

2019 Memorial Day Conference
N. A. Co-workers
Excerpts

(**Boldface** type for emphasis)

1 Corinthians 4:17

Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, **who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ**, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

2 Timothy 1:6-8

For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness. **Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me His prisoner**; but suffer evil with the gospel according to the power of God.

Footnote 1 on verse 8: This was the reason Paul charged Timothy in vv. 6-7 to fan into flame by a strong spirit the gift of God that was in him.

* * *

Definition of “one accord”—Gk. homothumadon from homo, same, and thumos, mind, will purpose (soul, heart). (Witness Lee, *Elders’ Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord’s Move*, p.7)

* * *

ONE IN:

TEACHING — 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 16:1; Acts 2:42; Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3; Eph. 4:13-14

PRACTICE — 1 Cor. 11:16; 14:33b-34

THINKING, SPEAKING — Phil. 2:2; 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 15:6

ESSENCE, APPEARANCE, EXPRESSION — Rev. 1:11-12

(Witness Lee, *Elders’ Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord’s Move*, p.35)

* * *

**To Unite and Mingle
the Triune God with the Tripartite Man**

In His full ministry in the first stage of His incarnation, Christ also united and mingled the Triune God with the tripartite man. The Triune God is mysterious, and the tripartite man is difficult to understand. If we simply say that Christ united and mingled God with man, this is easy. However, according to the new language of the new culture in the divine and mystical realm, we need to say that Christ united and mingled the Triune God with the tripartite man. Concerning the Triune God, the Father is the source, the Son is the expression, and the Spirit is the entering in.

Concerning the tripartite man, the spirit is the innermost part, the soul is in the middle, and the body is on the outside. This is not easy to explain clearly. Nevertheless, we need to know these things. If we do not have the knowledge, we cannot have the experience or the enjoyment. If we do not have the experience and enjoyment of Christ, we simply cannot gain Christ. Then when we go to speak to others, we will have nothing to say and will be poor in utterance and void of words. Even if we compel ourselves to speak, what we speak will be shallow, simple, and trite.

Some co-workers and elders often would say to me, “I don’t dare to speak about these high truths because the believers whom I am serving cannot understand them according to their present spiritual condition.” My reply is, “It is not that they cannot understand, but it is that you cannot speak clearly.” It is only after we have known, experienced, and gained Christ that we can speak to others, according to the new language in the Lord’s recovery, concerning this Christ whom we have gained. We must learn to use the new language to speak the new culture in the divine and mystical realm. Then people will listen to us with great pleasure and will definitely understand the things we speak. It is only by this way that we are qualified to be co-workers and elders. Otherwise, we are outdated in the Lord’s move in the present age.

The ministry of Christ was not only to unite but even more to mingle the Triune God with the tripartite man. We must be able to tell people clearly what it means to be united and what it means to be mingled. When two pieces of wood are connected together, they are united; when two things are ground into powder and blended together, they are mingled. It is easy to speak concerning the union of God with man, but it is not easy to speak concerning the mingling of God with man. When we preach these truths, we need to explain them in detail. (Witness Lee, *How to Be a Co-worker and an Elder and How to Fulfill Their Obligations*, pp. 16-17)

* * *

FULFILLING THE LORD’S COMMISSION TO HIS RECOVERY

Since October of 1984 I fully realized that we had become somewhat stuck in the Lord’s recovery. We held the Lord back very much, so we did not carry out His commission to the recovery. In the preaching of the gospel we have not had much spread. In the teaching of the truth we rarely exercised. I began to feel that I should ask the Lord to forgive me since I am considered by many of the saints as the one to take the lead in the Lord’s recovery. I felt that I had not done an adequate job. Therefore, in October of 1984 there was a big revolution, a big change, within me. We must change the situation among us so that we can fulfill the Lord’s commission. The Lord’s commission is His recovery, and His recovery today is to recover Christ as life, to recover the church as our living, to recover the enjoyment of Christ as everything to us, and to recover all the significances of the church life for the purpose of not only preaching the gospel but also spreading the truth. I believe that

this is the unique reason that He has given us nearly all the truths in today's Christianity. He has given us His truths for us to spread them not only to Christians but even to the unbelievers. **The entire globe is under darkness. Every human being on the earth needs to hear the truth, but our spreading of the precious truths that we have received has been extremely limited. There have been many strong testimonies concerning people getting attracted and caught by the footnotes in the Recovery Version, but who has the burden to go out and spread these truths?**

Some brothers who are with us do not use these truths when they teach and preach. They teach and preach what they feel is good, yet they do not realize how poor their messages are. Some brothers among us continually put out some publications. I was honest to tell them that there was no light and nothing new in what they put out. The points in our publications are full of life and light, but these brothers would not present them as they are. I could not understand why they have to change the messages we publish to present something in their own style and in their own way. There are no new points of life or light in what they publish. Any life or light in their material is altogether adopted from this ministry. I have been observing this situation among us for years. I would like to see whether some younger brothers among us would be raised up by the Lord to speak something. If I could see this, I would praise the Lord. On the other hand, I have seen some who like to build up something around themselves.

I have been in the line of the Lord's recovery for many years, and I bear much responsibility for the Lord's recovery. Thousands around the globe came into the recovery due to the ministry. They sacrificed their future and everything. In these days hundreds of young people in Taiwan gave up their future after their graduation from college. Humanly speaking, they sacrificed everything, so I am somewhat responsible to them. For them to sacrifice their entire future and come into the recovery in such a state is not fair. This is why I cannot allow this to happen.

The Lord has commissioned us with His recovery, and He has surely opened up the New Testament to reveal many dear and precious truths to us. What the Lord needs is for thousands of His dear saints who love Him, who live to Him, and who know nothing but His recovery to take one way. Regardless of whether the saints are from Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, England, Thailand, Indonesia, or the United States, we all bear the same burden, take the same way, and spread the same truths. **We dispense the truths embodied in the "gold bar," the Recovery Version. We have no other merchandise. If we would be like this, the entire earth will be taken.**

It breaks my heart to see some practicing to have another ministry, using the material of the ministry. We all have to pray, "Lord, rescue me from my ambition to be somebody in the recovery." We should know only the truths of God's New Testament economy. We use only one way by one accord, prayer, the Spirit, and the Word. This is what I believe the Lord is after, and this is what we all expect in the depths of our being. Everyone will feel happy about this.

We all have to realize that we are the full-timers. If we are a banker, we do banking to Him. If we are a teacher, we teach to Him. If we make one dollar or one million dollars, we make it to Him. Then when we go out, the Lord will surely back us. We do not need to worry about our living. The Lord will be backing us. When we go out, we do not go in a dissenting or ambitious way. If you go out with your ambition to build yourself up and I go out with my ambition to build my ministry up, we are finished. The Lord has to go to others. We all need to go out in one way like an army. Then we will have the morale and the impact.

We do not need to do that much. We just need to go out with a pure heart, without anything to ourselves but all things to Him. Just go out with all the truths and the Recovery Version to read to people. I assure you that you will catch someone every week. You do not need to preach your teaching or your kind of doctrine with your terminology. We have to see what the Lord's recovery is. The Lord's recovery has been commissioned with a big enterprise to spread the Lord's truths. He has given us the truths that we are holding. But we need the faithful, pure-hearted ones, who do not have any intention to live to themselves but to Him, to go out to spread these "gold bar" truths. There is no need for you to preach or teach in your way. Open up the Recovery Version and read some of the footnotes with the hungry ones.

If we all would go out in this way, I believe each one of us would get some persons every week. We would begin to have the increase, not just in percentage but in fold. We could even triple our number in one year. If we would all gain one person every three months, we would have a fourfold increase in one year. If you use the "gold bar" (the Recovery Version), the rainbow booklets, and all the Life-studies and present them to the believers and unbelievers all the time, within three months you will get one person. I believe that you may even get one person every week. In the Lord's ministry we are not building something to ourselves but something altogether to Him.

Let us all be full-timers! If we are led to drop our jobs, then we drop them to Him and go out to serve the precious truths in the Recovery Version, the rainbow booklets, and the Life-studies to everybody. We may read them footnote 14¹ on 2 Corinthians 13 or footnote 3⁴ on Hebrews 1, which tells us what aspects of Christ are revealed in each of the books of the New Testament. If we go out to read the footnotes of the Recovery Version to people, they will be caught. We will gain much increase. Actually, though, I do not care that much for the increase. I care for the spreading of the truths so that they can get into the needy hearts. If we spread these truths, we will become the faithful servants to serve food to the Lord's people at the appointed time (Matt. 24:45). Then we will fulfill the commission of the Lord's recovery. This is where my heart is. I will die to this. I told the brothers in the Far East that I will not stop until my

entire being is exhausted by this ministry. I hope you all will say the same thing.

Let us rise up to go full time, either by dropping our jobs to go out or by remaining in our jobs to make more money and give every cent to the Lord's move. Then the Lord's move will not be short of men or money. We will be short of nothing. **If the Lord can gain ten thousand saints in the United States to go full time with one kind of teaching, one kind of preaching, one kind of material, one kind of publication, one kind of way, and everything one kind, this will be our morale. The wise way is that we all take the full-time way and speak the same thing, think the same thing, present the same thing, and teach the same thing, having the same essence, appearance, and expression. Then we will have the morale, the impact, to defeat the enemy. This is what the Lord needs.** (Witness Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 08: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 112-116)

* * *

PREACHING THE HIGH GOSPEL IN THE NEW WAY WITH THE NEW LANGUAGE

We should not take the old way of preaching the gospel but should take the up-to-date way. If we contact others with the old, stale gospel, most will not receive our word. However, we can preach something new, which is actually ancient but has been hidden in the Bible. Because of God's mercy, we have dug out long-concealed truths. We need to preach the up-to-date gospel of the truths that God has unveiled to us. In order to preach in this way, we must learn the high-peak truths.

The Gospel of John is well known, treasured, and exalted among Christians, but there are truths that have been buried in it for thousands of years. John 12:24 says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." *It bears much fruit* means that it produces many grains. The original grain of wheat is Christ, who is God as the Word incarnated to become a man in the flesh. John 1:1 reveals that Christ is God. Verse 14 reveals that He became a man. Thus, in His person Christ is both God and man. This God-man revealed to His disciples that He was going to die as a grain of wheat in order to produce many grains. If Christ as the original grain of wheat is a God-man, the many grains must be many God-men. Since the one grain is divine, we as the many grains are also divine in life and nature but not in the Godhead. What else could we be?

The original grain—Christ—lived among others as a man but not by His human life. Instead, He lived as a man by the divine life in order to express God. He was able to do this by denying Himself as a man and putting Himself on the cross so that He as a man could live by God's life and live God in order to express God's attributes in His human virtues. This is the practical way to live as a God-man.

We must not forget that by nature we were sinners, yet God redeemed, regenerated, and transformed us into sons of God. Although we were sinners, we became sons of God by being redeemed, regenerated, and transformed from fallen

humanity into divinity. As a result, on the one hand, we are human, and on the other hand, we are divine. Thus, like Christ, we are living on earth as men to express God. However, we cannot express God by living by the human life. As men, we can express God only by denying ourselves and putting ourselves on the cross so that God with His attributes can be expressed in our humanity. The main thing that we need to remember is to live as God-men by denying ourselves and taking the cross so that we can live as men not by the human life but by the divine life in order to express God. This is the practical way for His divine attributes to be expressed through our human virtues.

We need to learn these new truths. This is my burden. There is a struggle between God and Satan concerning this matter. I am suffering because I am involved in a struggle between God and the enemy to release the depths in His holy Word. There is the need of a new era—a new age—and we need to learn to speak a new language, a new gospel, new truths, and new doctrine. We should speak the same Christ not in a stale way but in a heavenly, unveiled way. In order to learn to do this, we need to read and reread the ministry books that concern the high peak of the divine revelation.

Since my ministry began, I have spoken about nothing other than Christ. My tone has not changed but has recently been uplifted. I continue to speak about the same thing but with a higher tone. It is for this reason that the saints need to learn a new language. We should repeatedly read the books that we have published from messages given since 1994 in order to become familiar with the new language.

Once we learn the new language, we should go as members of a vital group to contact others with the gospel. When we do this, we should not speak in a stale way but in the new way. This way is powerful, convincing, and subduing. A brother recently used the new language to preach the gospel to a Muslim, who, as a result, was dynamically saved. This shows that it is not exceedingly difficult to gain an increase. The difficulty is because we remain in staleness. Americans have heard the stale gospel for centuries and are tired of it.

If we present Christ to others in the new way with the new language and new points of truth, this will shock others and stir them up in a positive way. The saints can do this by visiting others. When others are willing to listen to us, we should not speak vain words. No matter if they are already Christians or not, we can tell them that we would like to read to them a verse from the Bible. Then we can use a verse like John 12:24 to preach the high gospel to them. There are many verses that we can use to preach the high gospel. This will shock even those who consider themselves to be Christians. We need to uplift our preaching from staleness into newness. We all need to change in this way. My burden is to train the saints to speak the new language. The high peak of the divine

revelation cannot be found in other Christian books. Therefore, we need to learn and pray, asking the Lord for a new revival and the saints' learning to speak the new language. (Witness Lee, CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 2, *Church Meetings in Anaheim*, pp. 161-163)

* * *

I hope that this fellowship can be used by the Lord to open our eyes to see that the way we have been taking is not the right way. Instead of making so many telephone calls, use the time to go to contact your next door neighbor, and give him a rainbow booklet that we have published. If you visited one of your neighbors once every two weeks, continuously, regularly, properly, and with a sincere burden and some prayer, do you not believe this person could be caught by the Lord? We cannot take anything as an excuse. We cannot say that many have been poisoned against us or that our particular area is a place full of Christians. We must ask ourselves how much time we have spent in visiting others with gospel tracts, with the Bible, and with some of the rainbow booklets. If you try this week after week and even day after day, you will see the result. The Bible tells us that the husbandmen, or farmers, should labor with patience, expecting to see the gathering (1 Cor. 9:10; 2 Tim. 2:6). You cannot say that it is hard to reap a harvest before you have even sown something. That is not fair. You have to do the sowing, the cultivating, and the watering to help the crop grow. After a certain time according to the natural law, something will grow up. We all must ask ourselves whether or not we have done our duty. We have to realize that some day we will stand before the judgment seat. (Witness Lee, *The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 152-153)

* * *

Many Christians are nearly void of the truth; they have the Word of God, but they do not care for it, nor do they realize how much is in it. In this age of apostasy the Lord, by His mercy, has opened up His Word to us. Many of the divine riches have been printed and published. The more the riches are put out, the more we should be condemned and burdened. Why do we not go out with these riches? Our edition of the Recovery Version is not as expensive as some other Bibles. It would be wonderful if we could distribute some copies of this version to the Lord's seekers. We all should have the spirit and the burden to spare some money to get some copies of the Recovery Version into others' hands. This is one of the ways to feed the Lord's people.

Some of us may not be able to afford to purchase extra copies of the Recovery Version, but all of us can distribute the rainbow booklets. We have many thousands of these inexpensive booklets stored away, and we are still publishing them. If we would practice this, this will be a base for us to stand before the Lord when He comes back. None of us will care for

money when we are standing before His judgment seat. To save some money and spend it on the Lord's work is to use the mammon of unrighteousness to make friends (Luke 16:9). When you feed others with these spiritual publications, you will surely make friends. The Lord will reward you, and those who get saved and edified will receive you into the eternal tabernacles. Furthermore, we can go to others with our Bible and read Matthew 24 and 25 to them. Many Christians need these chapters to wake them up from their stupor. (Witness Lee, *The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 154-155)

* * *

USING OUR PUBLICATIONS

When you begin to present the gospel and the truth, you should not speak your own word. The more you speak your own word, the more impact you will lose because your contacts do not know who you are or what your status is. When you speak something, they may not have much confidence in it. But if you present them a proper, printed book, they will be impressed. In general, people respect books because a book should be written with much consideration and scholarship. When you present a book, they would respect it, especially when you present the Bible. The Bible is a famous and highly regarded book. Mostly everyone, even the opposers, would recognize that the Bible is a great book. If you present them a short portion of the Bible and say something in brief according to the footnotes in the Recovery Version, this will surprise and impress them. They will feel that you are a person who knows the top book in this world, so this will stir up their respect and give them confidence in what you present.

When you go out, you must have a Recovery Version and the rainbow booklets, which contain a slightly edited version of the Life-study messages. The most important publication for you to bring is the booklet entitled *The Mystery of Human Life*. Using this booklet is the best way to catch people. This booklet is also good for those who are saved, because so many saved ones never got to know what the mystery of human life is. If you use this, you will catch them. In Taiwan thousands have been brought to the Lord through this booklet. You do not need to read the whole booklet with them. This booklet talks about four keys to the mystery of human life. Just use one key with those that you visit. People respect books, and they respect the Bible even more. You must open up the meaning, the revelation, of the Bible to people in a short time. Then show them a footnote in the Recovery Version, and let them read it. This will catch them. (Witness Lee, *The New Way to Carry Out the Increase and Spread of the Church*, pp. 13-14)

* * *

No other Christian body can imitate us because of two main reasons. The Lord started His recovery with two things—life and truth. In church history it is hard to find any organization, any group of Christians, that has been raised up, established, and built up with life and truth. Regardless of how short a time you have been in the recovery, you should have realized that the main item is life. I do not mean that

each one of the saints is in life all the time. But in a general way most of the saints in the Lord's recovery are for life. With life there is also the truth.

The Lord has also blessed us with the truth. Now we can go out by life with the truth. We have the life within, which is our very fiber, our very element, our very essence. We go out with this life essence within and with the truth in our hand—life within and the truth without. We have the Recovery Version of the New Testament, The Mystery of Human Life, the rainbow booklets, the Life-study messages, and all the books in the Lord's recovery.

Two heretical groups, the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, knock on people's doors very much. They bring heretical teachings to people, but we bring the divine life and the divine truth. We have the mingling of the divine life with the human life within and the truth in our hands without. The Lord's recovery came to the United States in 1962, yet even by 1970 the time was not yet ripe for us to go out in a full-scale way because not much of the ministry had been published. Now, however, we have Life-study messages on the entire New Testament and a Recovery Version of the New Testament. Furthermore, most of the churches, especially those in Taiwan and in the United States, have been fully and strongly established. Hence, now is the time for all the saints to go out. We have the life with the truth in the established churches. (Witness Lee, *The New Way to Carry Out the Increase and Spread of the Church*, p. 31)

* * *

Today the United States is the top country on this earth. The young people today on the campuses are seeking more knowledge concerning human life and the reality of the universe, yet superficial knowledge will not fill up the void within them. They would like to know the truth of the universe, the real meaning, the real significance, of human life. We have what they need. We have a proper translation of the New Testament with footnotes that open up the text, many booklets for distribution, and many truths to speak. These truths have to be our constitution. **We have to be saturated and soaked with all these divine realities. Then we need to go out to speak with our Recovery Version and with our pockets or handbags full of the rainbow booklets, which contain a slightly edited version of the Life-study messages. When you are speaking the high gospel to someone, after a certain point give them a booklet. This really means something.** Thank the Lord that He has given us a rich deposit of His Word. The early believers went out not only with the Spirit but even the more with the Word. The Spirit by Himself is too abstract. We can minister the Spirit to others, but we cannot present the Spirit. What we can present in a thorough way is the Word. (Witness Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p.25)

2019 Memorial Day Conference
N. A. Co-workers
Excerpts

(**Boldface** type for emphasis)

I am sharing this to help us realize that the history among us has been one of coming completely out of Christianity without compromise. It is a shame that some so-called co-workers among us have tried their best to compromise. They say that between the denominations and the local churches there is a gap, and they consider themselves as the bridge to bridge the gap. This was a suffering to Brother Nee, and today this is a suffering to me.

Because of our standing for the pure church life, others have been offended. But what can we do? Paul says in Galatians 1:10, "If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of Christ." If we were men-pleasers, we would not suffer persecution as Paul did. The history of the Lord's recovery is a history of coming out of and being outside of the present evil age. We have burned the bridges between us and Christianity, but some among us have tried to build a bridge to bring us back. We need to burn all the bridges. There should be no bridge between the local churches and Christianity. Everything should be after its kind. The denominations are after their kind, and the local churches should be after their kind. We should be what we are without compromise or pretense.

I am afraid that in the coming years, if the Lord delays His coming, some subtle ones will be used by the enemy again to try to bridge the gap between us and Christianity. We need to maintain such a gap between us and Christianity. The wider this gap is the better because it is a gap between us and the present evil age. Thank the Lord that Brother Nee was a pioneer ahead of us to come out of Christianity into the pure church life to accomplish God's will to have the Body of Christ. He suffered for this his entire life. He was even imprisoned by the Communists for the last twenty years of his life. There was a rumor saying that he was released, but this is a lie. He died in prison in his faithfulness to the Lord. There was no change with him. He was a real martyr. He was **martyred** for the church and the churches. He was really delivered from this present evil age. (Witness Lee, *History of the Church and the Local Churches*, pp.113-114)

* * *

EXERCISING WISDOM

None of us should have a condemning attitude toward others. You must exercise wisdom in applying what you hear in these messages. **The messages in the Lord's ministry must be faithful to His burden and tell people the real**

situation. However, this does not mean that you should go out and criticize those in Catholicism, the denominations, or the free groups, telling them that they are divisive and that only the local church is right. This is not wise. **On the other extreme, you should not be political, pretending to be something that you are not. We all must be what we are, yet with the exercise of wisdom. When we contact people, we must help them according to their condition and situation.** Do not tell the unsaved about the church. Rather, minister to them something concerning the forgiveness of sins and the imparting of life. You may meet some who are saved but who have never consecrated themselves to the Lord. Thus, you should help them become consecrated people. **At some point you may meet a person who truly loves the Lord and who is seeking after the Lord's heart. Then, with discernment, you may share something with him concerning the Lord's economy and His recovery today.**

In this day of division and confusion you must be on the alert not to be cheated, deceived, or influenced by anyone. At the same time you must have much contact with the Lord, praying individually and corporately and fellowshiping to seek the Lord's leading in contacting people according to their situation and condition. I hope that the young people will come together in groups to pray and fellowship about all these matters. This will make you more clear about them and help you to contact others. (Witness Lee, *Young People's Training*, pp. 205-206)

* * *

Some who were influenced by Brother Nee's book have said that the practice of the Lord's recovery is too frank and too bold. Therefore, they invented another way. This way is to pretend to be something you are not. Those who follow this way claim that they are practicing the church life, but they do not want to call it the church. (Witness Lee, *Young People's Training*, p. 198)

* * *

Not only the Catholic Church has taken in leaven, but the Protestant denominations and groups have also. Rock music and drama are types of leaven used to make spiritual things easier for people to accept. When I was in China, I knew of some young men in a certain organization who mixed basketball with the preaching of the gospel. Using basketball for gospel preaching is also leaven. I doubt that very many were saved through this. **The whole principle of the Y.M.C.A. is leaven, for the goal of the Y.M.C.A. is to bring the heavenly standard down to the earthly level, to bring the gospel to secular society in a worldly way.** So many things in Christianity are leaven. These include Christmas, Easter, idols, pictures, images, rock music, drama, and the entire Y.M.C.A. system. **We must be careful not to take anything other than Christ for God's purpose, because anything other than He is leaven. Oh, the subtle one is crouching nearby waiting for his prey! We can easily become his prey because in our human nature is the desire to make it easy for people to experience spiritual**

things. But whatever you use to help people to touch spiritual things is a type of leaven. The pure and sanctified way to preach the gospel and to bring people to Christ is prayer and the ministry of the Word. Do not take any other way. If after praying and ministering the Word, people will still not receive the gospel, that is up to the Lord. Whether or not people receive our word is a matter of the Father's will. We do not want to use any gimmicks to help in our preaching. Every gimmick is leaven. We are not for a work or for a movement—we are for the testimony of Jesus.

With the appearance of the kingdom of the heavens there are three matters: the tares, the changed nature of the constituents of the kingdom; the big tree, the false façade; and the leaven, the inward corruption and rottenness. We can apply this picture to today's Christianity. Throughout Christianity we can see tares, abnormal growth, and the corruption caused by leaven. In nearly every part of today's Christianity there is corruption. Although there is a certain amount of truth, it is mixed with leaven. Instead of purity, there is mixture. Those who oppose and criticize us, claiming to defend the truth, must deal with all these things. Praise the Lord that we have been called out of the façade and kept from the leaven! **Nevertheless, we must be on the alert not to allow another kind of leaven to come in. Be careful not to take anything other than Christ. In building up the church and spreading the Lord's testimony, the only way is to pray and to minister the pure Word. In the eyes of God, any gimmick—anything other than Christ, the Word, prayer, and the Spirit—is leaven. We must pray until our preaching is in the power of the Spirit, and we must pray until our testimony is filled with the riches of Christ. This is the pure meal as food for God and man. This is what the Lord wants today.**

I believe the reason the Lord gave all these parables showing the mysteries of the kingdom was to help the apostles and the early disciples to realize that this is the kingdom of the heavens. We must see the difference between the reality of the kingdom and the appearance of the kingdom. The reality is precious to God, but the appearance is abominable to Him. Therefore, we must treasure the reality and reject the appearance. **We do not like the tares, the big tree, or the rottenness. We care for the pure wheat flour and the little mustard herb which are good for food. This is the church's testimony, which is food to God and man. Not until the hungry and seeking ones come into the Lord's recovery can they find the pure food for their spiritual satisfaction.** Many of us can testify that we were hungry for years, but that once we came into the church, we were satisfied. Our spirit told us that here in the church there is food. **Here there are no gimmicks or leaven, but fine flour with the mustard herb. This is the Lord's recovery, and this is the dining table. This is the Lord's testimony without the tares, the big tree, or the leaven.** (Witness Lee, *Life-Study of Matthew*, pp. 469-471)

* * *

A SUBDUING ATMOSPHERE

I think those of you who were with us in those years at Elden hall will all agree with me that the recovery then was very pure. It had one direction, one tendency, one goal. I do not mean that all who were meeting with us had seen the focus, but the focus was there. A good number of the saints saw, and some did not, but there was no mixture. This made the atmosphere convincing, even subduing. Any who came with another goal either dropped it or stopped coming. Not too many left, yet there were some who did, because they had their own goal. They would have liked to use our field to carry out their own work; when they realized there was no way, they left. Many who came, however, were subdued, convinced, and purified. Today the churches seem to have lost that convincing, subduing power, as far as the leadership is concerned.

CARING FOR NUMBERS

In some places there is an effort being made to build up the numbers in attendance at the meetings. I would ask you to check whether your concern is for the meetings to be in the focus of the Lord's economy or whether it is for an increase in the number attending. Even if you simply want to have a good meeting, this may cause you to miss the focus. The focus is to have the testimony of Jesus. We should pray, "Lord, I don't care merely for a good meeting. I don't care merely for numbers. I don't care merely for good attendance. Lord, I care for Your testimony."

Brothers, if there has been an increase in attendance in your locality, that is really good. But I would check with you, what is the focus in your locality? What is the goal of your work? Is there a real lampstand or just a Christian meeting?

DESIRING THE LEADERSHIP

As long as you have even a little desire to be a leader, that is a debit to God's economy. Brothers, as long as you have such a debit factor, you do not have the power to convince, subdue others. Elden was convincing because it was pure in God's move. The convincing, subduing power came from a source that was pure and clean.

The Lord's blessing is of different kinds. The rain, according to Matthew 5:45, is for everybody. The righteous do not get more and the unrighteous less. The Lord's blessing today is everywhere. Many Christian groups have some blessing in a general way. But the special blessing is not general. These groups do not enjoy the Lord's special blessing. I am afraid that in some of the churches in the recovery also this special blessing is lacking.

To take the leadership, to serve the Lord, you must have a pure heart and a pure motive. You must not try to build up a meeting just because it is in your hand. That is impure. To like being the leader is impure. To want to be the first leader is

impure. Even to have a consideration that someone does not want you to be the leader is impure. As long as you have an impure heart, the blessing can only be general; it cannot be special. Apparently, you all are pure. You love the Lord. You sacrifice your time, your family, your home, and many other things for the Lord's recovery. Yet you are not absolutely pure for the focus of the Lord's recovery.

PLAYING POLITICS

Another sign of impurity is to play politics. Even if it is only a little, in quality it is the same; only the quantity is different. You may bring your experience in the world into the church, even into the leadership. If you do this, it is impure. This is to contaminate, to pollute, the Lord's recovery.

A WORD FOR THE FUTURE

I want to have talk after talk with you, not messages but talks, that you may all see what the Lord wants in His recovery. Preaching the gospel? There are lots of preachers. If you say, "Well, let's do the same thing," then there is no need for a testimony. Teaching the Bible? Coming together to have an assembly according to the Scripture—an ekklesia, the called-out ones meeting together? Is this all the Lord wants?

What I share with you here will be made available in printed form to the public. The video tapes will not last as long as what is printed. It will be sent to the whole earth, not just to Orange County. It is not for the present only; it will be available for the future.

It is good that the churches preach the gospel, that they use the Life-studies, that they are doing things according to the Scriptures. But, dear brothers, where is the focus? Do we practice the one spirit with the Lord? Do we have a vision, the prevailing, present vision, every hour controlling us, guarding us? If we do not, how can we expect the brothers and sisters in our locality to have such a vision? (Witness Lee, *Practical Talks to the Elders*, pp. 16-18)

* * *

We may be weak. We are still not so useful in the Lord's hand. I do not deny this. Yet even the dissenting ones cannot deny that the blessing has been on the Lord's recovery. Twenty years of history have gone by since 1963; it is clear where the blessing has been. Impureness in the church life and in the Lord's work is the basic killer. It kills everything, including you if you are impure. As long as you have impurity in your motive, you are the first victim of this impureness. This is not a threat; it is a warning, first to myself. Only the Lord knows how fearful and trembling I have been for many years lest I be impure in making a decision concerning certain things.

To talk with you about this matter of purity is one of the reasons for these Monday night meetings. Of course, this is a minor point, not the

central lane. Nevertheless, it is a major condition. However much you say that you are in the central lane, in the Lord's focus, if your motive is not pure, you are off. You are not in the central lane. The central lane is good only for the pure ones to travel on. This is a serious matter. A church under pure hands may experience many troubles, but it is still under the blessing. Once it changes into impure hands, death comes in. You have probably seen this happen.

The same is true with the Lord's work. Soon after I came to this country, some jealous ones from another place said, "Why can't we do what Brother Lee is doing? Let's go to the United States too and do the same thing." They came to this country and tried to do a work. Eventually, nothing was accomplished. **I do not believe that the blessing on the recovery in the United States has been due to my ability. My ability at most could only have been a little instrument. It was due to something in the recovery that was pure. My conscience allows me to ask you brothers: is there any hint of impurity regarding the church and the Lord's work as far as I myself am concerned? I have been with you for twenty years. Tonight I stand before you, about a hundred people, to say that it is hard for you to find anything of the church and the Lord's work related to me that is impure. Brothers, this is the only reason that the Lord's blessing, not in prosperity but in life, is here, and it is because of this that I can speak boldly. My conscience does not have even a small hole. In other things I dare not say, but in this matter of pureness I have a conscience without offense.** (Witness Lee, *Practical Talks to the Elders*, pp. 26-27)

* * *

Remaining in the Focus

What I have shared with you tonight is about the pureness and the focus. We do need to have the external things like good meetings, proper Bible teaching, and good gospel preaching. Without these we cannot exist. Mrs. Penn-Lewis lacked these, and so did T. Austin-Sparks. Because of this shortage, history shows that their ministry did not last long in its practical reality. The denominations, on the other hand, have lasted just because of their organization and all these external things. I do not say we have to follow them, but there is a principle. It was for this reason that Brother Nee, in spite of the sacrifice, took time to care for the external things. He learned by observing those who went before him and lacked these external things, so he did take care of them. At the same time he told us of his hope that some brothers would be raised up to take care of matters like gospel preaching, new beginners, teachings, and practical church affairs. He regretted that there did not seem to be many among us who could replace him in this aspect.

Today it is the same. The external is still prevailing. We do not pay sufficient attention to the focus. There is a peril, a danger, that we may lose the vision of the Lord's recovery.

It is true that, in spite of our weakness and of our not being up to the Lord's standard, there is no other group of people who are so seeking. Not to say unbelievers, even other Christian groups are not as seeking and as sincere as we are. This is simply because of the Lord's mercy. We are somewhat attempting to be pure, and we hate the impureness. Nonetheless, we are not absolute in this hatred.

I look to the Lord that the leading ones in the churches may see this focus and practice it. We must not allow other things to invade our daily life, nor must we allow any practice, good or not good, biblical or not biblical, to invade the church life. May every local church have only this focus, this practice, all the time. Even though the externals are necessary, may we not let them become our focus. Only one thing can be the proper focus of the church life, and that is Christ, Christ experienced by us all. Doctrines cannot be the focus. No doubt, we have this doctrine already. I know you all understand it. But to understand the doctrine is one thing; to see the vision and be caught by it, and to practice it, is another matter.

THE OUTCOME

I believe Brother Nee left this earth without much joy. He did not see much outcome of the vision he had seen. There was very little real expression on this earth of his ministry. If there were not such a little continuation as what we have now, perhaps the only outcome would be some of his writings published to serve Christianity. When I consider this, I am very much warned. What will be the outcome of today's recovery?

I believe that the present spread of the gospel on mainland China has been due to two things. First, it was due to the earnest prayers of many European and American brothers and sisters who went to China as missionaries. Of course, not all the missionaries were pure, nor did they all have a real burden. But some, like Hudson Taylor and others, did. I believe what is happening in China is an answer to the prayers they offered. Second, it is due also to the seed sown by the Lord in China through the recovery. Many of us prayed for the mainland, and the seed of the recovery was sown there.

Much of the present preaching there is shallow. Thus, our books that have been sent in have been used by the Lord; in fact, they have been very much used, because those new believers had nothing to feed on. When they received the books and Life-studies, they were fully satisfied. Of course, this is just the beginning.

We must endeavor to go on, to leave a real testimony. Every local church should be a genuine, pure lampstand. Today's world is small. Whatever we are here will have an effect on China and elsewhere. The influence, the news, will reach them. We hope that they may receive some publications and even these messages. How the recovery goes on in other places depends on what we are here. (Witness Lee, *Practical Talks to the Elders*, pp. 33-35)

* * *

TAKING CARE OF THE YOUNG ONES

I passed through this stage of picking up wrong interpretations and concepts of the Scriptures, so I learned something. I do not like to see that the Lord's recovery is being brought backward to the old writings. I also do not like to see that the young generation would be brought back to the old things to be occupied by them. We must realize that we have only one life to live. Even with two or three lives, you cannot exhaust the reading of the Christian books. I do not like to see people misdirected in reading things that will waste their time.

By the Lord's mercy, there has been a kind of laboratory work done through Brother Nee and us. We have picked up the necessary, basic items of the divine, spiritual, and heavenly things. We have put all these things not in a scholarly form but in a "layman's form," which is John's form in the book of John.

My burden is that we must take good care of the young ones among us. Do not bring them into peril so that they would be occupied with the wrong things. We have a pure system of publications that comprise all the main items of the divine, spiritual, and heavenly things. These publications are very adequate for all the young saints among us to have a good foundation laid and a strong standing established. Then they could go on, not to learn more things from the old books, but to check the old books and to get themselves confirmed.

For us to bring the young ones into the old books without consideration is a peril and a risk. It is not safe. What you young ones can use as reference books, however, are the dictionaries, lexicons, and concordances. Nearly all the dictionaries have some good points. No dictionary, however, is complete, and all differ from one another. Never be satisfied with one. You must use more than one. When you investigate a word, do not be satisfied with one dictionary's definition. You must look into others. These are the only things that I would recommend for you young ones to use—the lexicons, the dictionaries of languages, and the concordances of the Bible. You should use these references in the way of comparison. This will help you. (Witness Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 04: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 14-15)