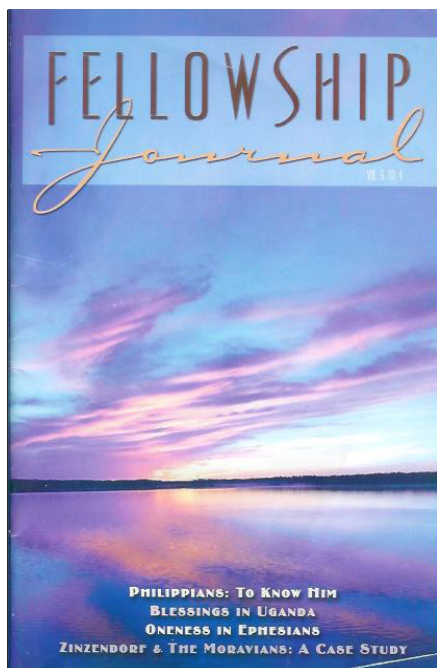


FELLOWSHIP *Journal*

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Contents

Uganda Update

Knowing Christ

Oneness in
Ephesians

Case Studies
in
Continuing After

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CONTENTS

4

Uganda Updates

10

How Yun Received a Bible

12

The Experience of Christ in Philippians
Message 29:

Knowing Christ and the Power of
His Resurrection and the Fellowship
of His Sufferings, Being Conformed
to His Death

30

Book Excerpt:

Keeping the Oneness in Ephesians
and the Example of Paul

38

Historical Case Studies:

Zinzendorf and James Taylor, Sr.

44

Carrying versus

Propping Up God's Work

Schedule of Youth Events This Summer

Summer Tsunami
May 15 - August 20

Uganda Trip
June 6 - June 24

Junior High Camp (USA) @ Ashland Woods:
July 24 - July 29

Mountain Top @ Columbus Ohio
July 17 - July 19

College Training @ Ashland Woods
July 17 - July 23

Music Camp (TBA)
July 30 - August 3

Gospel Camp @ Cleveland Area
July 30 - August 3

Gospel Odyssey @ Cleveland Area
August 3 - August 12

Serving in a New Church
August 2007 - August 2008

for more information see www.youngseekers.com or
contact Rex Beck, Mike Samulak or Ben Shumway



A FRESH HOPE

John 17 contains the last prayer Jesus prayed before going to the cross. In it, He prays to the Father for us (His believers) that we all may be one... “that the world may believe”. From the Lord’s own prayer we can see that the matter of “oneness” among believers has a profound effect in that it provides the way for the world to believe. When Christians realize that through the Lord’s death and resurrection we were made one, then there arises “hope” in the midst of a dark world.

What would it look like to have a church within a city where Christians realized their oneness in Christ and took their rightful position simply as members of Christ’s Body? For years I pondered the thought. At times, I questioned whether this was even possible in the world today. What I have witnessed and experience of the Lord’s work in Uganda, however, for the past two years has put a fresh hope in me that the church is not something merely theoretical but both applicable and powerful. It is alive and beginning to blossom right before our eyes.

A GROWING TESTIMONY!

Coming together simply as the church within the city – the one Body of Christ – is a strong testimony to the accomplished work of Christ on the cross and a shame to Satan. The last corporate church gathering brought together nearly 700

saints from 21 different communities in and around the city of Kampala. Since most of the saints who attended do not own cars, over 40 minibuses (taxis) were used for their transport to and from the rented facility. Brother Vern Yoder, who was visiting from the USA, ministered a powerful message on the two prayers of the Lord Jesus particularly related to the oneness of the believers and the church. Most of the practical service and music for this gathering were carried by the saints in the ten month training. May the Lord continue His building work!

IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST

Several new brothers and sisters were recently baptized, desiring to put away their old life and live unto the Lord. Their decision for baptism came from the Lord's leading and the shepherding they received from those in the ten month training.

TRANSITIONING

As the ten month training winds down, the 16 trainees are considering their future before the Lord. In April we stepped outside the bustling city to spend a couple of days along the banks of the Nile River to consider all that the Lord has done and what He will do in the future.

Six of the trainees feel led by the Lord to continue to serve the Lord on a full-time basis. All the trainees testified how their lives are forever changed as a result of the training. Even among those who feel led to seek employment, they testified with boldness that they must find a job within the city that will enable them to continue their commitment and service to the church. What a great work the Lord has done among these trainees! May the Lord continue to bless them and the church as a result of their commitment in the coming days.

REACHING THE COMMUNITIES

A weekly training for pastors and congregational leaders is conducted every Tuesday. As pastors receive help from this time they share their experience with pastors from other communities. We now have on average 25 to 30 pastors who regularly attend. These pastors come from communities throughout the city and some are now traveling from towns outside of Kampala. The training becomes both a hope and a challenge for many. The truth in the word is a real ministry of life yet at the same time, it often exposes the misconceptions regarding the Christian life and the church that are currently accepted and taught in Uganda.

NEW TRAINING SCHEDULED – YOUR PRAYERS NEEDED

The Lord continues to work and move among the hearts of the young people in Kampala. As another school year comes to a close, a good number, mostly graduates from Makerere University, are considering joining a new ten-month full-time training scheduled to begin in August 2007. They have both witnessed the growth and heard the testimonies from those graduating from the first training. Yet, consecrating oneself to the Lord always poses a challenge with many obstacles. Let us fight for and uphold in prayer all those who are considering the upcoming training.

A SPECIAL THANKS

During his recent visit, Vern Yoder provided a vital contribution to the saints in the ten-month training as they consider their future in serving the Lord in the church. In addition to the caring for the ten-month trainees, brother Vern also shared at the corporate church gathering and conducted the pastors' training. During that training he emphasized the importance of the New Testament ministry and ministers according to 2 Corinthians. This enlightened the pastors to realize that being a minister is a matter of "constitution" and not just position. It also helped them to see that the New Testament ministry should result in the practical building up of the church. Thank you, brother!

PIONEERING FOR THE FUTURE

As the church grows, we are getting to know brothers and sisters who are from places outside Kampala. They are desirous to one day see the church in their hometown. Our hope is that some of the saints, finishing the training and continuing to serve the Lord, would begin to labor in places outside Kampala. We have planned a number of gospel events in surrounding cities for when a group of saints from North American visit in June. We intend to follow-up with the contacts we obtain from those events and pray that a door will be open for the Lord to spread in cities beyond Kampala.

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

We would like to thank you for your love, prayers, and support that are enabling the move of the Lord to continue here in Uganda. Your emails and letters

really supply us with hope and encouragement to continue our labor – so please keep them coming. May the Lord give all of us time and help us to recognize the opportunities before us to grow in His grace. (Keith and Tina Miller)

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Or contact us by mail at:

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Kampala, Uganda AFRICA





Fruit of the Gospel & Blessings to the Lord and His Body



A Brief update: Wednesday June 13 2007

Today was a very wonderful day. We are all getting a bit exhausted yet at the same time empowered. The day began with music practice at the hotel conference room. Some of the local saints from the music team here in Kampala joined with the Americans in learning local and contemporary Christian songs- Ugandan style. From there we traveled by two taxis to Old Kampala High school.

Even though I prepped the American saints on what to expect, I don't think any of them were ready for what they witnessed. Almost immediately, at 1pm, about 300 students filed into a single classroom. When the classroom was nearly packed and the saints began to sing the response from the high school students was overwhelming. There were shouts for joy (African happy shouts), powerful Amens, and Hallelujahs as the students stood on their feet and sang along. The look on the American saint's faces was priceless and could best be described as stunned. The place went wild when Micah Shumway began to sing a song in the local language. They were equally impressed when Mindy Bowman sang a stanza solo.

Later in the day, we split into two groups. One group (composed of 6 Americans and 7 local saints from the ten month training) went to Kireka community and the other group (composed of the same) went to Kyebando. In Kireka, Emma (pastor in that community) wisely divided the saints into small gospel teams composed of one American, one from his community and one of the brothers or sisters from the training. I heard many wonderful stories about the time. I also witnessed Mark Miller share a powerful gospel to a group of about 6 people! Wow! Debbie Mann also shared 5 mini gospel messages to small groups in homes. Jon Wells was especially excited about what he was able to share with people. I don't think he knew what he had!

In Kyebando, pastor Barnabas organized a community gathering and had all the saints (American and those from the training) share something. They also sang multiple songs to a packed audience. Everyone participated in ministering and singing. At supper, (about 9:30pm) when everyone returned to the hotel, we all swapped stories of the day. The prayer of the saints at supper and the stories they told convinced me that the lives of all those visiting have been forever changed. As we finished our dinner, Mike Samulak and Lawrence arrived from the airport and were warmly received. Tomorrow is another busy day. Please pray for us.

How Yun Got His Bible

Yun grew up in China after communism had taken over, during a time called the Cultural Revolution. Most people in China at this time had never seen a Bible. Yun's parents had received the Lord, however, and Yun's father had even been healed of cancer.

Yun asked his mother whether Jesus had left behind any words that he could read for himself. She told him there were none to be found. Yun was able to see some handwritten chapters of the Bible believers had copied and hidden, but only the very oldest Christians could recall seeing an entire Bible.

Yun's mother remembered an old man in another village who had been a pastor before the Cultural Revolution. They went to visit him, but when they arrived he was fearful of showing his Bible to them, for he had already spent twenty years in prison for his faith. Yet he had compassion on the poor boy who had made such an effort to see him, and told him, "The Bible is a heavenly book. If you want to see a Bible, you'll need to pray to the God of heaven...God is faithful. He always answers those who seek Him with all their heart."

So every night Yun asked God for a Bible. After a few months, nothing had happened, so he visited that old brother again and begged to see his Bible, even if just to look upon it. The brother told him to pray with fasting. Yun began eating just one small bowl of rice each day, and continued praying. He really became desperate. His longing for God's Word was so strong that his parents worried that he might go insane if God did not answer his prayer.

Then one morning at 4 a.m., he received a vision as he knelt beside his bed. In his vision he was pushing an old rickety cart up a hill in search of food for his family. He was nearly fainting from hunger. Down the hill came three men, one with a long beard who was pulling a cart full of fresh bread. The man asked if he was hungry, and he replied that his family was so poor they couldn't afford bread (his father really had sold everything to buy medicine when he was sick and they often had to beg for food from friends). The man radiated love, and Yun wept in his presence.

In the vision, the man asked his two servants to take a loaf of bread from his cart and they gave it to him wrapped in a red cloth. The man told him he must eat it immediately. When he put it in his mouth, it turned into a Bible! In his vision, he knelt down and praised the Lord, telling Him that he wanted to serve Him for the rest of his life.

When he came to, he began searching the house for the Bible, for the vision had been so very real to him. When he realized it had been a vision and that he didn't really have the Bible, he wept uncontrollably. His parents came into his room to find out what was the matter. When he told them of his vision, they really thought he had lost his mind! His mother told him, "The sun hasn't even come up yet, and the door is locked. No one has been here." His father held him and cried out, "Dear Lord, have mercy on my son. Please don't let him lose his mind. I'm willing to be sick again if it would prevent my son from losing his mind. Please give my son a Bible!"

Suddenly there was a faint knock at the door, and someone called Yun's name. He rushed to the door and asked, "Are you bringing the bread to me?" The voice answered, "Yes, we have a bread *feast* to give to you!" Yun recognized the voice from his vision, and when he opened the door, the same two men he had seen with the old gentleman stood before him, holding a red bag in their hands. They passed it to him and when he opened it he held in his hands his very own Bible! As the men hastily departed into the darkness, Yun hugged the Bible to his chest and fell to his knees, thanking God.

Yun later found out the names of the men who had brought him the Bible, and from them he learned the story of what had happened.

When Yun had begun to pray, the Lord directed an old evangelist from a town some distance away to give his Bible to a person named Yun, and in the vision he even received directions to Yun's village and house. The brother delayed, however, but after a few months he at last dug up his Bible from its hiding place and sent it in the care of the two brothers who then traveled through the night to find him.

Yun fully believed from that moment onward that the Bible could only be God's word, and even slept with it over his heart. Not only was that Yun's first Bible; it was also the first answer among many he would have to prayer. Yun is still alive today, and has experienced many such answers to prayer.

(Taken from "The Heavenly Man" by brother Yun with Paul Hattaway, Monarch Books, 2002, pages 26-30)

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-NINE: KNOWING HIM...

...To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...

Philippians 3:10

The peak of the book of Philippians, and the goal of our Christian existence, is found in chapter 3, verse 12, where Paul states: "...if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (RcV). Above all other things, Paul desired to find himself completely incorporated with Christ. He sought this above all else.

Therefore, in chapter 3 Paul presents seven "steps" by which we may arrive at this peak of knowing Christ. [An overview of these seven may be found in Message 27 (Issue 5, Number 4) - *Ed.*] In this message we will eventually address the fifth of these, which can be found in verse 10.

THE FIRST FOUR "STEPS" IN PHILIPPIANS 3

When we began to consider this chapter, we saw that the *first* step to our goal in Christ is to **beware of ideology**, because it so easily lays hold of us once we become believers. In verse 2, Paul warns us of different things, different workers and different practices. All these are related to ideology. Ideology is something that frustrates the organic life of the Body of Christ. When the saints are holding on to differing ideologies, the unique oneness of the Body of Christ is damaged.

The result of ideology is religion. Therefore, in following the Lord, the first thing we need to take care of is stay away from whatever would cause us to become religious.

The *second* matter we need to be watchful of in following the Lord has to do **dealing with all the things that by nature we might count on** other than Christ. We need to learn to forsake such things, even though we grew up thinking such things were helpful. Why do we value these things? Because it seems they enable us to get somewhere! In verses 3 through 6, Paul listed some of the things that he once assumed he had “working” for him. For instance, he was born and circumcised to be among God’s chosen race, the Jews; among the Jews he belonged to the esteemed tribe of Benjamin. In addition to this, he was trained as a Pharisee, and even among the Pharisees he was recognized as being blameless as to the Law. He was so zealous that he even became a persecutor of the church! How much he could boast in when being compared to whoever might dare challenge him! He realized, however, that such things were a hindrance to gaining Christ.

Third, Paul reveals we should **count all things loss and refuse** on account of Christ (vv. 7-8). You can only truly gain Christ when your hands are emptied of whatever else you might be holding onto. When your hands are empty, however, you have no choice but to lay hold of Christ! This is how we gain Him. Anything else in our hands, no matter how good it seems, needs to be counted loss and even as refuse—rubbish—if we are to gain Christ. This is why there are three “on account of’s” in verses 8 and 9. Paul realized that in order to gain Christ, he had to count all else loss and even suffer the loss of all things other than Christ if he was to expect to gain Christ in the fullest degree.

We should not think this is a once and for all experience! When you are young, what you may possess as “wealth” is a used Toyota, for instance. As you grow older, you will find more is given to you and you therefore possess more. Even spiritually, you will accumulate experiences. These experiences will be memorable and precious to you. They will be of benefit to you in your Christian life. In my own life, I have had many wonderful experiences as a believer. When I came to this country in 1963, when I met Brother Lee here, when I labored with various saints in this area and saw churches raised up... but if I hold onto these things, I am finished, for my hands would be full of these things instead of emptied for Christ.

Even things such as these may not be as precious as the revelations the Lord Himself has granted us. They are granted by the Lord Himself to you directly, so they are most dear. Even such matters, however, must be counted as refuse! Why? We are after Christ Himself! All the revelation we receive of the Lord is indeed precious, and we should receive it and minister according to it, but we cannot belong to those things that the Lord reveals to us, for we only belong to the person of Christ! How good it is when we can testify: “I only have Christ, and nothing else!” As you spend time with this Person, you will find out He has so much to give to you, but no matter how much He gives to us, our focus must fiercely remain on Him. We are here to gain *Him*. Because of this, we must learn to count everything else refuse, or else those very wonderful things will damage the ecology in the church life, and hinder us from gaining Christ more today.

The *fourth* stage is a very difficult phase for us as believers to enter into. That phase in chapter 3 is to **be found in Him** (v.9). We should not think, however, that such a person must be complete or matured to experience this. Paul is not saying that in order to be found in Christ, he had to be a “holy” person, for he sought to be found in Christ, *not having any of his own righteousness* which was according to the law. In verse 6 he said he had become “blameless” in regards to the righteousness which is in the law. That was something he now counted loss. To him, that wasn’t worth a dime. He had fulfilled all the obligations of the law, but that was all now worthless when compared to the preciousness of Christ.

***We Cannot Be Found in Christ
By Means of Our Own Righteousness***

If you were to ask me, “Titus, do you pray? Do you love the Lord? Are you faithful to the requirements of the church life?” I could respond, “Yes.” But if you were to ask me, “Titus, can you be examined by God?” I would have to say, “No!” Why? Because when you examine the situation according to what it really is, I know there is nothing I can boast in. According to the real intrinsic situation, I cannot stand upon any “righteousness”! Therefore what Paul is saying is that to be found in Christ, we have to realize

there is no way we can be found in Christ!

We must realize that, side by side with the divine, mystical realm in which we find Christ, there is the world. First of all, for those who believe, there is the world of religion! Beside this, there is also the material world and the sinful world. No matter how spiritual we are, we must still take care of matters in the physical world. In other words, we must eat food, sleep somewhere, wear clothing, and so on. (Of course, we avoid the things of the sinful world.) But beside the sinful world and the physical, material world, there is the religious world, where, like in the other aspects of the world, is something that is invented by man. It is something man sees as related to God, but it is not God Himself! When God Himself is not present, however, people substitute religion. It may even be something very close to Christ, and even applied in the name of Christ, but it is devoid of Christ Himself. Therefore it takes the place of Christ, replacing Christ Himself.

For instance, soon after we began to meet in Akron, a group of “Exclusive Brethren” came to one of our meetings. They were scandalized by the fact that a number of sisters were speaking and calling songs, and doing so even as their heads were uncovered. Although they were asked to stay to fellowship their concerns with the elders, they refused to remain among us. Were they right in their insistence? I would say they were wrongly right and rightly wrong. They were wrongly right, for they were right that our practice should adhere to the Bible, but they were wrong to allow any teaching to replace Christ. (In Corinth, a large number of the women were employed as temple prostitutes, and wore their hair uncovered. This is most likely why Paul wrote what he did to the Corinthians, and yet to no other church.) Even “correct” teaching can become a replacement for Christ. They were “wrongly right” because, while their argument was right, their person was wrong! And they were “rightly wrong” because their “right” argument would produce a “wrong” result. We, as human beings, like to do such things, thinking that by them we might eventually be found in Christ. But Paul said he sought to be found in Christ **not** having his own rightness. How easily our ideology can separate us from Christ! Christ is here, but the religious world is also here, and religion is in our blood.

We have to realize, as Paul did, that our right behavior in no way can bring us into Christ. Even if we can behave righteously in the morning, what about the afternoon? It is not because of such righteousness that we can be found in Christ. It is only by means of the righteousness that God applies to us because of our faith in Christ. We have believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior! Only the righteousness which is *through faith in Christ*, which is *out of God* and *based on faith* avails. If I see you walking around aimlessly in your mind, I may accuse you of not being in Christ, but you should realize you can simply turn again to Him. There is no need to feel condemned. Just say, “Lord Jesus, I love You” and immediately the reality of salvation becomes yours again.

Being Found in Christ is a Matter of Subjective Application

Being found in Christ does not depend upon some high spiritual attainment, but rather a subjective application. It is based upon the righteousness of God, not our own righteousness, based on faith. When our faith is in Jesus, God counts us as righteous. We possess a righteousness which is out of God and based on faith. The phrase “based on” indicates there is a progression. First, we are found in Christ’s accomplished work. Second, we are found in Christ’s present move. Third, we are found in Christ’s person. I am so happy about this. I have been loving the Lord for over fifty years now. Believers who have many “overcoming” testimonies, also realize that for every such story they also have instances of being defeated which they would rather not make known! My own testimony is that I have experienced many times of failure and defeat, and often feel unworthy to come into the Lord’s presence. There are times also that I realize that what I minister doesn’t always match what I see in my daily life. Yet I am still very happy, for I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior and righteousness. Because I have believed into Him, God counts me righteous and therefore I am still able to be found in Him.

Being One With Christ in Life, Nature, and Person

It is because of this that I can say I have grown over the years. As I have grown, I have seen more and more of the Lord’s move, and as I

have seen how the Lord was moving, I have desired to stand with Him in His move. For instance, I have learned to simply be with the Lord's move, rather than trying to manufacture it into a flood! Furthermore, I have enjoyed many times of being united with Christ in life, and have experienced rich times of being mingled with Him in nature. I have even had some experience of being incorporated with Christ. This is the reality of being found in Christ. It is not only something that is according to position according to Christ's accomplished work; it is also something according to the level of maturity of life the Lord has granted you thus far. Therefore, we should tell the Lord, "I want to grow! I praise You for the oneness we have in life, and as You move, I praise You I can be one with You in Your move. I praise You for the oneness I have experienced with You through Your nature being added to mine. But Lord, how I desire to be incorporated with You so that I might be so one with who You are! May Your personality possess my personality, and may Your personality be expressed through my person!" Brothers, this is ultimately what it means to be found in Him!

THE FIFTH LEVEL: LIVING IN ORGANIC UNION WITH CHRIST

Knowing Christ, the Power of His Resurrection, the Fellowship of His Sufferings, and Being Conformed to His Death

By verse 10, we should have advanced in our realization. Now, Paul presents something that is even more a matter of experience. In verse 9, we realize something of the truth of what it is to be found in Christ. Verse 10, however, is even more a matter of experience. Only by experiencing Christ in a certain way can we say we have this knowing of Christ. After we experience Christ in these aspects, however, we can really say we *know Christ*. Do you desire to really know Christ? Then you must know the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, and what it is to be conformed to His death.

Resurrection is the Base and Starting Point

Perhaps we may think that suffering should come first, then death,

and then, finally, resurrection. But that is not the order presented here for our experience. Our mind takes the view that we are on earth, and that we are trying to reach the heavens. According to Ephesians 2:6, however, we are already in the heavenlies with Christ! This is God's view. As far as God is concerned, we begin our Christian life in the heavenlies, and come to maturity by learning to be with the Lord in the situations on earth, becoming conformed to His death in our living.

It is true that the more we are conformed to Christ's death, the more we will know His resurrection power. But in order to go through the sufferings of Christ and in order for us to become conformed to His death, we need resurrection as our base.

Suffering Vs. Death

What is the difference between suffering and death? Those who suffer know they are suffering, but the person who dies does not realize he has died. Those who are alive can see that the person has died, but the person who has died does not know. Suffering does bring us into death, so suffering and death are companions. Suffering brings us into death and also grants us the ability to experience even more advanced sufferings. But in order to pass through these things, we must first know Christ's resurrection. As we shall see, these three correspond to our being united with Christ in life, mingled with Him in nature, and eventually incorporated with Him in person.

The Need For Those Who Are Being Conformed to Christ's Death

How great is the need in the church life for those who have experienced being conformed to Christ's death! The problem in so many places is that too many are very alive to tell one another what is right or what is wrong! This kind of being "alive" causes the church life to be damaged.

KNOWING THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

If I were to ask you whether or not you really wanted to know Christ,

most of you would shout, “Yes!” Is that not why you are here in the church life? Well, Paul points the way for us in this verse. It is very practical. First, you must participate in, know, and enjoy the power of resurrection. In experience, resurrection involves strengthening, enlivening, ascending, and even governing power. It is this power that seated Christ on the throne in the heavenlies. By means of this power, every need of your Christian life can be fulfilled. This power became ours the day we believed and received Jesus as our Savior. Christ brought us all into His resurrection. Thus, we are in the heavenlies with Him already, and we have access to this power for whatever is needed in our Christian existence. We will face thousands of challenges and experience continuous needs as believers, but this unfailing power is always present with us to uphold and supply us.

Resurrection Power Overcomes All Things That Frustrate

What are some of the situations that require resurrection power? One great challenge is our natural mind. We all have our logic, and our individual logic is a great frustration to the Lord. Every culture has its own peculiar logic. For instance, in America, there is a strong desire to consume rather than conserve. Many Americans like to buy things that will require replacing, just so they can buy something again. Therefore, they do not always look at things with the long-term in view. In spiritual matters, we also have our kind of logic. Each of us has our own view of what it means to follow the Lord. It may be very reasonable, but it can also frustrate what Christ wants to do! Our single object must be to gain and obtain Christ! Therefore we must be able to let all other things go, and the limitation of our logic is one of the things that resurrection power can rescue us from.

Another great matter that we need resurrection power for is our manner of life. Some people believe whatever “expert” opinion they read and thus become quite confined by all the “advice”. If not for the continuous operation of the power of resurrection in our lives, we all would become increasingly peculiar and confined. More importantly, we would not be able to receive whatever the Lord has arranged for us. If the Lord has arranged for us to eat nothing but dry bread for a week,

we have what it takes to truly receive and enjoy that, for we have the operation of resurrection life!

Some might think of resurrection power as something that is extraordinary or super-natural. For instance, they may think it means that you get lifted off the floor or begin to glow. I have experienced the sensation of being lifted into the air while praying, and it is possible to experience such a thing while touching this power, but the normal operation of resurrection is applied to you in your daily life in everything you are and do, including your logic, your manner of life, and even the way you pursue the Lord. For instance, if the Lord leads you to speak something for Him, you should be able to speak it whether or not you feel you can. We are able to obey and follow the Lord because we all have this resurrection power. In all these things, such as your logic, your manner of life, and your ability to follow Him, resurrection keeps bringing us back into line with Christ.

The Power of Resurrection is in Our Spirit

One of the things Paul prayed for in Ephesians 1:16-20 was that we would know this power which raised Jesus from the dead. According to Paul, the way to know this power is to be in spirit (Eph 1:16). If you truly want to know the power of the Lord's resurrection in your daily life, you must know your spirit! You must exercise your spirit to know this power.

Why is it, for instance, that you get enlivened when you pray over the Bible? It is because the Word becomes life to you as your spirit contacts the reality it contains. Pray-read Philippians 3:10, and experience this yourself! Eventually you will put yourself through the Word to your spirit and the Word will open up to you. Whenever your spirit is made alive, all the problems that seem overwhelming are spontaneously overcome.

Sometimes we have issues with each other in the church life just because we are those who love the Lord. If we did not love Him, we would just come to the meetings and do our part in offering for the maintenance

of the hall, and everyone would consider use a good brother or sister. Once you consecrate yourself to the Lord to serve Him, however, you begin to discover how much at odds the saints are with each other. You will feel the church should go one way, and someone else may feel it should go another. Brothers and sisters, eventually we must realize that no “direction” is the direction; *the Spirit is the direction*. When the Spirit is present, the power of resurrection is present, and that power grants us the ability to lay hold of Christ in our situation. This is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. When we are in spirit, we experience this power, and when we are experiencing this power of resurrection, Christ becomes the center of the church life.

The Experience of the Spirit and Oneness

Why is it that so many are distracted by the nonessential matters? Yes, we should contend for the essential matters of the faith, but it seems most of the time we see saints contending over what is non-essential! Count Zinzendorf was a Christian leader who gave the Moravian Church the motto: “In what is essential, Unity; in what is not, Liberty; and over all, Love.” The Moravian Church has benefited from this to this very day. The Moravians came to this point after they passed through a definite experience of the power of the Spirit.

In the church life, as Paul taught in Romans 14, we should not insist on anything in matters such as practices and observances. All the saints may live unto the Lord as they feel led. How it possible to have such a church life? Only by the power of resurrection! Apart from this power, we all become opinionated and even insistent on what should be done. There could never be any revival among us if this was our case, for revival can only take place when we restrict our insistence to the essentials of the faith, and have love to all the saints, however they may feel led of the Lord in the non-essentials. In fact, when we are experiencing the power of resurrection, we find it possible even to love those who disagree not only in non-essentials, but even those who do not receive the essentials of the faith. Therefore, in times of revival, many nonbelievers are brought to know Christ through the gospel! Thus, may the Lord grant us mercy that the church life in every place would be saturated with the Spirit!

Essentially, resurrection is a realm in which we have the complete Triune God with all His divine attributes and human virtues. In this resurrection we have the operation of God's divine economy for the fulfillment of His eternal will. All of God's operation takes place in the realm of resurrection. To experience resurrection not only means we possess strength for doing something; it also means we simply enjoy the reality that is present in it.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

Suffering the Loss of Personal Rights

It is through the power of resurrection that we are strengthened to be brought into a deeper relationship with Christ, experienced in a fellowship of His sufferings. What is one aspect of this fellowship? It is the loss of whatever was once your right. Your personal "legal" rights are no longer yours to claim. You lose what seemed to be rightfully yours. As you enter into these sufferings, know that your right to declare something for yourself is over!

In matters of love, however, the loss of your "liberty" for the sake of your loved ones is something that happens spontaneously. No parent says to his or her baby when it cries in the middle of the night, "My child, I will not get up at this hour to feed you. You must wait until morning, because you are infringing on my right of eight hours of sleep." Parents who have children have forfeited their "right" to do certain things because they have begotten someone who means more to them than their own freedom! Whenever you beget, you surrender your personal rights. That is true spiritually also. In order to raise up new believers, you have to be willing to give up what you once considered to be your "rights".

When we fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, the first thing we must realize is that in His economy, for the accomplishment of His purpose, none of His servants can declare their rights, for those rights are gone. In the church life, sometimes you may feel you have the right to relax at home after a long day at work instead of rushing off to a meet-

ing. Yet if you desire to know the Lord, you must be willing to participate in His sufferings, for Christ forfeited all of what was His right so that He could save us.

The Suffering of Christ For Our Sake

Christ did not have to become a man. How filthy it must have appeared to Him! It would have been easier to live among animals, for they did not participate in sin. Yet He did not count His pre-existence in the heavenlies as a thing to be grasped. He did not even insist upon growing up in comfort as a man. Instead of growing up in a palace, he grew up in a carpenter's home. Not even His birth took place in a place of comfort, but rather in a place of strong smells and noise. What was it that caused Him to go through all this? His word would be, "I gave up all for *your* sake."

We have no way to conceive of all He gave up to become our Savior, yet He came. In fact, He was prepared to come from the foundation of the world (1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8). He was prepared. It was in His heart. He was willing to give up His right (Phil 2).

Instead of seeking to know the Lord in this fellowship of His sufferings, however, we usually go ahead and act as though we have inalienable rights in the church life, such as the right to raise issues or argue that a certain thing should be done or should not be done. Those who know the fellowship of the Lord's sufferings have little to say. For the sake of the truth, they will speak out, but they do not claim any dignity for themselves or their opinions. For the Body's sake, they have renounced their "rights".

The Suffering of Loneliness

In entering into the fellowship of the Lord's sufferings, we also experience what it is to be lonely. In Hymn #156 this is touched upon. Three of its stanzas read:

He held the highest place above,
Adored by all the sons of flame,
Yet such His self-denying love,
He laid aside His crown and came
To seek the lost
And at the cost
Of heavenly rank and earthly fame
He sought me—blessed be His name!

It was a lonely path He trod,
From every human soul apart;
Known only to Himself and God
Was all the grief that filled His heart,
Yet from the track
He turned not back,
Till where I lay in want and shame,
He found me—Blessed be His name!

Then dawned at last that day of dread,
When desolate, yet undismayed,
With wearied frame and thorn-crowned head,
He, God-forsaken, man-betrayed,
Was then made sin
On Calvary,
And, dying there in grief and shame
He saved me—Blessed be His name!

“It was a lonely path He trod, from every human soul apart; known only to Himself and God was all the grief that filled His heart...” Many co-workers, including myself, love to sing this song, yet usually we still have someone we can fellowship with, and a family life we can enjoy. But the Lord was truly lonely. Even as a child, He was misunderstood by His parents, including His mother, who seemingly should have stood with Him, knowing what she knew. Yet even she did not understand what He was going through. How lonely and misunderstood the Lord was. Even His disciples could not understand Him. Only His Father understood. Eventually all His disciples even forsook Him and fled the garden. Peter, His

staunchest disciple, denied Him three times that night, as He had foretold. John alone followed Him all the way to the cross.

If you desire to know the Lord, be prepared to touch the fellowship of *His* sufferings. Do not expect to have others' applause or approval. Even now, some of you know of colleagues who have gained recognition and acclaim in the world. Can they understand this path you chose when you decided to follow Christ? If you tried to explain it to them, would they be able to comprehend?

Betrayed and Abandoned by Those Closest

After the Lord gained Peter, Peter left again for a period of time. This touches me. The Lord went to heal Peter's mother-in-law just so that He might regain His disciple. Eventually, however, after the crowds left Him along with a number of His disciples, He asked His closest disciples, "Would you also leave Me?" (John 6:67). He had just been celebrated as the One who fed the five thousand. That reception turned cold so quickly! Those who had enjoyed His miracles and His teaching were fast deserting Him. Peter responded by saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." But Peter too betrayed and deserted the Lord on that night of all nights. Yet the Lord was prepared for this.

When anyone proclaims that they will follow you, beware! Some whom I raised up and who were close to me later became my strongest detractors. When the Spirit is operating, know that the fellowship of His sufferings does include the matter of being forsaken. When you are young you may proclaim, "Praise the Lord! We are for the Lord's recovery! We have a future! This is the Lord's testimony!" This is something we may enjoy of resurrection power. Eventually by that same power, however, you will be brought into His sufferings, which include the loss of your rights and to be misunderstood as He was. Yes, you will have many brothers and sisters, but be prepared to walk a lonely pathway. Eventually, your fate will be to be forsaken. (In the meantime, do not look at the others in the church life as those who may betray you someday. Every brother and sister will love you. But within, you should have a willingness to tell the Lord, "I forfeit my legal right, I am willing to live a lonely life, and eventually should it even

mean I be misunderstood and forsaken by all others, I am still determined to know only You and be one with only You.”) It is in this way we arrive at the last matter listed in this verse, which is to be conformed to His death.

CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH

To be dead means you have no more feeling towards what you were once alive to, for you have been cut off from that. As I have shared previously, the most spiritual verse in the Bible is perhaps Song of Solomon 6:12, for in it the country girl has become the Shulamite, the female counterpart of Solomon, who is the type of Christ in this Song of songs. She testifies how without even being aware, she finds herself in the royal chariots. In type, this indicates entering into the unsearchable riches of Christ. From this point forward it is Solomon (Christ) and only Solomon (Christ) she is with and for. The daughters of Jerusalem cry out, “Return, return O Shulamite that we may gaze upon you”. She, however, is now incorporated into oneness with her lover and king, so to those on the outside it seems she has disappeared. It is the Lord who answers for her, saying, “Why is it you look for this spiritual man? Do not mourn for him... he has passed through a long spiritual journey, and has finished his course! Rejoice with the dancing of two armies” (In Song of Solomon 6:13, “Mahanaim” means “two camps”)!

Become Selfless

What is it to experience death? First of all, it is to become selfless. This is the first indicator that someone is experiencing what it is to be conformed to the death of Jesus. Throughout His entire earthly life, Jesus lived His life in the reality of death. When He said on the cross, “It is finished,” He entered into another realm, but even in His earthly life His communication was with the things of the earth. As we serve the saints, we should have the realization that we are before the Lord, not before them. In a sense, we become dead even to the reactions of others, for it is the Lord we are alive to, and Him we serve.

There may be a saint whose existence seems to be for nothing other than bothering you. That is a good opportunity for you to learn the fellowship of His sufferings and to enter into further conformity to His death. If

you are someone conformed to the death of Christ, you can shake the hand of such a one, even though he truly acts as your enemy, and love him just as you would love any other brother.

Living Not Your Own Life, but The Life of Another

When you are dead, the one in you who responds to things or reacts or defends or holds onto fame or honor or name has been wiped away. You become selfless. This is a trait of the death of Christ. How does such a death come about? It comes about due to the fact you become one hundred percent one with God. What did Christ ever do that was on His own? He never did one thing of His own choice; He never lived His “own” life. He did only what He saw His Father doing, and He spoke only what His Father was speaking (John 5:19; 6:57; 8:28; 10:30; 12:49-50). To do everything in oneness with another is death to the independent self. The life Christ lived was absolutely one with the Father. Such a life equals death to our self. When you are incorporated with God and Christ, everything you do will be in the principle of death.

This is not something that you can pick up as a teaching. When you are young, it is doubtful you will know much of the fellowship of His sufferings, but you can still partake of His death. It may not be something fully formed in your life, but you can partake of it. You can also say that whenever you experience the fellowship of His sufferings that you partake of His death, for to be one with the Lord’s leading is to be in the process of being conformed to His death.

To all this you may say “Amen!”... but when you depart to do other things you will probably still do whatever you think is proper, or perhaps even what you may feel may be a blessing to the church. Among the churches today, how many can say, “I am conformed to His death”? Some almost seem to look down upon us if we say, “I only follow Christ.” The Lord, however, desires that we would follow Him. This means that even when something seems unreasonable or strange or foolish in the eyes of men, we must still do it, if the Lord is leading. There are many who have given up high positions and moved from desirable locations simply because the Lord led them to do so. In the eyes of the world, it is folly to give up one’s career

and financial security. As you follow the Lord in such things, however, you can experience what it is to be conformed to His death. Still, we can never say we are totally conformed to the Lord's death, because there will always be so much more in the realm of resurrection for us to experience!

Even if Not Yet Conformed to His Death, We Can Partake in it

If you are young, it is good that you tell the Lord that you are willing to follow however the Lord would lead, and that you would speak whatever He gives you to speak, and that you would do whatever the Lord would have you do. To do this is to indicate you are accepting the principle of Jesus' life, which was to do or say or go nowhere other than wherever the Father was doing or saying or going. He would not depart from His Father to live independently. That is the principle of death: your self-life is gone. Eventually such a life does take on a form. This is quite mature. Eventually, though, no one can say they have fully arrived at this stage.

An Ever Deepening Experience

For us to think we have achieved such a thing is far too high, but still we should seek to enter into it. In both the crucial things and in the small things, may we desire to be so one with the Lord that His death might be applied to us and become *our* reality. We should never grow out of this cycle of experiencing the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings and conformation to His death. Regardless how much we have experienced these things, our experience can never be adequate.

Those Conformed To His Death Become A Source of Life

Those who know something of what it is to be conformed to His death become a source of life to others. To be a source of life in the church does not necessarily mean that you are an able minister or leader or that you are able to do so many things. Whenever someone has passed through these things and has entered further into the Lord's death, this person becomes a source of supply in the church. When you are with such ones, you are blessed simply because of who they have become as they lived a life of following God and being conformed to the death of His Son.

When I was a young Christian, at a certain point I became very discouraged over my seeming lack of spiritual victory, and I began to question everything. I was really cast down. Therefore, I asked my sister Beth to accompany me to see an older spiritual sister. We arrived at where she was living, and were told she would be out shortly. I asked my sister to pray with me, and we began to pray. When this sister came out, she simply joined in to pray with us. While she was praying, I experienced the heavens being opened, and I became a different person. I prayed, "I am crucified with Christ! I died with Christ!" I was filled with the Spirit. After that prayer, the sister asked, "Young brother, do you have anything you want to fellowship?" My response was that it was no longer necessary, for I had been totally opened up. The element of death had so operated in that sister that life was able to operate in me while I was with her, as Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians 4:12. Those who live in the principle of death open the way for others to experience life.

How mysterious is the operation of this very Christ! May we be able to tell the Lord, "I know the power of resurrection. I know what You have accomplished. I know I am united with You in life. Now I am advancing into the fellowship of Your sufferings, for I know this to be the principle of Your own operation. I am able to pass through sufferings as You are being mingled with me in nature. This mingling within grants me the way to enter into this fellowship in Your sufferings. Eventually, I will be conformed to Your death." As we are conformed to His death, our apprehension of Christ will become so vast, so great...words cannot express it. It will produce something so outstanding. At such a point you will be able to say, "I really KNOW Him!"

Should we not all thank the Lord and tell Him, "We worship You that it is possible for us to know You in this way. Grant us growth. Grant us spiritual understanding. May we pass through the experience of resurrection, the fellowship of Your suffering, and becoming conformed to Your death, so that we might become a source of blessing in the church life, for all the members in Your Body." The Lord tells us in John 12:24 that it is only when a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies that fruit can be gained. The seed experiences resurrection, so be fearful of nothing. The base of all of this is resurrection, which is the divine and mystical realm, the realm of the Spirit. Resurrection is the base of all your spiritual experience. - *Titus Chu*

**THE KEEPING OF THE MYSTICAL ONENESS
ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS AND THE
EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

In this chapter we encounter a challenge to every local church: how to practically keep the mystical oneness of the Body of Christ. On the one hand, Paul presents the high revelation of oneness in his wonderful epistle to the Ephesians, and yet on the other, he emphasizes its outworking in such a place as the church in Corinth. This is surely something of God's arrangement, for every local church is, in experience, the church in Corinth. Regardless of what locality we live in, we can testify that the Corinthians' "abnormal" situation is actually the norm. Therefore we shouldn't be too bothered when we consider our problems, because it is normal to have problems in the church life.

When I first came into the recovery, I was unaware of this. To me, even the chairs in the meeting hall seemed to be sanctified. At that time, had I been aware of all the problems in the church life, I would have been greatly surprised. Over the years, however, I have witnessed many of the things found in Corinth among the churches, and I have come to realize that they are somewhat normal. What should concern us is not whether a church has problems, but how those problems are handled. If a servant of the Lord knows how to handle the problems properly, abnormal situations can be turned to strength. If, however, the ones who are serving do not know how to handle situations properly, the problems can become the source of both institution and organization within the church. Any group that takes that line eventually develops into a denomination.

Recently I went to London to fellowship about matters concerning the Lord's work. While I was there I visited the city of Plymouth. During the nineteenth century, Plymouth was the place where John Nelson Darby and

Benjamin Wills Newton, along with many other notable brothers, ministered among the so-called Plymouth Brethren. I wanted to see what remained of that blessed time in the history of the Lord's recovery. Eventually we found a place where the Brethren were still meeting and contacted one of the leading brothers there. When we asked him about his appreciation of John Nelson Darby, he replied he had not even heard of Darby. Instead, his word was that they were a group who "looked forward instead of backward." We learned from him that there were other Brethren groups meeting in the city, and that his hall was the one that cared for the young people. We then met with a group of older saints, who were burdened for those confined to nursing homes. One hundred and fifty years earlier, many high and glorious truths had been manifested among the Plymouth Brethren through the ministry of a number of servants who had been raised up by the Lord. Now it appears that little of that deposit remains among them. This helped me to realize that it is the church alone that is eternal, not anything or anyone else.

I hope we all will rise up with this realization and let everything else go. When I am gone, I trust that another will carry on, and that person also should have the expectation that someone else will be able to go on to carry forward what the Lord has committed to him. What is of eternity, however, is the church. Everything else will fade away. All the movements of the Lord and all the servants of the Lord are of time, but the church is eternal. Brothers and sisters, we have to realize how wonderful it is that we are in the church.

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF THE ONE UNIQUE GOD AS THE GOD OF ONENESS

The church is God's eternal purpose. It is the goal of the Father's predestination, the Son's redemption, and the sealing of the Spirit (Eph. 1:1-14). The three are one God, of course, and should not be too strongly differentiated. For example, is not Jesus also the Spirit who dwells within you? The Bible, however, does make a distinction as to how the Father, the Son, and the Spirit function for the fulfillment of God's purpose. The Father predestinated us to be His church before the creation of the world, and in time the Son came to redeem us. Eventually we received the Spirit, who applies all that the Triune God is to us.

Seeing this, the apostle desired that we would substantiate this divine reality in our experience, so he prayed that God would grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him (Eph. 1:17).

**THE DIVINE OPERATION OF THE ONE UNIQUE GOD
AS THE GOD OF ONENESS—
CREATING THE CHURCH, THE ONE NEW MAN**

We often think that our positive virtues are good for the church. Perhaps one brother is very nice, another is very humble, and another is very zealous. Can our niceness, humility, and zeal be for the church? No. The church can only be built up with what is created in us as a part of the new creation.

Every saved person has two lives. Our first life is that which is begotten of our parents. We have received another life, however, at the time of our regeneration. At that time something divine came into us, an element that produces the church. This is the new creation, not in the sense of time, but in the sense of element and essence. What is of God is always fresh and new.

Young people are often told that they are the church's hope. There is a Chinese proverb: "He who is yet a student should be esteemed more highly than he who has risen to power." In other words, you cannot say how high a young person will rise. A student may even become the president, who knows? Therefore, according to this saying, you should treat every young person with respect. But being young does not automatically make you the hope of the church. We all must grow in the Lord, for the hope of the church is Christ Himself.

When you see a group of saints, do you see the church? This is only possible if you see Christ. If you only see an older brother, a younger brother, or a Chinese brother, then you are not seeing the church. You must see Christ in the saints. When you see Christ in all the saints, you see the church.

**The Law of Commandments
in Ordinances Has Been Abolished**

Ephesians goes on to tell us that in the church, as the new man, the law of commandments in ordinances has been abolished (Eph. 2:15). This indi-

cates that in the church we should not place demands upon the saints. We should not give others the feeling that there are many requirements among us. All such things have been abolished! Instead of a demanding church life, we should have a church life where everyone is supplied and happy!

Joy is the mark of having Christ. What is the mark of having Christ among the saints in your locality? Joy! If the leading brothers bring the saints into ordinances and commandments, the free flowing enjoyment of Christ disappears. Nothing is more joyful than to be enjoying Christ with the saints in the absence of commandments and ordinances. We are free, we love Jesus, and we are in the church life! Hallelujah!

We Are Those Who Were Far Off but Now Have Become Near in the Blood of Jesus Christ

When we instruct others in Christian matters, we should not lead them into the law. We should be free to feed one another, pray and read the Bible together, and do all things in joyfulness. Yes, we do confront many problems in the church life. But instead of reacting to them by introducing regulations, we should learn not to worry about them so much. Paul tells us we have all been brought near in the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13). Whether you think one person is better or another is worse, each one equally shares in the blood of Christ as his portion. Because of the blood of Christ, we can be one, regardless of our problems.

Does anyone believe that he only needs the blood of Christ a little bit? All day long every one of us needs the blood of Christ to speak for us! In this blood we are all brought near. We all share the same status in the church because of the blood of Christ. You have the blood of Christ, and I also have the blood of Christ. In this blood we who were far off have become near.

Now Together We Can Receive the Gospel of Peace

As those who are brought near in the blood of Christ, we can share the gospel of peace. In the church, our testimony should be that there are no problems among us. As we are enjoying the church life, we experience peace towards the brothers and sisters. Therefore, we should not produce

reasons for disharmony. For instance, we should not look for differences among us, nor place expectations upon others according to our concepts. Christ has produced peace among us. When we raise issues, this peace disappears.

When we allow Christ to rule in the church life, enjoy the freedom to pursue Him, and experience the peace He has produced among us, we are enabled to come to the Father together in one Spirit (Eph. 2:18).

**THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE OF THE ONE UNIQUE
GOD OF ONENESS FOR HIS CHURCH:
ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE
UNITING BOND OF PEACE**

The Greek word used for oneness in Ephesians 4:3 is *henotes*, the state of being one. This word is used only two times in the New Testament. Its first use is here, regarding the oneness of the Spirit. The second use is in Ephesians 4:13, regarding the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God. The Greek word for one in Ephesians 2:15 (one new man) is *heis*, which refers to being one in nature and essence. *Henotes* refers to the state or quality of being in one accord and being in harmony. Such oneness does not take away the distinctiveness of its members. Brother Lee indicates that this oneness is a unity without uniformity, a unity with diversity.

In Ephesians four we find the seven ones. There is one Body, one Spirit, and one calling (Eph. 4:4). We have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism (Eph. 4:5). Then we have one God, the Father, who is over all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:6).

In the Triune God there is this divine oneness for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. Our responsibility is to endeavor to keep this oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). The oneness is already here. Now we simply need to keep it.

Instead of endeavoring to keep the oneness, we often raise issues, and issues lead to division, not oneness. We should not be for anything other than Christ. We should not be for young people, for old people, for Caucasians, for Chinese, for the sophisticated, or for the simple. Can we not just recognize that we all are His, and that we all love Him?

Some have the habit of questioning others until they find something with which they disagree. They may even do this with the thought that they must discover what others need to be corrected about, so they might be brought into their kind of oneness. Instead of feeling we must produce a kind of conformity, we should recognize that God desires that we endeavor to keep the oneness of the Spirit that He has already produced. The sweetness existing between the believers is damaged when we place demands upon others or raise issues over things that differ. We do not need to endeavor to produce the oneness; our endeavoring rather should be to keep it. Let us endeavor to keep the oneness!

**THE TRANSMITTING OF THE ONE UNIQUE GOD
AS THE GOD OF ONENESS—
THE ONE UNIQUE MINISTRY**

How is this oneness transmitted to us? It is transmitted by the one unique ministry, by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherd-teachers (Eph. 4:11-12). This one ministry is so rich that it requires four categories of gifted members to carry it out. What all the ministers in this New Testament ministry produce is the oneness of the faith (Eph. 4:13). Over a period of 44 years, I saw how Witness Lee endeavored to produce this oneness. Over the ages, the ministers who carry this New Testament ministry have labored to transmit the faith into the believers so they could become joined to the Lord and to one another, and so they could grow until they together would become a full grown man. In this way, all the believers will arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

In the apostle Paul we see someone who not only taught oneness, but also practiced it. In the church in Corinth many were claiming to be of Paul, while some said they were of Apollos and others. This is a very easy thing to do, even among us today. Paul made it very clear that Christ cannot be divided (1 Cor. 1:12-13). This is a great truth. I have no right to stand as a Chinese, and you have no right to stand as an American. One should not proclaim that he is for this serving one or that serving one. One should not

proclaim that he is for the young people, and another, that he is for senior citizens. Christ cannot be divided. All believers, by life and nature, are one. In addition to sharing the same life and nature, we should realize that no one has died for us except Christ, nor have we been baptized into any other name.

Honoring the Ministry of Others

Paul realized the preciousness of his ministry, yet he honored the ministries of others because he knew only God could give the growth (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Few who serve the Lord ever gain this realization. Paul was clear that to divisively declare that they were of one servant or another was something of the flesh. He was clear enough to say that not only was he nothing, but Apollos also was nothing, for God was the one who caused the believers to grow. I am thankful that I have been able to labor among you, but any growth cannot be attributed to me or to any other servant of the Lord, for it is God alone who causes the growth. Therefore we are for Christ alone. If we see this, we will not make such issues in the church life. Our oneness is of Christ alone. Take away Christ, and there is no oneness.

Being Only One of the Many Ministers of Christ

Paul also realized that no matter how rich and spiritual his ministry was, he was only one among many ministers of Christ. He further realized that whatever portion any minister had, it was for the church. Paul said, "So then let no one boast in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours" (1 Cor. 3:21-22). I do not know how many are able to sincerely say this. Paul, however, was very clear that all the serving ones belong to the saints. Paul realized that no matter how rich his ministry was, it was only a part of the New Testament ministry. In other words, Paul is yours, John Nelson Darby is yours, Watchman Nee is yours, and Witness Lee is yours. Whether in the east or the west, in the past, present, or future, all the manifested servants are yours. You should have the feeling whenever you see any serving one: "I am so happy he is mine!" You are not theirs; they are yours. Therefore do not say, "I am of somebody," for that somebody is for you.

Identified with Different Saints for the Sake of Oneness

Paul identified himself with all in such a way that he might gain all. He did this for the sake of the oneness. To the Jews, he became as a Jew; to those under law, he became as one under law; and to those without law, he was as one without law, although not without law to God. He came as one under the law of Christ. He made an effort to identify himself with all the various saints. To the weak, he became weak. He became all things to all men that he might save some from all backgrounds (1 Cor. 9:19-23). For this cause, he was willing to forfeit his own identity. To our thought, a mature serving one should behave in a peculiar, “spiritual” way, perhaps lost in holy contemplation. Paul, however, was not like this. When he was with others, he dropped everything but Christ. He was truly a spiritual man. Such a person is able to practice the oneness. May we all take Paul as our pattern for the sake of oneness!

FROM THE MINISTRY OF WITNESS LEE

...To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. — Acts 26:18-19

Whenever you talk with people it should open their eyes. This is something different from merely teaching someone. This is the way to realize whether or not a ministry is living. If a ministry is living, it must open people’s eyes. A man may be quite learned, possessing a high degree, but when he speaks he does not open the eyes of people. On the other hand, another brother may be unskilled in utterance and even stammering in his speaking, but because of his vision he can open people’s eyes. When you have the heavenly vision, you will open others’ eyes even if you speak without eloquence. You may be dull in utterance, but skilled in opening people’s eyes. Saul as a young man in God’s plan had his eyes opened, so he knew how to open the inner eyes of others. Whether or not your word, your ministry, could open other people’s eyes depends upon how much you have seen and how much you have experienced...

(Witness Lee, A Young Man in God’s Plan, p. 35)

To the lost world minister Christ
The precious One you possess,
Imparting Christ to those you love
As all their gain and success.
To the lost world minister Christ
The very Christ you enjoy,
Imparting Christ to all your friends
As all their boast and their joy.
(Hymn #922)

AFTER THE FOUNDING FATHERS:

Historical Case Studies: Count Zinzendorf & James Taylor

The departure of brother Witness Lee a decade ago on June 9, 1997 at the age of 91 marked the end of an era. Given Watchman Nee's passing 25 years earlier, it meant that the "founding fathers" of the Lord's present recovery were both gone. Many Christian groups face a crucial transition when their "founding father" passes away. The death of John Wesley (d. 1791) was a crucial juncture for Methodists. The decease of John Nelson Darby (d. 1882) was a turning point for the Plymouth Brethren. Similarly the departure of brother Witness Lee was a watershed event for the Lord's recovery. At such junctures crucial decisions are made which determine whether the Lord's move remains a vibrant force or becomes institutionalized.² Here we examine two case studies involving contrasting responses to the passing of the "founding fathers"—the Moravian Church's response to Zinzendorf's death and the Exclusive Brethren's reaction to the passing of James Taylor Sr.³ Both cases offer lessons for us today.

The Moravian Church after Zinzendorf's Departure

Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-60) has been identified as a crucial figure⁴ in the 18th century recovery of the church-life. Under Zinzendorf's leadership the Moravian Brethren established a vibrant church-life and a vision to bring Christ to all nations. W. Nee declares,⁵ *"They were the first group of brothers to go throughout the entire world to evangelize."* From small beginnings in Germany they pioneered the gospel's spread to slaves in the Caribbean, Inuit in Greenland and the First Nations of N. America. Their success in gaining "souls for the Lamb" from among "the heathen" was without parallel among Christians. In 1749 the Moravian Church was recognized as an "ancient Church" by the British government. This endorsement seemingly established their orthodoxy and allowed them to operate within the expanding British Empire. Yet shortly thereafter the Moravian Church faced a serious crisis.

Branded as an Extreme Sect, on the Brink of Financial Ruin

Count Zinzendorf was more of a visionary than a practical administrator. Under his leadership the Church's expansion was funded by personal loans. By the 1750's, expenditures were out of control and the Church was over-extended. This precipitated a spectacular crash in the Church's credit and reputation.⁶ Worse still, detractors pounced on this opportunity, issuing an orchestrated avalanche of books and pamphlets attacking Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church, further damaging their reputation. Key Evangelical figures like John Wesley and George Whitefield forsook them and joined in the attacks. The effect was nearly ruinous. Critics questioned Zinzendorf's orthodoxy, citing his radical emphasis on the Son among the Trinity and his depiction of the Holy Spirit as Mother.⁷ But it was his graphic "Blood and Wounds" theology which fuelled the most controversy.

Zinzendorf's Graphic 'Blood & Wounds' Theology

Christ's crucifixion wounds, especially His wounded side, were central to Zinzendorf's theology. *"The holy side of Jesus is a central point from which one can derive everything spiritual,"* Zinzendorf said.⁸ To him⁹ *"Swimming in the blood of Christ...[was] an expression of the soul's desire for eternal life in Christ."* The Moravians saw themselves as a community of believers living both literally and mystically within the side-wound of Christ. They were *"bees around the corpse of Christ"* and *"worms in the wounds of Jesus,"* worshipping the Savior's wounds *"so moist, so gory."* Few areas of their church-life were left untouched by their blood-and-wounds theology. They lived, worshipped, worked and loved within the wounds of Christ.¹⁰ *Children were raised singing praises to the side wound, and the dead were laid to rest in [Christ's] open side."* The graphic depictions and intense imagery of Moravian hymns were offensive to other believers¹¹ and embarrassing to themselves. They were portrayed as a weird Christian sect with heterodox beliefs. Under blistering attack from foes and former-friends,¹² in 1755 Zinzendorf retreated from England to his native Germany in disgrace. When he passed away five years later the Church had lost its credibility. Shunned by Christian leaders and engulfed in financial troubles it drew in upon itself. The future looked bleak. It was a crucial juncture.

New Leadership, Decisive Actions

The new leadership confronted a crisis calling for decisive action. The North American leader, Spangenberg¹³ (1704-92), was recalled to Europe where he rapidly emerged as the “first among equals” in the Moravian Church eldership. The Church assumed responsibility for the mountain of accumulated debt and introduced strict financial controls. It was a close call; several times the Church tottered on the brink of financial ruin. Yet they staved off bankruptcy and survived. More importantly, the elders introduced measures to clarify their stand, revive confidence in the Church and restore its good name. The Moravian leadership made statements:

- Reaffirming their orthodoxy, they resolved to make the Heavenly Father a more central object of their teaching and worship.
- They apologized for extra-biblical teachings, admitting¹⁴ “we have formerly expressed many private opinions and made such representations of the truth, both in our preaching and in our printed books, which have no foundation in holy Writ [Scripture] and have given offence.”
- Concerning Count Zinzendorf, they distinguished between his personal sentiments and the Church’s stand. The leadership pointed out that ¹⁵“Moravians were not required to defend Zinzendorf’s ‘private opinions’.” Moreover, “the Church wished to erase...the impression made by his sometimes unorthodox teaching.” They withdrew offensive published writings.
- They reaffirmed the primacy of the Bible. ¹⁶“The Holy Scriptures...shall remain the only standard and rule both of the doctrine and practice of the Moravian Church,” they declared.
- They reiterated their mission goals—¹⁷“Our missions are the most important work of God, entrusted unto the [Moravian] Brethren by our Lord Himself.” Despite financial constraints, as the Lord led, overseas missions would not be reduced; they would be expanded.

From Radical Fringe to Mainstream Model

The reform measures worked. Shorn of its unorthodox trappings, the vital church-life and gospel endeavour initiated by Zinzendorf prospered. The Moravians published a History of Greenland, detailing their success among the Inuit. They launched a mission to the Inuit in Labrador, Canada. Mission outposts were also established in the American colonies, the Caribbean (St. Thomas, St. Croix, Antigua, Jamaica,) Surinam, Ghana, South Africa, Greenland, Algeria, Russia, Sri Lanka, Iran and Egypt. As Watchman Nee says,¹⁸ “The Moravian Church

became the strongest missionary body at that time. Their believers spread to every corner of the world." Over the next 30 years (1760-92) the Moravian Church became the recognized authority in the field of foreign missions. When William Carey incited his complacent fellow-Baptists, the Moravians were his model. ¹⁹"*See what these Moravians have done! Can't we Baptists at least attempt something in [faithfulness] to the same Lord?"* he challenged. As the 18th century closed, the Moravians had been successfully rehabilitated from the radical fringe to become the mainstream model of the missionary Church among evangelicals. The re-evaluation initiated by Spangenberg was instrumental in that restoration.

The Taylor Brethren—Establishing the Binding Authority of 'the Ministry'

The Exclusive Brethren's transition following the demise of James Taylor Sr. contrasts with that among the Moravians. The decease of James Taylor Sr. was a watershed event for the Brethren. For 50 years, Taylor's personal leadership had been universally recognized and accepted among them. In no other fundamental group was authority personally vested in a single leader to the degree it was in James Taylor. He was regarded as "God's elect vessel"—in today's term, the "Minister of the Age"—whose teaching carried apostolic authority. His ministry embodied God's up-to-date speaking. Taylor's death in 1953 created a vacuum with the potential of undermining the Exclusive Brethren's unity. To those concerned about the future²⁰ "*In his absence...the ongoing implementation and enforcement of his teaching appeared essential to the continuing cohesion of the group.*" An unofficial group of prominent leaders arose to fill the leadership void. It served as²¹ "*an oligarchy working with a mutual aim of reinforcing the authority of previous ministry, particularly Taylor's.*" Its actions were aimed at²² "*promoting the ongoing implementation of Taylor's ministry, alongside a move to establish beyond challenge its binding status.*"

In contrast to the Moravians, there was no re-evaluation of Taylor's ministry among the Brethren after his passing; no reconsideration of his teachings in the light of Scripture. No distinction was made between Taylor's personal sentiments and the Church's stand. The leaders promoted the view that Taylor's ministry was to be embraced in its entirety. Doubtful doctrines, like the notion that the Holy Spirit should be an object of worship,²³ became dogma rather than being discarded. One leader warned those who were wavering, ²⁴"*If you are going to remain happily in fellowship with the Brethren...you must accept all Mr.*

Taylor's ministry." The subsequent elevation of Taylor's ministry spawned the view that his²⁵ "ministry...was on a par with Scripture. Indeed...its authority went beyond that of the Bible." In effect, Taylor's ministry became a "third testament," among these Exclusive Brethren. The few "dissenters" who dared question the supreme authority ascribed to "the up-to-date ministry" were silenced or excommunicated. Nevertheless the unofficial self-appointed oligarchy lacked the muscle and cohesion necessary to maintain the uniformity which had characterized the Brethren under a single leader. Within a decade of Taylor's decease, his son, James Taylor Jr. emerged to claim his father's leadership mantle and enforce legalistic compliance to 'the ministry.' A new era of despotic control had begun. Today, 50 years after James Taylor's passing, this branch of Brethren is widely regarded as an exclusive Christian sect. It remains isolated, in-bred and irrelevant on the radical fringe of Christianity.

Conclusion—Time for a Re-evaluation?

The passing of the "founding fathers" offers a unique opportunity for Christian groups to re-evaluate their teachings and practices as they enter a new era. In the New Testament and Christian history each of the Lord's servants had their shortages and made mistakes. Peter denied Christ and returned to his former occupation (John 21). Even after Pentecost, on occasion he compromised with Judaism (Gal. 2). The Apostle Paul performed a Nazarite vow (Acts 21:18-26). Subsequent servants of the Lord, though mightily used of God, are not immune from error.²⁶ One historical pattern of transition is the Taylor Brethren where Taylor's ministry in its entirety became the authoritative standard to which compliance was demanded. Another, more promising example, is the Moravian Church where Zinzendorf's legacy was re-evaluated after his passing. That re-examination and re-statement of the Church's position saved the Moravians from being condemned to obscurity as a radical fringe cult. It rehabilitated them to be the mainstream model for evangelicals, especially in terms of mission. The impact of that "re-positioning" persists until today.²⁷

A decade has elapsed since our brother Witness Lee completed his course on June 9, 1997. Perhaps it's time the Lord's recovery commenced a similar re-examination. Watchman Nee warned against perpetuating a work when God takes away His workers, violating the important Scriptural principle that²⁸ "David 'served his own generation and slept' (Acts 13:36). He could not serve two." In his final public ministry, brother Witness Lee said (concerning receiving believers)²⁹ "We

all made mistakes in this matter in the past, I myself included; I confess that I had, for this matter and before the Lord, a very painful repentance. I am really sorry." To some observers this parting word strongly suggests that the Lord's recovery should not simply continue with "business as usual" after Witness Lee's passing. Rather it implies some re-consideration and modification is needed in the teachings and practices affecting our relationships with believers "outside the recovery." Other benevolent commentators suggest a more wide-ranging re-examination is necessary if the Lord's recovery is to avoid the stigma of being labeled a "Christian cult."³⁰ A recently published "Open Letter" by over sixty Evangelical Christian Scholars and Leaders also calls for such a re-evaluation.³¹

- Nigel Tomes

NOTES:

1. Although not a biblical term, we use the expression "founding father." The "Phoenix Accord" (Feb. 2003) signed by certain leading co-workers-brothers from both the Great Lakes area and S. California contains a statement which refers to "spiritual fathers." It says, "*We acknowledge Watchman Nee and Witness Lee as our spiritual fathers in the Lord whose ministries constitute the basis for the teaching and leading in the recovery today.*"

2. Watchman Nee warned against institutionalization, saying, "*Once there was the blessing of the Lord, men organized something to contain the blessing. ... When the grace of God comes, men immediately set up an organization to keep it. The organization remains, but the content is lost. However, the cup cannot be broken; there are always those who are zealous to maintain the cup continuously. Here is a matter of principle: The students of Wesley could never be equal to Wesley, nor could the students of Calvin match Calvin. The schools of the prophets seldom produced prophets—all the great prophets were chosen by God from the wilderness. The Spirit of God descends upon whomsoever He will. He is the Head of the church, not we. Men always think the living water is valuable and must be kept by organization, but it gradually declines through the generations until it completely dries up.*" (Watchman Nee, *Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, Vol. 47, p. 57, emphasis added)

3. The transition of the Exclusive (Taylor) Brethren following the death of James Taylor Sr. may be particularly relevant to the present situation in the Lord's recovery because the similarities are striking. (1) Both Taylor and Watchman Nee were highly appreciative of John Nelson Darby's writings. Many of the teachings in the recovery can be traced back to the early Brethren, especially Darby. (2) The paths of W. Nee and James Taylor crossed in the 1930's. In 1932-35 the Taylor Brethren felt that "*they received en masse a considerable number of Christians in mainland China, [i.e the local churches] who met in ninety Brethren-style meetings under the leadership of Watchman Nee. The links were short-lived...*" [Roger Shuff, *Searching For The True Church*, (Paternoster, 2005) p. 40] The fact that (according to their realization) Taylor's group received the 90 local churches into their fellowship suggests they saw much in common between the two movements. (3) Some teachings recently

Are We Merely *Propping Up* the Work of God?

In the previous article, Nigel Tomes compares two moves of the Lord, and their outcome based upon how the involved saints determined to carry on after the leader had passed from the scene.

The Lord's work of recovery is a spiritual matter, and therefore no identifiable group or movement besides the Church itself should feel they alone have the privilege of carrying it forward, as though they were the unique people of God. The work of God is with whomever He chooses. Therefore when terms such as "Lord's recovery" are used, we must be clear about their intended meaning. Do we mean "Lord's **R**ecovery"? If so, perhaps we have already been passed by as far as the Lord's current work on the earth is concerned.

A.W. Tozer, one who was particularly burdened over the state of the Church, writes of this tendency to impose human structure to God's work:

Churches and societies founded by saintly men with courage, faith and sanctified imagination appear unable to propagate themselves on the same spiritual level beyond one or two generations. The spiritual fathers were not able to sire others with courage and faith equal to their own. The fathers had God and little else, but their descendants lose their vision and look to methods and constitutions for the power their hearts tell them they lack. Then rules and precedents harden into a protective shell where they can take refuge from trouble. It is always easier and safer to pull in our necks than to fight things out on the field of battle.

In all our fallen life there is a strong gravitational pull toward complexity and away from things simple and real. There seems to be a sad inevitability back of our morbid urge toward spiritual suicide. Only by prophetic insight, watchful prayer and hard work can we reverse the trend and recover the departed glory.¹

Again, however, I would ask who is the "we" here?

When certain brothers among us began to put forward the matter of “one publication” and so on, it reminded me very much of the operation of the early church father Ignatius, attempting to get all the ducks in a row” so that the believers might be protected rather than misguided by the “different teachings” of his day². His response to what he perceived to be the danger was simple: establish one central leader, or *bishop (overseer)*, in every locality, rather than rely upon the function of a group of bishop/elders as had been originally arranged in the NT. Humanly, it may have seemed a healthy thing to do, but it was not something God had directed or ordained. Therefore, as many historians acknowledge, a hierarchy was produced that grew level by level, until when tied to the thought of apostolic succession³, it evolved into the worldwide papal system centered in Rome.

I like Tozer’s comment on “prophetic insight, watchful prayer and hard work”... (hard work being a matter of paying the price to *fellowship*). I particularly am impressed with the matter of prayer... but not merely “watchful” prayer... just *prayer*! I also would like to contrast two case studies, as Nigel did.

In Acts 15, we see a response to a situation among the churches that *seemed* to come out of fellowship, and even resulted in James saying, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (v.28). But what only *seemed* good out of this kind of fellowship produced something that apparently was not so profitable. It doesn’t appear that Paul carried that pronouncement everywhere or proclaimed it on his gospel journeys. It seemed more a compromise than a genuine move of the Lord. In short, although it *seemed* good and had some initial effect, it was ultimately not that helpful to the Lord’s move, and perhaps even contained a damaging element.

Compare this with Acts 13:2⁵. As the leaders in Antioch were “ministering to the Lord and fasting the Spirit spoke to them: ‘Set apart for me *now*...’” A clear word of the Spirit came forth because of that prayer, initiating a definite move of the Lord. May there be some today among us who are ministering to the Lord in this way. We are not here to prop something up of what the Lord has done. We are here to give the Lord a way to do whatever it is He is seeking to do *today*. How shall we do this? Let us hand the reins over to Christ and allow Him to take the initiative among us as we minister *to Him*. - *John Berglund*

(notes on p. 48)

(continued from p. 43)

emphasized in the Lord's recovery (e.g. the unique 'Minister of the Age,' the emphasis on God's 'up-to-date speaking through the ministry') were already taught among the Taylor Brethren during that earlier era (1930-50).

4. Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-60) has been designated as "Minister of the Age" in the 18th century. See for example Ed Marks, *The Ministry*, vol. 7, No. 6, (Aug. 2003) p. 13.

5. W. Nee writes: "By 1732 the earliest missionary body in the world was conceived, the so-called Moravian Brethren. ...They were the first group of brothers to go throughout the entire world to evangelize. Eighty five out of one hundred among them eventually became foreign missionariesThe Moravian Church became the strongest missionary body at that time. Their believers spread to every corner of the world." Watchman Nee, "What Are We?" Collected Works, vol. 11, p. 847

6. In an era where insolvent debtors were sent to "debtors' prison" it was a serious matter to default on a loan, especially for a Christian entity.

7. This has been referred to as the "feminization of the trinity" by the Moravians seen in their description of the Holy Spirit as Mother. [See Aaron Fogleman's article in the *William & Mary Quarterly*, 2003, pp. 295-332.]

8. "By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat" A review of the book, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* by Craig Atwood.

9. Craig Atwood, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* pp. 100-1

10. "By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat" A review of the book, *Community of the Cross*

11. John Wesley "called attention to [the Moravians] recent extravagant emphasis upon Christ's side wound, and urged all who had been fooled into joining the Brethren to desert them." [John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, p. 213]

12. Chief among "former friends" and supporters were John Wesley (see previous note) and George Whitefield. George Whitefield's 1753 public *Expostulatory Letter to Z.* ...was long-lasting in its prejudicial effect." (J. C. S. Mason, "*The Moravian Church and the Missionary Awakening in England, 1760-1800*," p. 10)

13. August G. Spangenberg had overseen the Church's N. American operations.

14. J. C. S. Mason, "*The Moravian Church and the Missionary Awakening in England, 1760-1800*," p. 12

15. J. C. S. Mason, "*The Moravian Church*..." p. 12

16. J. C. S. Mason, "*The Moravian Church*..." p. 12 Spangenberg reassured readers "*The Brethren's congregations do not take the writings of the Count or any man as their standard of doctrine; the Bible alone is their standard of truth.*"

17. J. C. S. Mason, "*The Moravian Church*..." p. 16

18. Watchman Nee, Collected Works, vol. 11, p. 847

19. A. J. Lewis, Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer, p. 194

20. Roger Shuff, *Searching For The True Church*, (Paternoster, 2005) p. 123

21. Roger Shuff, *Searching For The True Church*, p. 122

22. Roger Shuff, *Searching For The True Church*, p. 121

23. Initially in 1942 and subsequently in 1947-8 Taylor began to teach that the Holy Spirit should be worshipped, just as the Son and Father were worshipped in the Lord's table meeting. [Earlier Brethren rejected this view because no explicit New Testament basis could be found for worshipping the Spirit.] In 1950 a new edition of the group's "Little Flock" hymnal was commissioned. A new version was rapidly produced, containing no less than 45 hymns solely addressed to the Holy Spirit. Roger Shuff, *Searching For The True Church*, p. 120

24. Roger Shuff, *Searching For The True Church*, p. 123

25. Roger Shuff, *Searching For The True Church*, p. 123 The quote in context reads: "*This absolutist view of ministry...the proposition that such contemporary ministry, implicitly synonymous with the current voice of the Spirit, was on a par with Scripture. Indeed, by inference, its authority went beyond that of the Bible since the Scriptures contained only the written words of Christ, while current teaching in the power of the Spirit represented Christ's direct and personal words to the contemporary Church.*"

26. In Witness Lee's final public conference in March 1997 he said, "*Concerning the matter of receiving people according to God,...we co-workers in every place all need to learn, the responsible ones in every place all need to learn, the brothers and sisters in every place all need to learn.... too many things cause us to learn. **We all made mistakes in this matter in the past, I myself included**; I confess that, I had, for this matter and before the Lord, a very painful repentance.*" [translation from the Chinese transcript] Elsewhere W. Lee wrote: "*Although I have always intended to do the right thing, I have nevertheless made many mistakes, even some big mistakes. I certainly hate these mistakes, but I can testify that they have afforded God the opportunity to show forth His wisdom. Therefore, I can thank the Lord for all my mistakes.*" [W. Lee, *Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 273] Furthermore he said, "*My point is this—do not think that any leader could not make a mistake. Only the Lord Jesus, the unique Leader, never made any mistake. It is absolutely impossible for Him to be mistaken. However, all of us, including Peter, have made many mistakes.*" [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move, Elders' Training, Book 7*, p. 113]

27. The Moravian Church exists until today. Recent figures indicate a total worldwide membership (in 1995) of 765,000. The largest concentrations are in Tanzania, S. Africa, Nicaragua, W. Indies—areas which were the subject of Moravian missions.

28. Watchman Nee, *Collected Works*, vol. 40, pp. 84-5. Bro. Nee says, "*David 'served his own generation,' and slept (Acts 13:36). He could not serve two! Where today we seek to perpetuate our work by setting up an organization or society or system, the Old Testament saints served their own day and passed on. This is an important principle of life. Wheat is sown, grows, ears, is reaped, and then the whole plant, even the root is pulled out.... God's work is spiritual to the point of having no earthly roots... Men pass on, but the Lord remains. ...God Himself takes away His workers, but He gives others. Our work suffers. But His never does. Nothing touches Him. He is still God.*" (emphasis added)

29. See Note 26 above. This quote in context reads: "*Concerning the matter of receiving people according to God,...we co-workers in every place all need to learn, the responsible ones in every place all need to learn, the brothers and sisters in every place all need to learn.... too many things cause us to learn. **We all made mistakes in this matter in the past, I myself included**; I confess that, I had, for this matter and before the Lord, a very painful repentance. I am really sorry. I am really sorry toward the Body of Christ, also really sorry, not only toward the brothers and sisters among us, but even to those in the denominations, also really sorry toward them...*" We note that Brother Lee include himself in this apology, saying "**We all made mistakes...in the past, I myself included.**" Contrary to the claims of LSM's "blended brothers," W. Lee was **NOT** merely apologizing for the mistakes of the local churches. The LSM-DCP brothers state: "*What Brother Lee said in the Chinese-speaking conference was his observation and realization before the Lord **that the churches receiving his ministry had at times failed** in the past to live up to that standard: Brother Lee*

"shared with the saints his grieving **that the churches under his ministry had caused offence** through coming short in our practice of these truths." "**Repenting for Offending the Body of Christ—What Did Witness Lee Really Say?**" (article on AFaithfulWord.org)

30. We understand that in this context the term "Christian cult" is being employed in a theological sense and **not** in a secular or sociological sense.

31. 60 Evangelical Christian Scholars' Open Letter (January 9, 2007) www.open-letter.org

NOTES from John Berglund's article (pp. 44-45)

1. From the chapter "Organization: Necessary and Dangerous" in *The Best of A.W. Tozer*, Christian Publications (copyright Baker Books, 1979), pp. 69-70.

2. Earle Cairns writes in his history: "*This early church father...lays great emphasis on subjection to the bishop as the way to achieve unity and to avoid the growth of heresy...He was the first to place the office of the bishop in contrast with the office of the presbyter and to subordinate the presbyters or elders to the monarchical bishop and the members of the church to both. The hierarchy in the church is, according to him, bishop, presbyter, and deacon.*" (*Christianity Through the Centuries*, Zondervan, 1981, p. 74, see also FF Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, pp. 203-205, published by Eerdmans). According to his *Epistle to the Trallians*, Ignatius did not even consider a church to be a church unless it had a bishop (verse 3). He writes also to Polycarp, whom he refers to as the bishop of Smyrna, also promoting this matter. Polycarp, however, does not appear to endorse Ignatius' view of the need for a single bishop in his letter to the Philippian church, which had no such bishop at the time. (Ironically, of the six places to which Ignatius wrote, the only place he does *not* mention the matter of a ruling bishop to is Rome!)

3. Irenaeus was the person who seems to have made the final leap tying the matter of hierarchy to apostolic succession and Rome. W.H.C. Frend writes "*Therefore, claims Irenaeus, 'obedience is due to those presbyters who, as we have shown, are in the succession after the Apostles, and who with their episcopal succession have received according to the will of the Father the charisma of truth.' ... So the idea of apostolic succession was to be linked with that of episcopal authority. Others, such as Ignatius, had stressed the fact of the bishop's authority against the claims of heretical teachers. Hegesippus had sought to confirm (circa 175) that the chief Christian churches did have Apostles as their founders. Irenaeus, however, linked the two ideas, and in his hands the bishop becomes the supreme arbiter of the Church's doctrine and discipline. Rome, founded by the two Apostles Peter and Paul, Irenaeus cites as a model See, and in a famous but ambiguous sentence affirms that 'every church assemble at (or 'be in harmony with') this church because of its outstanding preeminence...'*" (*The Early Church*, Fortress Press, 1982, pp. 66-67)

Sadly, perhaps, as Nigel notes concerning certain tendencies in his article, Polycarp, who may have done much for the Lord's move in his day, is held up by Irenaeus in a way that supported his own view for the further organization of the church under a central headquarters overseen by those with supposed "apostolic authority".

5. Please see the extraordinary and inspiring quote from Watchman Nee on p. 22 in FJ 4-5 on this matter, from p. 30 of *The Normal Christian Life*.