:15 tells us that the church is the pillar and base of the truth. Thus, we must help the saints to have the full knowledge concerning these matters.

**TO KEEP THE TRUTH AT ANY COST**

In 2 John 1-2 and in 3 John 3-4, the aged Apostle John was happy to know that his children kept the truth.

**TO EXERCISE TO QUARANTINE**

I do feel that all the churches must do something to help the saints to know the real situation in the recovery. The saints must be helped to realize that a "contagious disease" is now among us, and, as in the field of medicine, we must quarantine the diseased ones. To quarantine does not mean that we do not love those who are "ill," nor does it mean that we cut them off. It means that we do something to preserve both the contagious ones and the rest of the Body.

***THE DIVISIVE ONES***

According to Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10, we need to exercise to quarantine the divisive ones. Romans 16:17 charges us to turn away from those who make divisions. To turn away from them is to exercise to quarantine them. Titus 3:10 says that we should refuse a factious (sectarian, divisive) person after a first and second admonition. To refuse such a one also is to exercise to quarantine him.

***THE HERETICAL ONES***

We also need to quarantine the heretical ones, those who go beyond the teaching concerning Christ (2 John 7-11). According to 2 John 10, we should not receive such persons into our home, and even we should not greet them. This also is to quarantine them.

***THE FORNICATORS***

In addition, according to 1 Corinthians 5:2, 11-13, we need to quarantine the fornicators, who live in such a gross sin, by removing them from the fellowship of the church.

## **A CONCLUDING WORD**

### **DIVISIONS TESTING AND APPROVING THE BELIEVERS**

First Corinthians 11:19 says that divisions are unavoidable that the approved ones might be made manifest. The kind of turmoil and rebellion that we are now experiencing always sifts the congregation. In such a situation, some are sifted and some are manifested as being approved.

#### ***NOT A MATTER OF BEING RIGHT OR WRONG BUT A MATTER OF KEEPING OR NOT KEEPING THE ONENESS***

Most people pay their attention to the matter of being right or wrong. However, in today's situation, it is not a matter of right or wrong; it is a matter of whether we are divisive or not.

#### ***TO REMAIN NEUTRAL NOT BEING GOOD FOR THE BUILDING UP BUT FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST***

Being neutral does not build up (2 Cor. 13:8, 10) but destroys the Body of Christ. Being neutral may come out of a good heart, but it is the wrong way.

#### ***TO KEEP THE TRUTH NEEDING THE OVERCOMING OF PERSONAL AFFECTION***

To keep the truth, we need to overcome personal affection with the vow of a Nazarite. In Numbers 6:6-7, the Nazarites were charged not to be contaminated by any kind of death, even by the death of their blood relatives. Therefore, we must be careful about anyone who is "dying" or who is spreading death. If we realize that one who is near us is "dying" or is spreading death, we must keep ourselves away. Otherwise, if we remain near such a person, we will be contaminated by the germs of death. This will nullify our vow, and we will have to begin our vow over again (Num. 6:9-12). In some cases, to avoid the contagion of death, we need to overcome our personal affection, especially for those with whom we are well-acquainted. Leviticus 10:6-7, Exodus 32:25-29, and Deuteronomy 33:8-9 all stress the need of the overcoming of our personal affection in the service of our priesthood. Both Exodus 32:25-29 and Deuteronomy 33:8-9 tell us that when the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf, offending the Lord to the uttermost, Moses spoke the word asking all the Levites to kill their relatives and those who were close to them. They obeyed, and as a result they obtained the priesthood. The Urim and Thummin were with them, meaning that they had the revelation; they had the vision of the Lord's oracle because of their faithfulness to God's person. God hates to see His people worship anyone besides Him. So, He demands that His faithful people "kill" all the idol worshippers. One of these worshippers might be our father, and one might be our sister. In order to be faithful to the Lord, we must overcome our personal affection.

#### ***THE LORD'S RECOVERY BEING NOT ONLY THROUGH LIFE, BUT EVEN THE MORE OF THE TRUTH***

At such a time as this, we need to stress not only the matter of life but also the matter of truth (1 Tim. 3:15). We need to stress the truth concerning the Body and concerning the church ground.

#### ***TO WALK IN THE LIGHT OF THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST***

We need to remember that whatever we do and whatever we say will be judged by the Lord's coming back at His judgment seat (1 Cor. 4:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:10). Paul was strongly criticized. In such a situation he was forced to say that he did not judge himself, nor did he justify himself; rather, he was waiting for the Lord's judgment at His coming back (1 Cor. 4:3-5). We must walk in this kind of light. It is not just a matter of what we are today. Whatever we are today affects what we will be in the future.

Even the Apostle Paul was greatly criticized; hence, we should not be disappointed if we are criticized, defamed, and slandered. We ourselves must exercise to have a conscience void of offense (Acts 24:16). (*The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, pp. 83-86)

EXCERPTS FROM:  
***THE PROBLEMS CAUSING THE TURMOILS IN THE CHURCH LIFE***

**PRACTICING THE BODY LIFE BY RECEIVING THE BELIEVERS  
AND TURNING AWAY FROM THOSE WHO MAKE DIVISIONS**

There was a big debate among the Brethren concerning the receiving of the saints. This is why there are today's Closed Brethren and Open Brethren. Both the Closed and the Open Brethren are partially right. On the one hand, we can accept and we should accept the real Christians, but we cannot strengthen or justify their denominations. This was, has been, and still is our attitude. We say that we love all the dear saints in the denominations, but we cannot confirm or justify the denominations. Denominations are wrong, and there are many evil things there. Any kind of hierarchy is an evil thing in the Lord's sight. To build up the clerical class and thus annul the functions of the members of the Body of Christ is evil in the eyes of God.

Our attitude depends upon our seeing of the Body. The only remedy is to see the Body of Christ. It is not a matter of yes or no, good or bad. It is a matter of whether or not something is of the Body or not of the Body. We must be Body-conscious to the uttermost. What the Lord wants is the Body. But today not many really care for the Body.

When we accept someone at the Lord's table, we have to consider the Body. According to the principle of Romans 14, we accept all of the Lord's children, but according to Romans 16:17 we have to mark those who make divisions and turn away from them. We cannot receive division-makers who have been quarantined by the Body. Furthermore, we have to realize who has the function and qualification as the priest to discern leprosy among the Lord's children. Again this is a matter of practicing the Body life. If a local church receives someone who has offended the Body to the uttermost, that local church is obviously not going along with and not one with the Body. We have to take care of the Body.

In a sense, we may say that a local church is autonomous only to a certain degree in practical and business affairs. Whether a local church should buy a piece of land to build a hall or rent a hall is according to their discernment. But receiving a person who has made trouble in the recovery and who is still making trouble involves the Body very much. If we behave ourselves properly, we are okay in the Body. But if we commit something that is condemned by the New Testament, the Body has the right to say something. The Body surely will check with a local church if there is a division-maker among them whom they have not disciplined. If they do not discipline such a one, they are wrong and are offending the Body.

To know the Body is the proper recovery of the Lord. If we are for the recovery, we need to realize what the recovery is. The Lord desires to recover the missed Body of Christ and to recover the neglected oneness of the Body of Christ. This is the Lord's recovery.

**PUTTING ASIDE OUR NATURAL RELATIONSHIPS  
AND PRACTICING THE TRUTH OF THE BODY**

We need to put aside all our natural relationships when it comes to practicing the truth of Romans 16:17, that is, turning away from those who make divisions. If a relative of ours is making divisions or living in sin, it would be wrong to allow him to participate in the Lord's table. What if a brother's father is living with a concubine? He may say, "How can I reject my father?" Surely he still needs to respect and honor his father, but he cannot bring this family regulation into the church life. He still has to practice the truth by taking care of the Body of Christ.

The book of Acts tells us that Barnabas made a mistake because of his natural relationship with Mark, his cousin (Col. 4:10). He wanted to take his cousin, but Paul would not agree with this (Acts

15:35-39). Barnabas was wrong. He should have gone along with Paul. After Barnabas separated from Paul in Acts 15, his name is no longer mentioned in the record of God's move.

Regardless of how much help we have received from a certain one in the past, if he does something that offends the Body, we must practice the truth. We must know the Body and trust in the Body. The churches in California wrote an open letter because they felt burdened and were held responsible to let the churches on this globe know the damage certain ones did in California and the loss which they had suffered. In this open letter they said that they had made the decision to quarantine these ones. Should we listen to the churches or take care of our own personal observation of the situation? If we put the notification of so many churches aside and go to investigate the situation for ourselves, this is an offending to the Body. Do we respect the Body or do we respect ourselves?

It is not a matter of whether someone is right or wrong. He might be right, but still he offended the Body. We need to see the Body. What the Lord wants is the Body, not a bunch of saved souls. Soul-winning is right; soul-winning is good; but soul-winning should not be for soul-winning. The Lord wants souls for the building up of the Body of Christ. We must see the Body. (*The Problems Causing the Turmoils in the Church Life*, pp. 30-32)

EXCERPTS FROM:  
***A WORD OF LOVE TO THE CO-WORKERS,  
ELDERS, LOVERS AND SEEKERS OF THE LORD***

Chapter Three Outline:

**BEWARE OF FOUR NEGATIVE FACTORS**

**A CONCLUDING WORD REGARDING THE FOREGOING MESSAGES**

1. We must have the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God.
2. We must also have the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ, with the goal to gain people.
3. We need to remember these two matters and realize them in practicality.

**A WORD OF LOVE**

I. Beware of:

A. Ambition:

1. To be the leader.
2. To get a place, even a district, for your work.
3. To captivate people to be your private co-workers.

B. Pride:

1. To boast hiddenly of your spiritual capacity.
2. To exalt yourself and despise others.
3. To think of yourself more highly than others— Rom. 12:3.

C. Self-justification and exposing others' failures and defects:

1. To justify yourself and speak well of your success and merits.
2. To condemn others, exposing their failures and defects.

D. Not conforming to the death of Christ:

1. Not absolutely denying your self and bearing the cross.
2. Not always crucifying your natural man.
3. Not putting to death your disposition by birth. (*A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers and Seekers of the Lord*, pp. 35-36)

Chapter Four Outline:

**BE RIGHT IN FOLLOWING OTHERS**

II. Be right in following others:

A. Be careful in following any co-workers whom you appreciate and to whom you are attracted:

1. He should be a person loving the Lord, living for the Lord, and renouncing his self, natural life, preference, and ambition.

2. He must hold the complete revelation of the entire holy Scriptures properly without any twisting and deforming.
  3. He must be one who endeavors to keep the oneness of the Spirit, the oneness of the universal Body, by taking the unique ground of the local church.
- B. Be strongly discerning in the accepting of the divine revelation according to the holy Scriptures:
1. The accepting of the divine revelation must be governed by:
    - a. The eternal economy of God as the basic principle.
    - b. Christ as the centrality and universality of God's eternal economy.
    - c. The Body of Christ which consummates the New Jerusalem as the divine goal of the processed and consummated Triune God.
  2. The application of the divine truths must avoid:
    - a. Uplifting any basic truths, such as the three sections of sanctification, the designation of Christ as the seed of David to be the firstborn Son of God, the acknowledgment of the fact that "I am of Christ," etc., to cause divisions that divide Christ, including His Body (1 Cor. 1:11-13a).
    - b. Neglecting any subordinate truths or stressing any of them, which leads toward the direction of division that divides the Body of Christ. (*A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers and Seekers of the Lord*, pp. 49-50)

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