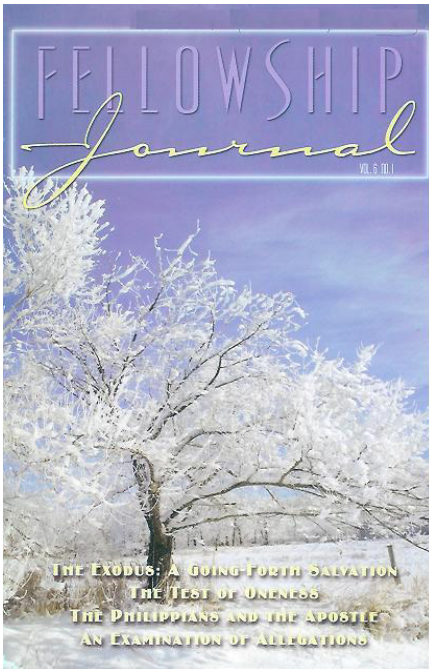


FELLOWSHIP *Journal*

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ENCOURAGEMENT TO IMBIBE

As editor, I feel the pressure of editing and putting together individual issues of the *Fellowship Journal*, and agonize over the typos that slip by me to be forever found on their pages. I also, however, benefit from and exult over the revelation that now may likewise be located in these issues, for I have had the privilege of handling what is conveyed. Sometimes I review what has been printed just to again be reminded, refreshed and edified by what has been marvelously ministered among us for our sakes. Since this has been such a watering to me, may I recommend this to you, the reader: Appreciate and make use of these riches that the Lord has ministered by His servants for the sake of His Body! They have been wrought and made available at great cost, yet they come to us so freely!

Today, for instance, I read again what was ministered by our brother Titus at a conference held in Columbus, Ohio (found in No. 5, Issue 2, which I accessed online) and I was encouraged once more and impressed at how much was released in those few precious days, and how relevant and needful it remains. I also re-discovered sharing from the first Psalms training and was again impressed with how much was poured out to us at that time. The fact that so much is being poured out, however, does not indicate that what is ministered among us should be treated as something common! It would be the height of foolishness to take for granted the high value of what we have so long been privileged to witness and participate in.

Besides such a faithful ministry of the Word for the edification of those of us meeting among the churches, this journal also presents articles examining relevant aspects of church history and our particular and unique spiritual heritage and commitment. It is my aim that every issue, if it is received, would be of greatest possible benefit to those struggling upon the ground of oneness for the building up of the Lord's Body in these days.

May we all be those found faithful to His faithfulness at His coming, as those who have participated in the preparation of His Bride.

John Berglund

P.S. As to the apology I made in the previous issue, it needs to be made clear that it was intended for what was contained within the pages of black and white alone. If there was any unintended inference made regarding photographs, etc., I must apologize for my apology!

Early in December about 20 sisters gathered at the Huntington House to enjoy a time of... grace! They discussed what grace is, how we experience it and how to develop a habit of looking for it in our lives. The time was so enjoyable, they wanted to give some sort of account of their time for submission to the Journal. It is an example of how Huntington House and the properties at Ashland Woods facilitate opportunities for fellowship among the saints and the churches - Editor.

One sister's testimony:

As I have considered what to share about the weekend, I realize I can only share my own experience. As far as content, there was too much to squeeze into this summary. However, I can share some highlights and blessings I received from the riches that flowed; in other words, my testimony.

One of the most poignant examples of grace I have experienced was when my mother died. I had been with her in the hospital all day, not realizing how close the end was. When I came home, I noticed that a hanging flower which I had brought from her home had fallen and was completely withered. Speaking to my children, I said, "I hope Grandma does better than her plant." She died that night. The next morning, weary from grief, I walked out onto the porch and found the flower in full bloom. What a picture of resurrection! My mother loved plants and this was the language the Lord used to comfort me at the time of her death. I knew it was a special message from my loving Father.

We shared many of these "That wasn't me!" moments from our lives; experiences of enjoying the Lord which served to get our attention so that we noticed God in our lives. This encouraged us to learn to look for ways to be open; to be in a place to receive grace more often.

We also shared habits we have developed to increase our openness to receive more grace. Again, our God is creative, leading sisters to contact and experience Him in many ways - from praying while packing the kids' lunches to calling on Him at traffic lights on the way to work - and lots more besides! It was an encouraging time; not for us to learn new methods, but to see grace operating in sisters' lives and be encouraged to seek the Lord in our own lives and look for ways to find Him involved and available in all of our situations. One of the blessings of sharing these experiences is the encouragement that results - the magnification of grace and the increased enjoyment. For example, the first time I shared the story of my mom's plant with a sister, she responded by

telling me how the Lord had comforted her (in a completely different way) when her mother had died. Grace was multiplied as we realized how much God cares for us to comfort us in exactly the way we will understand as coming from Him. Thus He is expressed in our shared enjoyment of Him as grace to us in our daily lives.

We looked at many verses as we considered grace together, including Hebrews 4:16: "Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help." Coming forward is something we can do and we should do, without fear. Furthermore, there is a result; something is received and something is found. What an exciting experience—receiving mercy and finding grace! My daughter experienced the Lord's timely help through a friend when their husbands were overseas as a result of their position in the military. They spent hours on the phone together, talking after their children were in bed, passing many lonely hours in conversation. Even though they were both tired, somehow they were able to get through each day feeling better because of the time spent encouraging and strengthening one another in a difficult time. This example touched my heart because it is so practical. Human needs being met. Timely help. Today the men are home and their friendship continues to flourish, drawing them closer to each other and to the Lord.

As Annie Johnson Flint wrote in her marvelous hymn (723):

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men,
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

What a wonderful God we have—so rich and so available as grace to us!

Another sister testifies:

"I think it's wonderful when God can bring sisters together so that we can be knit together. I appreciate the unique setting of the Huntington House. It provides an opportunity to spend time with sisters and get to know them—sisters that I normally don't spend time with. It was a good beginning that I believe the Lord can use. I think it is wonderful what the Lord is able to do when we just give a little bit and open ourselves up to be built up as fellow-members in the Body. I appreciate it when the Lord provides us a different setting, outside of regular meetings and how He is able to open things up - what a blessing!"

MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES: EXPERIENCING GOD'S GREAT SALVATION IN EXODUS

AFTER THE LORD ACCOMPLISHED THE PLAGUES UPON EGYPT AND DELIVERED THE ISRAELITES AT PASSOVER, THE WAY WAS CLEARED FOR MOSES TO FINALLY LEAD THE PEOPLE OF GOD OUT OF EGYPT TO HIMSELF. WHAT A MARVELOUS PICTURE OF SALVATION FOR US TODAY!

God appeared to Moses after he had lived forty years in the wilderness, and told him to return to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel out of their bondage. After meeting with Aaron and the elders of the people (Exo. 4:27-29), Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says Jehovah, the God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" Pharaoh must have been amused as he dismissed their demand that he would simply allow all his slaves to walk off! Moses, however, did not respond in anger, even though he had with him the serpent-rod, for he was no longer the man so prone to strike out as he once was. Instead, Moses and Aaron simply said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to Jehovah our God, lest He fall on us with pesti-

lence or with the sword." Pharaoh thus heard from them that the descendants of Israel had a God named Jehovah, and He was called both the God of Israel and God of the Hebrews!

JEHOVAH, GOD OF ISRAEL, GOD OF THE HEBREWS

Knowing God according to these three titles is crucial to our going on. If we desire to be separated from the world, and if we desire to see the church in sanctification from the world, we need to understand the significance of these titles. Each of them requires the previous one to be fully applied. Therefore, they must be understood in order. As we come to know God as Jehovah, He becomes to us the God of Israel, which in turn enables all those in the church life to experience God as the God of the Hebrews.

JEHOVAH IS LIFE

The root of the name *Jehovah* comes from the Hebrew *haya*, meaning life, that which restores. Such a life is a dispensing life, a restoring life, and a reviving life! When you have met with this God as Jehovah as Moses had, you meet with the God of life!

COUNTERFEIT GODS CANNOT MATCH GOD

The Egyptians had no such God. At that time they were using the Israelite as slaves to build two cities named Pithon and Rameses. The name "Pithon" means "God, the self-producing". Our God, however, is ever-existing. He is forever God, He has no need to be replenishing Himself for the sake of His existence. The principle God gave for reproduction was that it take place by two: male and female. The Egyptian "god" claimed to bypass this law.

THE GOD OF LIFE STRENGTHENS US TO GET OUT OF EGYPT AND COME TO HIM

The people in the world are focused upon production, but they seek to bypass the principle God has established to obtain it. The God of life, however, is telling us to GO! Go where? Go to God Himself! Go to Him who is life! Go to enjoy being revived, restored, and dispensed into! This very Jehovah tells us that we have to go to Him,

for we cannot produce anything on our own which will be of any lasting value.

SUCH A GOD IS THE GOD OF OUR TRANSFORMATION

Thus, as Jehovah, God becomes the God of Israel. He is the God who transforms His people. Israel was born Jacob, but he became Israel through all of the Lord's transforming work. God is able to make you into another person through His constituting work. Our God is able to make us very different, even to the extent that we become as He is!

THE GOD WHO IS TRANSFORMING US IS ALSO BRINGING US TO CROSS OVER INTO NEW REALMS

The more we know Him as the God of Israel, the more we will also be able to know Him as the God of the Hebrews. What does the term "God of the Hebrews" mean? It indicates that God is the God of river crossers, because the word *Hebrew* means *river-crosser*! In the Bible, crossing a river from one region into another is very significant. This God is transforming and constituting us into someone we have never been before. Furthermore, He is always leading us from one piece of land into a higher piece of land, and then again to an even higher piece of land. This God is always leading us to cross river after river into ever-higher realms. This is marvelous!

When we speak of our beloved God, we must remember that He is life, He is a life-giver, He is a life-dispenser, He is a restorer and He is a reviver! Whenever you touch Him, all that is of life and all that is related to life will happen to you. More than that, whenever you touch Him, He reconstitutes you, making you into a different person! Because you have such a God, there will be a noticeable difference between you and your unsaved friends, for within you there is a God who is transforming and even reconstituting you. If you are not undergoing such a change, there is something wrong! Do you realize that you have a God who is continually giving you life and making you into another kind of person? This is marvelous! Yet even more than that, He is also the God of the Hebrews, leading us collectively as His testimony to continually cross out of one realm into another. This is the pathway of the church!

SUCH A GOD IS ABLE TO LEAD US OUT OF EGYPT UNTO HIMSELF

Although we do not have such a physical Pharaoh ruling over us today, people still need to be led out of "Egypt"! How is this possible? First of all, they must know God as Jehovah. Once you know Jehovah, you discover that your God Himself is life, One who dispenses Himself as life and revives and restores all of us in life. Our God is Jehovah, the life-giving One! Therefore, every morning we must touch Him and

every day we must enjoy Him. When you experience this God in such a rich way, there is no Pharaoh as far as you are concerned. Right now, not much can be expected from many of the young people. If the Lord should even simply breathe a little too hard on some of them, they would feel as though their life was over. Their need is to realize that their God is a God who is transforming and reconstituting them! I have loved the Lord for as long as I have known Him, yet now the way I love the Lord is different than it was when I first met Him. Why? Because a reconstitution has been taking place within me. Some amount of transformation has taken place.

Furthermore, God is also the God of the Hebrews. He is the God who is leading His testimony. In the church life in Cleveland there are a good number of young people who are burning. They are those who should be encouraging the whole church to cross the river into whatever the Lord is seeking to bring us into!

God used Pharaoh to demonstrate His power and to judge the land of Egypt for mistreating His people (Exo. 7:4). In chapters 7 through 11 in Exodus, we see how God sent many great and terrible plagues upon Egypt, culminating in the death of all the firstborn sons among the Egyptians. Pharaoh finally bowed to all of the Israelites' demands and begged them to leave Egypt.

WHERE TO? UNTO GOD, OUR EXCEEDING GREAT JOY!

To where, though, would Moses lead the people as they walked out of Egypt? In Psalm 43:3, the psalmist writes, “O send out Your light and Your truth: let them lead me; let them lead me to Your holy hill, and to Your tabernacle.” To where would Moses lead the people of Israel? To the good land, the land promised by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! In this Psalm, the good land is portrayed as being the Lord’s holy hill, and where the Lord’s tabernacles would be found. The writer continues, “then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy...” Whenever we truly consecrate ourselves (signified by going unto the altar of God), we find that God becomes our exceeding joy. God is the focus of our journey. We are journeying to God, who is our exceeding joy! In chapter 6, the Lord told Moses that He would take the Israelites to Himself (v. 7). The Lord has taken us to Himself, not to some religion!

OUR BEGINNING OF MONTHS

After the children of Israel had experienced the Lord’s salvation at Passover, we are told in chapter 12: “Now Jehovah spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, This month shall be your beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you” (12:1-2). If we wish to follow the Lord, the first thing we must realize is that

God is the one who can truly make us joyful! He is our exceeding joy (Psa. 43:4). God also tells us that He desires to bring us to Himself to be His people (Exo. 6:7). Now, we are told this is truly a new beginning. Some might consider this month (Abib) to be March or April—Abib falls in the Spring— but God says, “No. This shall be your January!” It becomes the beginning of months to us.

Have you yet had a “January” in your Christian life? Do you know why so many of the “second generation” seem so hopeless? It is because they have not yet had a “January”! What is a “January”? In our Christian life, God tells us that sooner or later we will have to depart from everything that is old and march on to something new. When you make such a departure, it becomes the January of your life.

My real January was not the day of my salvation, which took place January 1, 1953. My real January took place at the end of September of 1954, for that was when I really began to know the Lord and to love Him. That was when my life began as a life of exodus; a life of coming out of the world and following Christ. That became my life’s real beginning.

Everyone’s first month may be different, but everyone must have such a beginning. If you are saved and desire to follow the Lord, but have never really met the Lord to the point that you have consecrated yourself to Him, your life as a believer has not yet begun.

EXODUS: AN AMAZING EVENT

The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth (Exo. 12:37-39). They were finally able to say: "Let's GO!" According to the number of men, the total amount of people involved must have been over two millions. It would have been as if the entire city of Montreal rose up and began to move out in the same direction along the same road. In addition, they had whatever they possessed of flocks and herds. Some had some chickens and others had a few sheep or goats. Such an occurrence is like a miracle in itself. Among them must have been newborn babies and small toddlers, as well as the old and infirm. I don't believe any raised in a comfortable society could have survived it. Yet they all were able to follow Moses, from Rameses to Succoth.

FROM RAMESES TO SUCCOTH

Rameses was the name of the Egyptian sun-god. It was also the name of one of the cities the Israelites were forced to make bricks for and build. Pharaoh was proclaiming in this city that they had their god, and it was the sun! The word also can mean a barrier (such as what might stand against evil). Egypt, or the world, is the place where one might find all the evil things. The Lord said, "Come out!" In coming out, they had to pass through the barrier. It is hard to imagine around two million people

suddenly crowding into a city, and just as hard to imagine how they would have risen up to move on to the next station. It must have been a great sight. They traveled on from Rameses to Succoth, which means "booths," or places of rest. After leaving behind the city of the Egyptian sun-god and crossing beyond that barrier, the children of Israel finally came to a place of restfulness. In such a place they set up their tents. This is the manner in which the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to the good land promised by God began.

CONSECRATING OUR FIRSTBORN

It was at this point that God said to Moses, "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn; whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine" (Exo. 13:2). Moses had to circumcise his own firstborn before he entered Egypt (4:24). On the night of that Passover, all the firstborn males among the Egyptians died. When we follow the Lord, we must realize that He will demand of us our firstborn. What does the firstborn signify? The firstborn signifies the best. In the Bible, all the blessings go to the firstborn. Therefore, all the firstborn must belong to God. As you follow the Lord, whatever you treasure must be offered to God. Therefore, do not think this is an easy journey. However, God saves us by offering the spotless Passover Lamb, seen in Exodus 12 as the means of salvation, which represents His First-

born. God has thus saved us. Therefore, we all must say, “Lord, whatever is best of mine belongs to You.”

When I was young, I had a talent for writing. Some of my writings were even published in a few periodicals. Therefore I told the Lord, “I will write something for You!” The Lord, however, seemed to say, “That is right. Give Me something to work on. Give me your best, whatever it may be. Eventually, however, you will come to realize you cannot do anything for Me.” If we desire to follow Him, we must experience the Passover and have a new beginning. In this new beginning, we must give up our best to the Lord.

FOLLOWING IN THE WAY OF SALVATION

When we are saved, we are saved once and for all. But after you are saved, you have to follow the Lord! We have been through the Passover; that is the beginning. Now, for the rest of our lives we have to continue to experience the Lord’s salvation.

In Hebrews, we find the term “so great a salvation” (Heb. 2:3). The Lord has saved us, He is saving us, and He will continue to save us. We are saved—we have been through the Passover—and this salvation will continue to be our lifelong experience. We need to experience this salvation until the Lord returns. Because we ARE saved, we need to continue to be saved. We have to be saved from the way we dress, what we love to read, and so many

other things. We must be saved from the things we now like, focus upon and boast of—whatever may occupy us and keep us from Christ.

CAMPING AT ETHAM AND ENJOYING THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

“So they took their journey from Succoth and encamped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness” (Exo. 13:20). The Lord tells us we need to go on! We need to go forward to the God who is our exceeding great joy. Moses could say, “I have God as my exceeding great joy, and I want to carry you all to God Himself.” Every consecrated person has laid himself on the altar to be God’s satisfaction, and has found in turn God as their exceeding joy. For your entire life, this must be your story. You cannot be for a ministry, a work, or anything else that is merely of God... your joy must be God Himself. For this, you need to have God’s presence. Without God’s presence, you cannot have God as your enjoyment. Thus, when the people came from Succoth, they came to Etham, which means “strength” and “plow”. A plow-head is what is used to break through hard soil. Now is the time to labor. For such labor, the Lord grants strength.

At this point, the people were able to gain a glimpse of the glory of God! At Etham, God came as a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. What could direct so many people? Could any number of policemen do so? No, but God as such a cloud could. I believe this

pillar could be seen for many miles. What was the source of this cloud and this fire? God Himself was the source.

As you follow Christ, time and time again you find yourself getting lost. So many things are going on around you, much of what does not make any sense. You are jammed right in the middle of so much confusion and commotion. When you are in spirit, however, you are able to say, "I see the Lord!" The Lord is leading. As long as you follow Him in this way, there is no problem. Even in the night, when things seem to be worse, there is the pillar becomes a pillar of fire! We should be amazed at the Lord's presence. Throughout the years, I have experienced what it is to be lost in the midst of commotion. However, when everything seems most discouraging, the light is there, and you exclaim, "I am amazed at Your presence!"

When I was in a certain locality for a conference, a number of brothers also came with the express purpose of tearing down the testimony of the Lord in that city. Everyone was told to move. One brother, however, told them, "Everyone can go, brothers, but the Lord has led me here; I cannot move." To this day, I appreciate that. Because of such a brother, the church was able to stand. Many were there to carry out "the flow," and were very strong in their speaking. After going out for a walk at that time, I became very clear that the Lord was still leading His people as the pillar and the cloud. Therefore, I was reassured. I

returned and stood with that brother. We cannot manipulate the saints and tell them where to move, and so on. As we follow the Lord, there will be a pillar of cloud and fire.

MOVING ONWARD TO MIGDOL

Thus Moses said, "Let's go!" And the people rose up and followed. However, how is it that you go forward? First realize that you will always need to take the way of salvation. The more you enjoy salvation, the more you enjoy the Lord's presence. Every time you enjoy salvation, you experience a new beginning, you take a new step, you experience a new consecration. Thus, you are able to tell the Lord, "My firstborn is yours!"

Then, secondly, as you follow the Lord, you can say, "Lord, I am surprised at how You are with us in such a rich way! Whether it is daytime or night, the pillar of cloud and fire never depart. They even protect us, so that when Pharaoh's army comes, the pillar of fire becomes a heavenly light that stands between us and those who would trouble us!" When the Israelites were encamped near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the Red Sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon (Exo.14:2) the pillar of fire and cloud moved to stand between Pharaoh's army and the people of Israel, yet light only shone on the Israelites, while the Egyptians just across from them were in darkness (Exo. 14:19-20). The children of Israel began to see who it was who would be their Lord now.

BECOMING ENLARGED TO RECEIVE MORE

The children of Israel had really been freed. They were still unclear, however, about what the purpose of their freedom was. They had been freed to partake of God!

The word Migdol means watchtower, but its root means “enlarged”. The Lord’s people had filled themselves with complaints about how hard it was for them in Egypt. In our terms, it is that we used to have as our constant refrain: “O my flesh! O my sin! O my TV show! O my hobbies!” Now, however, that we are out of Egypt, we have nothing like this to talk about. We are out of it by means of the Lord’s mighty hand. People in the world live on murmurings and reasonings. At Migdol, the people were removed from all the things they used to be able to talk about. The Lord led them to a place to be enlarged! Here the people could be enlarged from “I am the center” to “Christ is the center.” Here the people were no longer held in the thrall of the things of Egypt. They had no new item they had purchased to talk about. None of the girls were waiting for someone to comment on the new fashion they were wearing. No, everyone has been freed from such things to follow the Lord! Pharaoh’s control over us through the things of the world is truly over! They still had to go forward, however, because they were still at the border of Pharaoh’s realm, the place that had been their resi-

dence for over 400 years.

STILL BEING “UNSHAPED”

Their encampment between Migdol and the Sea was also said to be near Pi Hahiroth and opposite Baal Zephon. Pi Hahiroth means unshaped grain, indicating something with life, but not yet possessing life’s pattern. There is life, but it is as of yet undefined. In other words, the people leaving Egypt were experiencing God’s salvation, but they could not say much about it. For instance, some may exclaim, “How rich is our God! How great He is!” But when asked to explain, he can only repeat, “He is so rich! He is so great!” That is an example of an “unshaped” realization of life. Every life has its pattern, but it takes time for it to develop. Among many saints we can see signs of life, but it seems to remain unshaped! A sister may weep in a testimony, and we all await what it is that moves her so, but...that is it!

The people of Jehovah had left Egypt, so there was something of life, but it was at that stage still lacking in its expression.

STILL WITHIN REACH OF IDOLS

Directly across from this place where they encamped was Baal Zephon, a name indicating a place of idols. On the one hand, you discover you are still so unshaped; on the other hand are such powerful idols. Different things become idols to different people. To one person,

it is technological gadgets. To another, it is a certain pursuit. In the midst of all this, God says, "Be enlarged!"

How are we able to follow the Lord when we are told it is time to go? First of all, we need to be saved. It is a time of death, but there is a Passover, which was a preserving from death. If you have applied the blood of the Lamb, then you will be saved from what is past, you will be saved today, and you will experience salvation in the future. No matter how difficult the environment, you will enjoy salvation. Furthermore, you will enjoy the Lord's presence. It is so rich! You will experience the pillar of cloud and fire.

PASSING THROUGH THE SEA

Then comes the time to pass through the Red Sea. By doing this we become totally cut off from the world. Moses stretched out his staff, and the waters became heaped together so that the people might pass through as on dry land. Would you have dared to do it? Perhaps ten million living beings passed through, when you include all the flocks and herds that had to be shepherded past that awesome sight.

How foolish Pharaoh was to change his mind and come out after them! But the pillar of cloud and fire intervened. In the Bible it appears as though it might have taken just a few hours for the children of Israel to pass through the Sea, but I

would not be surprised if it took days! Finally it was over, and the pillar of cloud lifted. Then the Egyptians said, "Now's our chance! Let's go!" But the Lord did not hold the water up for them, of course, and they drowned. And the children of Israel found themselves on the other side. They had left one region, and had passed into another. They were separated now, unto God, through their baptism in the Red Sea.

IN THE WILDERNESS, SEPARATED FROM EVERYTHING UNTO GOD

Remember, God had first appeared to them as a worker of miracles and works of power as He performed all the plagues and signs in the land of Egypt. Then He appeared as an avenger of what Pharaoh had done against them, and One who was able to save them out of His punishment. What God wanted to be to them, however, was the One who was everything to them, as was represented in the Good Land flowing with milk and honey. Everything was flourishing there, but of that land they as yet knew nothing. Therefore, God appeared to them as the pillar of cloud and fire to lead them. This was the extent of their knowledge of God up to this point. In such a state they crossed the Red Sea so that they might be terminated to apply the reality of their new beginning. By means of the Red Sea, all their old relationships were cut off, so that they might finally confront the One who was truly their God. - *Titus Chu*

Though I love You, Lord,
My life seems all deformed...
I give myself to You,
then drift away.
Lord, may I ask You that You'd draw me yet again
and keep me running after You?

...Lord, I've seen Your purpose...
Your heart's unveiled to me!
Now I'd just like to see You gain me fully.
Though You I often limit
and fail by compromise,
Keep me in the index of Your eyes...

Lord, I want Your best.
I want Your full blessing.
I don't want any less,
though good it be.
Have mercy, Lord, to push, to pull...lay hold on me!
Keep me still running toward the prize!

Mold me, shape me, Lord.
Be my reality.
Even break my heart, if that has to be.
I'm desperate, Lord, that You would have Your way with me;
Others could touch You, then, through me!

Set my heart aflame...
Don't let me stay the same!
Don't let things remain which now grieve You.
My life I give to You and all I've claimed as mine...
May I just hold, Lord, onto You.

The Test of Oneness

Christians are supposed to be one. Jesus prayed for this before going to the cross (John 17:11, 20-23), and nearly every New Testament book touches this point in one way or another. Yet the situation today is quite the opposite. Christians are terribly divided.

CAN WE AGREE?

When I was a young Christian, I learned about the Ecumenical Movement. Religious leaders tried to come to common agreements so that they could be one. I laughed. I knew it would never work. The only way that all Christians would be one in this way would be if everyone decided to agree with me, because I would not compromise my correct teaching for anyone. As it turns out, there were many others who felt the same way, even though their "correct teaching" was different from mine. Oneness based on agreement was doomed to fail.

ONENESS IS BASED ON CHRIST

Then I learned that oneness was based on Christ. In fact, oneness is Christ. How spiritual! How hopeful! I am of Christ and you are of Christ, so let us be one! It seems so simple. And yet I have seen over time that even this is not so easily worked out. What does it mean to be "of Christ?" How

can I tell if you are "of Christ?" Are you "of Christ" enough? Which of us is more "of Christ?"

These questions are not new. They were asked very early in Christian history. We read in the New Testament how the church in Corinth developed factions which each claimed "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." (1 Cor. 1:12) Because of this, Paul diagnosed that they had contentions among them (v. 11).

Those who claimed to be of Paul, Apollos, or Cephas were no doubt short of vision. They overly appreciated those from whom they had received help. It is proper to appreciate those who are our spiritual fathers. But, as we all recognize by the Apostle Paul's help, our spiritual father in no way makes us special, and does not set us above those who came in through some other source.

I AM OF CHRIST!

It is those who claimed to be "of Christ" that are the most troubling, because it is true: they are of Christ. But in this we begin to see what it really means to be one. Is it possible for some believers to be more "of Christ" than others? If someone claims to be "of Paul," is he therefore less "of Christ?" Are there degrees of being "of Christ?" Paul asks the same

question this way: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" (v. 13) The answer to all these questions is emphatically NO!

Just because a confused man wrongly claims to be a dog, he is no less a man than someone who realizes his humanity. And just because another knows he is a man, he is not more of a man than the first. By life, they are both men. There are not degrees on man-ness, and there are not degrees of being "of Christ."

A ONENESS SCALE?

There is a great danger that we will start to measure others using some kind of "oneness scale." How "one" must someone be before we receive him? How can we prove our oneness? Should we warn others about someone who is not "one enough?" Eventually, if we are not vigilant, we will redefine oneness to be agreement with us about whatever we feel to be important. Oneness will then mean "one with us," because we will have made ourselves the embodiment of being "of Christ." We will then have returned to the doomed Ecumenical Movement.

How strange it is that Christians can divide over oneness. We need our minds renewed that we may not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. We need to be sober minded, realizing that God has apportioned to each a measure of faith (Romans 12:2-3).

THE PROPER ATTITUDE

The proper attitude that we should

all have was expressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:2 where he says, "Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . Who is theirs and ours." If some seem to take a different way, claiming to be "of" something or someone else, our attitude must remain, "Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . Who is theirs and ours." When it comes to oneness, we must be most concerned about ourselves. Rather than ask if my brother is one with me, I must ask if I am one with my brother.

WHAT WOULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

Many Christians hold doctrinal views different from mine. Some enjoy practices I have either given up or am reluctant to try. Others have clear consciences concerning activities that trouble me. No one is exactly like me. Rather than hold any of these differences as a litmus test for fellowship, I must be generous. This person is my brother! As long as there is no heresy or sin involved, there is still plenty of room for open fellowship and the mutual experience of Christ.

Does this mean that I give up what the Lord has shown me? Not at all. I still hold dearly every truth and practice that I feel is from God and can help my growth in life. I may even fellowship these matters with others hoping to give them the same blessing I have received. But I must allow my brothers in Christ the same freedom. I do not insist, and I never let these differences become barriers to fellowship nor let them lessen the brotherly love between us. I, of course, hope my brothers in Christ will be equally generous with me.

NO TEST

There is no oneness test that I can apply to another believer. There is only one that I can apply to myself. We are already one because of the common life we each received at the moment of our regeneration. We are one not because we agree, but because we are each joined to the same Lord. At least with me, that must be enough. - *David Shields*

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THE REASON GOD MEASURES THINGS TO US

Whoever knows how to cooperate with the Lord's measuring hand will grow well. We may resist or try to reason out alternatives to what the Lord has arranged for us. Don't do this; the reason the things come to us is because of who we are. We think that B is happening to us because we did A. God's realization is that we did A because of who we are. The B is not for the A, the B is for you. ... Learn to see things spiritually, divinely. You must begin to realize that you are the one who is responsible for all the things that happen to you. There is something in you that requires the faithful Lord's dealing. So, whatever happens to you, be tender.

Watchman Nee was often called "the proud Watchman Nee." When one sister tried to be sympathetic towards him regarding this, he replied, "Sister, I am worse than what they say." This is enlightenment. This is why he never sought to defend himself. The things that happened to him just caused him to be much more in the Lord's presence. When the church in Shanghai excommunicated him, he just went out. He honored that wrong judgment one hundred percent. Even when other churches invited him to join them in their Lord's table he refused, for to him there was only one table. He could have rebuked those in Shanghai, claiming that they were his children, but he received it as from the Lord. He had a ministry, but he didn't care for his ministry, he cared for the Body. He didn't return to Shanghai until the brothers invited him back and repented. He wept. Think of how much was in that weeping. A spiritual man, who put aside such a ministry for six years, just because of some peculiar decision by some brothers in a church. He wouldn't argue with the elders. He did not seek some more spiritual church. His feeling was that his ministry was over. Eventually Brother Lee handled the situation, stressing the two trees, never discussing who was right or who was wrong. Thus, the saints were encouraged to repent.

We should realize that in the church life, no one makes any mistakes except us. We are the reason for all our troubles. The reason why all the things happen to us in the practical church life is that we need them to.

(Titus Chu, taken from "Survival Messages," 1984)

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS

THE FOLLOWING, CHAPTER FIVE FROM THE BOOK *ONENESS AND THE ONE ACCORD*, SHOULD SERVE AS A REVIEW OF PHILIPPIANS AS VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF ONENESS

THE LIVING OUT OF THE ONENESS AS LUMINARIES THROUGH THE ONE LIVING, ONE PURSUING AND ONE FELLOWSHIP

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

Among all of Paul's epistles, only the book of Philippians reveals such a sweet relationship between an apostle and a local church. This is why Philippians is included in our sharing on the living out of the oneness. As we have seen, the oneness is revealed in Ephesians, but the practical living out of this oneness is most clearly seen in Philippians.

Paul tells us in Philippians that we live out this oneness as luminaries (Phil. 2:15). Corporately, the church is a shining lampstand (Rev. 1:11-12), but this corporate expression requires many luminaries for the display of its riches. The Lord Jesus indicated that we, as lights, are to be placed on the lampstand (Matt. 5:15). He, as the Light (John 8:12), lights us all so that we might together become a corporate expression of the light. Thus, as Christians, we should together shine as one light upon the mountaintop for everyone to see (Matt. 5:14). We should realize through these verses that the Lord does not intend the individual lights to shine alone, but desires that the individual lights would together shine as one corporate light. When Paul says we are luminaries in the book of Philippians, he indicates that every believer individually is a light, and yet each luminary lives in oneness with all the other luminaries. In Philippians, Paul reveals how the many lights are able to be this one testimony.

First of all, Paul reveals that the believers are able to live out such oneness by having the same living. We must have one living. Second, Paul reveals that the believers are able to live out this oneness when each believer is pursuing Christ. In this way, each luminary pursues the same goal. Finally, all the believers, as the luminaries, are able to live out this oneness because they participate in the same one fellowship.

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS IS PURE, FOCUSED AND JOYFUL

The book of Philippians possesses three notable attributes. First of all, Philippians radiates purity. Second, it can be characterized as being very focused; in it Paul does not seek to cover many different topics or to address many different issues. His one burden is that the saints would gain Christ. Third, this book expresses a particular joy. Purity speaks of someone's being or existence; focus refers to his living; and joy has to do with what he exhibits.

Pure

Paul's letter to the church in Philippi was different from his other epistles. Philippians was not written because the believers were confronting any major issues or problems. Paul wrote to these saints simply because the church there satisfied the Lord and made Paul happy. In this sense, Paul's writing to this church is very pure. There is nothing to divert the apostle from his basic message. Therefore, this book is one of the best for any who wish to grasp the secret of the Christian life. Whoever dives into these four chapters will find out how to be a joyful, energized, pursuing, laboring, fighting, and one-with-the-Lord Christian.

Focused

Furthermore, this book is very focused. Paul's other epistles often deal with a range of topics. All of Paul's writings focus on Christ, of course, but some require more study than others. In his letter to the Ephesians, for instance, Paul covers the matter of the church in a variety of ways. While this provides a way for Paul to release many riches of the truth, one must exercise a sober mind to receive what is being revealed. His words to the Philippians, however, are easily grasped, for they all flow from a simple focus, which is the gaining of Christ. Because of the manner in which Paul shares to the church in Philippi, it is fairly easy to comprehend what is shared. Philippians comes to us like a well-prepared meal that is ready to be enjoyed, requiring little preparation on our part.

Joyful

When a person is pure and focused upon Christ, what else can he be but joyful? Pure and focused people are happy people. Such joy cannot be manufactured; no matter how much someone tells you to cheer up, it will not produce cheerfulness in you. If you want to be happy, be pure and focused upon Christ!

The reason many saints are unhappy is because they are impure. Some feel they will never be happy until they become an elder. Others are waiting to be appreciated by the elders. Some sisters are seeking to become coordinating sisters. Some may even be upset because their songs were not included in the latest songbook. In other words, it is very easy to be impure and to miss the joy of simply having Jesus.

Another reason many are unable to experience joyfulness is because they try to do too much. They are concerned about how to be the most useful, and they become involved in many, many things. The Lord, however, is more concerned about whether or not we can simply love Him. If we can be so pure and simple for Christ, we will experience a life of joy. Such joy should be what characterizes our church life. Ours should be a life that is genuine and focused upon Christ. Philippians portrays such a church life in which the saints are pure, focused upon Christ, and joyful.

The Organic Oneness of the Church Life

The saints as luminaries are constituted out of the organic oneness they share with Christ, the apostles, and the other believers. The organic oneness we enjoy is not merely a oneness with Christ alone, or with the apostles alone, or with the other believers alone. It is a oneness among the apostles who are with Christ, and who are one with all the saints. This oneness is also with the saints who are one with Christ, with the apostles, and with the other believers. The true organic union is displayed in the book of Philippians. In such a church the saints rejoiced in this oneness together with Paul.

Such oneness can never come about as a result of harassment, of course. If I have to demand that you be one with me because I have served you, then the genuine oneness is certainly missing. The organic oneness that exists among us is a sweet reality. When I call a family member, for instance, I do not need to summon up some sort of effort to do so. Perhaps the conversation doesn't have much content in one sense, but in another sense, it has a wonderful, sweet content. In the church life, however, it is possible to have a lot of "content" in our fellowship, yet still be lacking in the sweet reality of this oneness.

Sometimes we harass those around us in the name of some principle of the Body. Brothers and sisters, the church life should be pure, and the church life must be focused upon Christ. We should not investigate others in order to point out our differences under the guise of fellowship. Instead of holding up the things that differ, we should enjoy the reality of our oneness by taking Christ as our unique focus. I should give you my Christ, and you should give me your Christ! Then we have communion with one another in life.

Philippians Portrays a Church Life in the Reality of the Organic Union with Christ, the Apostles and the Saints

The oneness illustrated in Paul's letter to the believers in Philippi is simply marvelous! The apostle had the believers in his heart (1:3), and they had him in their hearts (1:7). Paul was also in the inward parts of Christ Jesus, where he experienced Christ's longing after the saints (1:8). The saints also were full of feeling towards Paul as those who were in Christ Jesus (1:1). Furthermore, this kind of experience was not merely experienced by all of them as individuals; it was something that took place between Christ, the apostles, and the saints as one entity! You cannot practice this kind of oneness as an individual. In yourself, you are not sufficient for this. This practice of the oneness requires Christ, the apostles, and the saints. If we are to experience this reality, all three—Christ, the apostles, and the saints—must be present and involved.

We have a song, "O Lord, everybody's home," and yet we may not truly be "at home" with the saints. It is normal that we love the saints, yet for some reason we often fall into the trap of doing things out of duty or obligation, instead of out of love for one another. In all our relationships we should act and move according to the inward parts of Christ.

THE ONENESS AMONG THE LORD, THE APOSTLE PAUL AND THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI

Not one believer should live by himself. Every one of us should live in this "golden triangle" of Christ, the apostles, and the saints. In this way we are all joined together in one spirit and in one soul, struggling together with the faith of the gospel (1:27).

A Beginning of a Good Work

Through Paul, Christ had begun a good work in the saints (1:6). Paul did not bribe any of them with promises of a better lifestyle if they stayed in the church life, nor did he threaten any of them that they would go to hell if they were to leave. Nothing besides Christ was mentioned. The church there began after Paul had been imprisoned there (Acts 16). Paul and Silas were singing in jail, and then there was an earthquake, and everyone was released. The jailer was about to kill himself, but Paul and Silas intervened and he and his family were saved and baptized instead. There was no impure element involved;

everything was just Christ. That was how the fellowship with the saints and the apostles and Christ began “from the first day.” Paul had the confidence to say that the Lord initiated this work, and He would also complete it.

The Saints Had the Apostle in Their Heart and the Apostle Longed after Them in the Inward Parts of Christ

In verse seven of chapter one, Paul says that the saints had him in their heart, while in the next verse Paul says that he longed after them all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus. On the one hand, the saints truly had Paul in their hearts. They cared about him. They did not feel any pressure when he came to them, nor were they relieved when he left! Perhaps among us some might dread the thought of a brother visiting their locality, and even hope that something might intervene so that he might not come! We should have the servants of the Lord in our hearts. The servant of the Lord, however, remembers the saints not according to their outward circumstances, but according to the inward parts of Christ Jesus. His concern is in Christ’s consideration towards these saints. When the saints remember the apostles, it is love; when the apostles consider the saints, it is love plus what is profitable for them according to Christ. The apostles go into the Lord’s heart, and according to the Lord’s heart they remember the saints. This is truly a sweet oneness!

If any local church is bent upon doing something, yet in doing so disregards the servant of the Lord who raised them up, there is something wrong with that church. Every church should always remember their source, and the servants of the Lord should always be one with Christ when considering those the Lord has committed to him.

Standing with the Apostle for the Advancement of the Gospel

Because they had the apostle in their heart and stood with him for the furtherance of the gospel, the saints prayed for the apostle in his imprisonment. The saints prayed when Peter was imprisoned (Acts 12:12), and here in Philippians we are told that the saints prayed when Paul was imprisoned. Because of that prayer, Paul received and enjoyed a bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19). In other words, the Lord began a good work in these saints and put them together with this apostle. Then they prayed for him, and through that prayer the apostle was supplied. Now Paul’s desire was to hear that they were standing firm and struggling together along with the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27). The faith of the gospel is personified here as something that is alive and struggling to advance.

Struggling Together

To struggle together with this faith does not imply that great deeds must be done. It does imply, however, that much can happen even out of seemingly small occurrences when we stand with the gospel's operation. The gospel produces surprises. It may seem as if nothing is happening out of your labor, and then all of a sudden, something is manifested. For instance, many years ago I went to a certain small locality. Outwardly, we did not do much. In fact, we even went fishing. But because of that time together, some began to take this way of the church life. For these many years they have remained about the same, but now today there is a young man present with us whose father was caught during that time. Who knows what that young man will become in the Lord's hands? This is the faith of the gospel, and this is what we should be struggling alongside.

Many, instead of struggling alongside the faith of the gospel, are "head counters" when it comes to the gospel, asking visitors in the meetings to stand if they wish to pray. Such an understanding cheats us. The gospel is always advancing. We need to struggle to stay up with it. The gospel is advancing, but are we struggling to advance together with it? If we struggle alongside the faith of the gospel, we will advance with it as it advances.

A Boast in Christ Jesus That Would Abound

The saints in Philippi were even willing to participate in the same struggle that was in the apostle on behalf of Christ (1:29-30). He was in bonds and thus was limited, but the saints were willing and desirous to carry forward the apostle's struggle for the Lord's testimony. How encouraging this was to the apostle. Eventually his feeling was that the boasting of the saints would abound in Christ Jesus through his coming again to them (1:26).

In verses 26 and 27 of chapter one Paul writes, "That your boast may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming again to you. Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel." Paul uses two different Greek words for "coming" in these two verses. In verse 26, the word is *parousia*, which is used in reference to the process of the Lord's coming and His presence with the believers (as in 1 Cor. 15:23), whereas the second word is the more common one, which was also

used by the Lord to refer to His coming again (see, for instance, John 14:18). I believe these two words open a window for us to see something of the relationship this church had with the apostle. Though he was absent, he was with them, and he would be with them again physically, for they had him in their hearts.

The saints in Philippi enjoyed a oneness with the apostle Paul. As those who had him in their heart, they were waiting for him and longing for his arrival. And since they were struggling with him in the same struggle and had him in their heart, the apostle would certainly come to them. They were waiting for that day, and his coming to them would be the fulfillment of their expectation. Before that day, they were already somewhat experiencing the apostle's presence (*parousia*), as one who was in their heart. Eventually, however, his physical appearing would issue in a fullness of joy that would be enjoyed between the apostle and the saints. In the apostle's arrival, the saints' boasting would thus abound.

THE ONENESS BETWEEN THE SAINTS IN PHILIPPI AND THE APOSTLE PAUL

Thus, Paul was willing to remain among them for their progress and joy, even though he knew that to depart to be with the Lord was far better (1:23). On the one hand, Paul was ready to die, and he looked forward to being out of the body and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). Paul did say that to die was "far better"! It meant freedom from the limitations and frustrations of the flesh, and enjoyment of the Lord's presence in full. It is very rare in Christian history to find this kind of earnest desire to be with the Lord. Most consider how they might live longer, even giving as their reason the need to continue on for the church's sake. Isn't this a good reason? Particularly if you truly care for someone, you will want to remain to care for that person. Paul, however, really experienced a struggle in his choice between these two possibilities. A parent, would always seek to continue on with his children for as long as his children need him. Regardless how much he personally wanted to be with the Lord, his desire to see the Philippians grow and progress in Christ was greater. Therefore, he did not allow Caesar to put him to death. Paul's word here reveals that his environment was in the Lord's hands, not Caesar's, for the Lord is the true Ruler over all things. Paul seemed confident that his appeal before Caesar Nero would achieve the desired effect, whether his release or his execution. The desire of this servant of the Lord was to continue upon this earth for the Philippians' progress and joy of the faith (1:25).

Brothers and sisters, the apostles should be in our hearts. I first met Witness Lee in 1953, and in 1954 I attended his Life-study of the Psalms. I realized at that time that this brother was a true servant of the Lord. From then on, until he passed away, he was in my heart. He is still in my heart today, and since his passing, I miss his presence. I am afraid, however, that some churches assess their situation and exercise according to what they feel is most needed, without realizing that in God's economy, the oneness is produced not by the saints within a locality alone, but also with the servants of the Lord. Therefore every local church should seek after the fellowship of the nearby churches and the fellowship of those who serve the Lord for their sakes.

If you only care for the needs of your local church without having the apostle in your heart, all the grace that the apostle receives for the churches' nourishment will not become your nourishment. You need to be with the apostles as they are experiencing this grace. Because the saints had the apostles in their hearts, they were able to participate in the grace that Paul enjoyed in his defense and confirmation of the gospel.

Let me give you an example. Once I walked into a place and discovered a book table, upon which was a book by G. Campbell Morgan, translated into Chinese. What interested me was the name of the person who was the translator, for it turned out he was a brother I had known while in Taipei. We both loved the Lord, but he eventually left the recovery, and hence he did not participate in the riches and the grace that Witness Lee released over the last 40 years. He remained a very good brother, but what he produced was a translation of a somewhat dated book. I appreciate his translation, but I tell you, brothers, I am so thankful that for more than 40 years I have been closely attached to Brother Lee. Thus, the grace that Brother Lee received, I also have partaken of. When he ministered on the four stages of life, I partook of that grace. When he ministered on the last Adam becoming a life-giving Spirit, I partook of that grace. When he ministered on pray-reading and calling on the name of the Lord, I partook of that grace. When he ministered on one city, one church, I was a partaker of that grace. When Brother Lee shared his Life-study of the Bible, I was a partaker of that grace. When he shared on the new way and the divine and mystical realm, I also partook with him of that grace. Brothers and sisters, I have participated in so many riches of grace simply because I had the apostle in my heart.

Eventually, we can see that such a church as the church in Philippi surely became the apostle's boast. I doubt that Paul could speak of the saints in Corinth with the same kind of joy. Perhaps their situation might prompt him to sigh "O Lord," whereas when he considered the saints

in Philippi he would burst out with a "Praise the Lord!" Why is this? This is because the saints in Philippi were one with Paul in his struggle for the advancement of the gospel. I believe even Brother Lee had such an experience among the churches here. Every time there was a crisis in the Lord's recovery, there was a particular church to which he could go to restore his ministry among the churches. We should all desire to be such a church with such a church life that can afford the apostle the ground to operate freely to carry out the ministry the Lord has committed to him for His Body's sake. When the servant of the Lord sees such a church, he knows he has not run in vain nor labored in vain. Paul was willing to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and priestly service of the Philippian saints' faith (2:17-18). The apostle and the church in Philippi were rejoicing together, and in such a situation, the apostle was joyful that he had such a church to be poured out upon. In other words, he was willing even to die for them to produce such a mutual satisfaction in Christ.

THE APOSTLE PAUL DESIRED THE SAINTS TO BE FULL-GROWN

Even in light of all of this, Paul still desired that the church would go on further. His desire was that the saints would become as full-grown as he was, having the same mind that was also in Christ Jesus (2:5). Having the apostle's mind eventually becomes the substantiating of our oneness. Oneness is not a matter of our emotions. It is a concrete matter. A young man may tell a young lady that he loves her, but it could simply be a declaration from his emotion. Our love for the Lord, however, must be something solid. Therefore the apostle tells the believers that he has counted all things to be loss, and has even suffered the loss of all things, on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ (3:7-8). From this word the saints should have been able to realize that anything else they loved and pursued would hurt them.

Counting All Things Loss and Suffering the Loss

To count all things loss is one thing, and to actually suffer the loss of all is another. I would like to have asked Paul, "Have you really suffered the loss of all things? Don't you still wear clothing? Do you not have a place to sleep and food to eat?" And he might have replied, "Yes, in fact, many times I have had better than average clothing, nice places to stay, and good food to eat." How is it then that he could say that he had suffered the loss of all things? I believe Paul would reply, "I have many things, but in all these things the Lord has the right to say no. I am not caught by anything other than Christ."

Besides counting all things loss and suffering the loss of all things, Paul also told the Philippians that he desired to be found in Christ (3:9). This is very high. Most often, we are found in our naturalness. We are often found in things far from Christ. If not for His mercy and restraining hand, I am afraid that we could even be found in many sinful things. But commonly we are found in the things we find comfortable, or in things that are for our self-interest. Paul says that to substantiate this oneness, we should be found in Christ. Paul's desire was that he would always be found in Christ. When you touched him, you would touch Christ. It would not even be that he would be found in the Bible, for you can be in the Bible and still not be in Christ. His intent was to be in Christ. Then when the saints were in his presence, they were in Christ's presence, for he was found to be in Christ.

To Know Christ, the Power of His Resurrection, and the Fellowship of His Sufferings

Paul also told the Philippians that his desire was to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death (3:10). Not many know what it is to experience the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, for it involves being led into a place of death, where we experience the finality of death and then, out of that hopeless place, the uplifting of the heavenly Christ in resurrection. That resurrection experience, however, is not for our glory, but for our endurance in the fellowship of His sufferings. And what are Christ's sufferings? They are the sufferings for our growth. If we live for the church, we must be willing to enter into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ for the church's sake. If we have the saints in your heart, we must be willing to be led away to endure the sufferings of Christ for their sake. If we have the saints in our heart, we must be prepared to experience Christ's death and resurrection for their sakes.

When we consider any saint in our care, we should realize that the Lord has a goal in view for that brother or sister. Whether we serve many churches or just a few saints, there is a suffering that accompanies the process of their growth. How about their usefulness? How about their growth unto maturity and function as the Lord desires? The Lord requires some to fellowship with Him through sufferings for the growth of the believers. Such sufferings result in the building up of His Body (Col. 1:24). The real oneness is not only according to a shared knowing of Christ, but also according to a fellowship in the experience of His death and resurrection for the sake of those with us.

Therefore our feeling of happiness when a new one comes into the church life should be tempered by an awareness that we will have to enter into further fellowship in Christ's sufferings if they are to grow properly. As you invest yourself in this new one, however, and as your headaches over him increase, you and he begin to grow more, and this oneness increases. Eventually Paul's anticipation was that there would be a particular reward for the person who paid this kind of price, and he expected that he would attain to this "extra" resurrection (3:11). This was Paul's hope, to which God in Christ Jesus had called him upward (3:14).

Pursuing to Lay Hold of Christ

Paul told the Philippians that he did one thing: he pursued (3:13-14). He sought to lay hold of that for which he also had been laid of by Christ Jesus (3:12). In a good sense, this pursuing of Paul was his persecuting of Christ ever since being captured by Christ. The Lord had gained him, and now he was intent upon gaining Christ. Do you ever pray in such a way to the Lord? "Lord, bless me. Be with me. Carry me on. Lead me. If You do not, I will not let You go until You do!" Or do you pray, "Well, Lord, if You cannot be with me today, that is all right; perhaps tomorrow You can bless me with Your presence—I need a break anyway." That is not what Christ has gained us for. He has laid hold of us so that we might pursue Him even to the extent that we persecute Him until He fully gains us.

Paul's desire for the believers was that they would all walk according to such a mind as he had. If not, then their oneness would be shallow and unsubstantiated. We must have the mind of the apostle, which is to gain Christ, win Christ, "persecute" Christ and pursue Christ, with the goal of becoming so one with Christ. The substance of oneness comes by this kind of pursuing. Oneness is experienced by a group of people when they are willing to die as a sacrifice for the Lord, when they are willing to pursue and gain Christ, when they operate according to Christ, and when they are fellowshiping in the sufferings of Christ. Without these, there is no real oneness. We must together become imitators of the apostle (3:17)... - *Titus Chu,*

from a message given in the Fall of 2002

Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward. (Philippians 3:12-14)

LSM'S QUARANTINE OF TITUS CHU

Does the Evidence Justify the Verdict?

The “blended co-workers” affiliated with Living Stream Ministry (LSM)¹ recently issued a proclamation calling for the quarantine of Brother Titus Chu. This declaration, entitled “A Warning to all the Saints and all the Churches...concerning Titus Chu...”² makes serious accusations and calls for drastic action—the quarantine of Titus Chu. Simultaneously, the LSM affiliate, Defense & Confirmation Project (DCP) issued, “Different Teachings and Dissenting Views of Titus Chu...”³ The latter document presents the “evidence” to substantiate the “judgment” pronounced in LSM’s “Warning Letter”—Quarantine. Both were presented at LSM’s Elders’ Training⁴ in Whistler, BC, October 7, 2006. Here we ask: Does the evidence justify the verdict?

The following pages examine 24 of the numerous allegations in LSM’s “Warning Letter” and evaluate the supporting DCP “evidence.” We ask: (1) Has the “evidence” been presented accurately, fairly and in an unbiased manner? (2) Does the “evidence” support the judgment, does it justify the verdict? ... To briefly summarize, we

conclude the following:

- The allegation that Titus is divisive and dissenting is based upon his “teaching differently” measured relative to the current teaching of the “blended co-workers” (e.g. concerning ‘one publication,’ ‘one Minister of the Age,’ one ‘wise Master Builder,’ one global band of workers, the recovery equals the Body etc.) This standard of evaluation is erroneous. Applying the wrong standard leads to an erroneous judgment, an unjustified verdict.

- When evaluated against the standard of Scripture, Titus Chu and his co-workers are NOT teaching differently from the Apostles’ teaching concerning God’s economy. This criterion, using the Bible as our only standard, is the proper metric for evaluating who is “teaching differently.” Titus and his co-workers are not teaching differently from the Bible, the Apostles’ teaching nor from a balanced reception of the ministries of both Brother Nee and Brother Lee.

- Both LSM’s “Warning Letter” and the DCP document fail to offer convincing evidence for their numerous allegations. Serious accusations are

made against Titus & co. Yet, for at least eight allegations, not a single shred of supporting evidence is presented to support the charges.

These are purely unsubstantiated allegations. In other cases, the writings of Titus & co. have been misrepresented, quoted selectively or given biased interpretations aimed at prejudicing readers. Frequently relevant information has been omitted and withheld. This renders impossible a full and fair evaluation based on all relevant information.

• A careful comparison of the final version of DCP's "Different Teachings..." with an earlier "Draft Version" inadvertently released, suggests the evidence has been manipulated and skewed to generate a biased impression and prejudice the reader towards condemning Titus. The DCP authors have worked closely with lawyers handling LSM's litigation with Harvest House publishers. They are aware of the standards of proof required by the law courts. DCP's "evidence" falls far short of these standards of proof. It is biased, sloppy and incomplete.

• The divergent views of Titus & co. and the "blended co-workers" do not relate to essential items of "the faith." Nor are they core items of the recovery as taught by Brothers Nee and Lee. Rather, these differing views relate to non-essentials, items not clearly taught in Scripture (e.g. 'one publication,' one 'Minister of the Age' etc.). Therefore, there is no Scriptural basis to justify quarantine. Consequently, we recommend the saints and churches reject LSM's "Warning Letter" and its call for quarantine.

• Quarantine is the next logical step in the "blended co-workers'" implementation of their 'One Publication' policy. One publication is not a tenet of Scripture. Rather it is based upon the "blended co-workers'" system of teaching concerning: (1) One unique 'Minister of the Age,' recently Bro. Witness Lee, (2) One unique 'master builder, the acting God' who supervises God's building work world-wide, (3) One unique 'continuation' of the Minister of the Age - Master Builder i.e. the "blended co-workers," (4) One global company of workers. These non-essential, extra-biblical teachings "go beyond what is written" in Scripture (1 Cor. 4:6).

• If the local churches join LSM's quarantine of Titus Chu, this sets a precedent for similar measures to purge ... others. This will divide the recovery into "exclusive" and "open" branches, like the Plymouth Brethren. The "exclusives" divided repeatedly, becoming isolated, inbred and irrelevant. Do we want to repeat this sad history?

LSM'S QUARANTINE—DUE PROCESS DENIED!

A trial, or disciplinary hearing, occurred in Whistler, BC at LSM's Elders' Training. Oral testimonies were given, written evidence presented and judgment was pronounced. The verdict was quarantine—"we solemnly exhort all the saints to join with us to mark Brother Titus Chu and those who disseminate his divisive views and his dissenting speaking and turn away from them." (p. 4).

There was one striking characteristic of this “trial”—there was no defence. The “prosecution” presented their evidence, their witnesses testified and judgment was pronounced. However, there was no defence. We should ask, was this a “fair trial,” an unbiased disciplinary hearing? Did the accused receive a “fair hearing”? Was there due process? The fundamental right of due process under law means that⁵ *“All parties who may be affected by a judgment are entitled to a fair hearing. At the very least, this means advance notice of what is to be claimed against them, the opportunity to confront and cross-examine those who are testifying against them, and an opportunity to tell their side of the story.”* Contrast this with LSM’s quarantine. Was the process balanced or biased? Why was only the “case for the prosecution” presented? Why was no opportunity given for presenting the “case for the defence”?

This was not a “fair trial,” nor an unbiased hearing. Those accused had no opportunity to speak. No opportunity was afforded the accused to question either witnesses or evidence. Not only so, the verdict charges the saints not to read materials written by the accused. The “blended coworkers” charge, *“We also admonish the saints not to read the materials published and spread by these brothers in printed form or on the Internet.”* (p. 4) The “blended co-workers” want to deny the possibility of any redress stemming from the lack of due process.

I am aware that the “blended co-workers” may well retort, “This

is the Body, a higher realm. Here constitutional rights like ‘due process’ don’t apply!” To this I respond, shouldn’t the righteousness exhibited among us ‘exceed that of the Pharisees’ (Matt. 5:20)? Shouldn’t the standards of uprightness and justice in the Lord’s recovery exceed those in the secular world?

However, we leave these issues for another occasion. Here we want to examine the credibility of the evidence. Having been denied the right to address the evidence at LSM’s Elders’ Training, we wish to do so here in print. In what follows we examine 24 examples of the numerous accusations contained in LSM’s “Warning Letter” and DCP’s document. In each case the allegation is stated and a response offered.

ALLEGATION #1: Of “Dissenting” and “Teaching Differently”

RESPONSE: “Dissenting”—Dissenting from What? “Different Teachings”—Different from What?

We reject the “blended coworkers’” and DCP authors’ characterization of Titus Chu and his coworkers as “dissenters,” having “different teachings.” We strongly object to being labeled with these negative stereotypes. We ask: “Dissenting”—dissenting from what? “Different Teachings”—different from what? The reference point is **not** the current teaching of the “blended co-workers,” including their recent emphases on “one publication,” one “Minister of the Age,” one “wise master builder who is the acting God,” one con-

tinuation of Brother Lee, one global band of co-workers, “the Body equals the Recovery,” etc.

The true reference point for evaluating the charge of “teaching differently” is the Scriptures which constitute our “canon” (rule or measure). As Watchman Nee stated, “The Bible is our unique standard”. Put differently, the reference point is the Apostles’ teaching (the entire New Testament revelation), centered on Christ and the Church, i.e. God’s economy (RcV. 1 Tim. 1:3, fn. 3). When evaluated against this measure and standard, Titus and his co-workers are **not** teaching differently from the Apostles’ teaching in the New Testament. Neither are we dissenting from a balanced reception of the entire ministries of Brothers Nee and Lee, understood in the light of the Scriptures.

However, we are constrained to be “dissenters” against recent theological innovations which extrapolate “*beyond what has been written*” (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9) in the New Testament and what has been confirmed Brothers Nee and Lee in their ministries. This has been our stand since the Lord’s recovery began in this area. We have not deviated; nor do we intend to change.

LSM’s “Warning Letter” cites the Scripture, Titus 3:10, which says, “*A factious [heretical, sectarian] man, after the first and second admonition, refuse.*” The “blended co-workers” apply this to Titus Chu, a senior co-worker in the Lord’s recovery. However, this Scripture’s immediate context talks about the Apostle Paul’s co-work-

ers (Titus 3:12-14). Paul’s younger co-worker, Titus was charged to receive and aid Apollos and Zenas (3:13), workers who didn’t coordinate closely with Paul. Concerning this, Brother Lee writes,⁶ “*Zenas and Apollos worked independently of him. Yet Paul still charged Titus to care for the latter two, showing there was no jealousy between the two groups of co-workers.*” Differences existed between Paul and Apollos. Yet Paul did not excommunicate or quarantine Apollos. Rather, he charged Titus to care for him. Moreover, this directive immediately follows Paul’s charge to refuse a “factious, divisive man.” Obviously, in Paul’s mind, that charge did not apply to Apollos, despite their differences. We contend that the context of Titus 3:10 argues against the “blended co-workers” application of this verse to the present case. Based on this Scriptural precedent concerning Apollos, how can the “blended co-workers” apply this Scripture (Titus 3:10) to Brother Titus Chu? Are the differences between Titus Chu and the “blended coworkers” greater than between Apollos and Paul? If so, this has not been proven by the “blended coworkers.”

Brother Nee said,⁷ “*The basic principle of the church is recovery, not excommunication,*” and (we would add) not quarantine.

[The rest of Nigel’s detailed responses, along with those written by a number of others, may be found online at concernedbrothers.com. (This article is drawn from that of the same title dated November 9). The article’s conclusion follows. -editor]

CONCLUSION

LSM's "blended co-workers" have called for the quarantine of Titus Chu and certain of his co-workers. This disciplinary action was announced at the LSM elders' training in Whistler, BC. One would expect a drastic measure like quarantine to be based upon irrefutable evidence of serious misdeeds—heresy, idolatry, immorality or similar documented behaviour. On the contrary, no such offences were alleged or proven. Rather, the tenuous charges of "teaching differently" and "being dissenting" were alleged. During the LSM proceedings at Whistler, BC the accused were denied due process. No opportunity was given for the accused to answer serious charges, nor to present their case, nor to question the "evidence" presented. Here we have examined some of the numerous allegations. We have found the "evidence" presented by DCP seriously flawed. At least eight accusations are made without a single shred of evidence. Other facts have been misrepresented and given biased interpretations. Relevant information has been withheld. ... They are aware of the standards of proof required in courts of law. The

"evidence" presented by DCP in the present case falls far short of those standards of proof. DCP have manifestly failed to prove their case. **The evidence does not justify the verdict—the quarantine of Titus Chu.**

Before closing, I wish to raise the question—What's next? The present case sets an important precedent for the future. If the local churches join LSM's quarantine of Titus Chu, on the basis of this kind of evidence, who's next? The quarantine of Titus is merely the first step. [...] LSM's current quarantine campaign sets a precedent for similar measures to purge [...] others. What about the local churches? Do the "blended co-workers" also intend to quarantine those local churches which reject their directive to quarantine Titus? Will they then proceed to quarantine churches who fellowship with those churches which receive Titus? In short, when will the quarantining process end? The ghoul of quarantine the "blended co-workers" have unleashed threatens to divide the recovery into "exclusive" and "open" branches, like the Plymouth Brethren. History shows the "exclusives" divided repeatedly, becoming isolated, inbred and irrelevant. Do we want to repeat this sad history?
-Nigel Tomes

FROM THE MINISTRY OF WITNESS LEE

"...there is nothing in the New Testament which indicates that the apostles tried to avoid confusion by exclusion. ...Apollos was somewhat a factor of confusion, but Paul still recommended him (1 Cor.16:12)."

(*The Eldership and the God-Ordained Way* (2). Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1992, pp. 162-163)

NOTES:

* This article is based, in large part, upon my personal submission to the review panel established by the Church in Toronto to consider LSM's "Warning Letter" of quarantine and accompanying materials. The review panel's conclusions have been posted on the "ChurchInToronto.net" website. The views expressed here are my personal views. They do not necessarily express the views of any other elders, workers or any local church with whom I am associated.

1. We use the phrase "the 'blended co-workers' affiliated with Living Stream Ministry (LSM)" because (1) the core members of the "blended co-workers" hold positions within the LSM corporation—president, directors, manager etc., and/or they are employed by LSM. (2) The core "blended co-workers" minister from the podium at the (so-called) "seven feasts," events conducted under the auspices of LSM. (3) The "blended co-workers" previously issued the "One Publication" document, "Publication Work..." (June 2005) which declares that LSM (and the TGBR) is the sole "authorized" publisher within the Lord's recovery and "authorized" publications should pass through their "discerning check." We assume the authors of the "Warning Letter" and DCP's supporting material have passed their documents through LSM's "discerning check." We regard them as "LSM approved" documents. (4) The documents analysed here were presented at LSM's elders' training (ITERO) held at Whistler, BC, October 2006. In the interests of being concise, we use the short-hand phrases "LSM' blended co-workers" or

"LSM" (as in the title of this piece,) based upon this understanding.

2. The title in full is: "A Warning to all the Saints and all the Churches in the Lord's Recovery Concerning Titus Chu and those who Promote and Disseminate his Divisive Teachings, Publications, Practices and Views." (October, 1, 2006) Signed "on behalf of all the blending co-workers in the Lord's recovery" by 63 brothers representing various continents and countries. Posted on the LSM-approved website, "AFaithfulWord.org."

Hereafter, we refer to this document as the "Warning Letter."

3. The full title is: "Different Teachings and Dissenting Views of Titus Chu and Certain of His Co-workers" by "Defense & Confirmation Project" (October 8, 2006). Posted on, "AFaithfulWord.org," an LSM-approved website. Hereafter, we refer to this as DCP's "Different teachings." (On the relationship between DCP and LSM see "Allegations #12 and #13" below). A "Draft" version of DCP's document was inadvertently made available through the website, "lastadam.com." The "Draft" version of DCP's document entitled, "The Different Teachings and False Accusations of the Dissenters," is significantly different from the "final" version on several points. Some of these differences are pointed out below.

4. Officially known as the "International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones" (ITERO) held in Whistler, BC, Canada, October 5-7, 2006.

5. Quote from: "The Right to Due Process of Law", Canadian Civil Liberties Association, www.ccla.org. The

denial of due process is not the major focus of the present article. It will be developed elsewhere. Moreover, one should also ask: Based upon what authority did the “blended co-workers” sit in judgment upon their co-worker, Titus Chu? Where is the precedent for this in Scripture?

6. RcV. Titus 3:13 fn. 1

7. This quote in its wider context refers to accepting and rejecting co-workers, Watchman Nee says: “A preacher once spoke sternly, “Look at your co-workers! What kind of persons they are!” Our attitude should take God’s attitude as its standard. We cannot reject what God accepts, and

we cannot accept what God rejects. We may have sloppy and under-qualified brothers, but we must ask, “Is he a brother?” If he is, we cannot “deport” him, unless he has committed excommunicable sins. We can excommunicate a student from a school, but we cannot excommunicate and reject a brother from a family. If anyone thinks that he can choose between brothers, I can exercise a choice as well. But a brother is a brother. We cannot cut off our relationship with him. **The basic principle of the church is recovery, not excommunication.**” (W. Nee, Collected Works, Vol. 60, p. 383)

“The Tottenham Statement”

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES HAVING OCCURRED... WE DESIRE TO MAKE KNOWN OUR INDIVIDUAL CONVICTIONS AND COLLECTIVE JUDGMENT AS TO THE PATH WHICH WE BELIEVE TO BE WELL-PLEASING TO THE LORD IN THIS MATTER; AND IN WHICH WE DESIRE TO WALK.

1. WE FIND OUR CENTRE OF UNION WITH EACH OTHER, AND WITH ALL SAINTS, IN CHRIST, AS *ONE IN HIM*, AND OUR POWER OF FELLOWSHIP BY THE HOLY GHOST.

2. WE THEREFORE DESIRE TO RECEIVE AT THE LORD’S TABLE THOSE WHOM HE HAS RECEIVED...

3. WE WELCOME TO THE TABLE, ON INDIVIDUAL GROUNDS, EACH SAINT, NOT BECAUSE HE OR SHE IS A MEMBER OF THIS OR THAT GATHERING OR DENOMINATION OF CHRISTIANS NOR BECAUSE THEY ARE FOLLOWERS OF ANY PARTICULAR LEADER, BUT ON SUCH TESTIMONY AS COMMENDS ITSELF TO US AS BEING SUFFICIENT.

4. WE DISTINCTLY REFUSE TO BE PARTIES TO ANY EXCLUSION OF THOSE WHO, WE ARE SATISFIED, ARE BELIEVERS - EXCEPT ON GROUNDS PERSONALLY APPLYING TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL FAITH AND CONDUCT.

Primary portions from an 1849 statement posted in response to quarantines imposed following the “Bethesda” controversy.

FOUND ON P. 305 AND REFERRED TO ON P. 160 OF ROY COAD’S HISTORY OF THE BROTHERS MOVEMENT, 1968, PATERNOSTER PRESS, UK