

Ron and Kerry
Book of Defamation
2006

Examining a slanted
untrue, and superficial,
portrayal of John Ingalls

John Ingalls' Account of Local Church History

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www.JohnIngalls.com

Preface

Dear Ron and Kerry,

I am giving to you copies of a book that addresses your word in print concerning brother John Ingalls, written in 1989, called *A Response to Recent Accusations*. I don't know how much you are concerned about any mistake you might have made in representing brother John, but brothers, your mistakes are numerous. There is the need, therefore, to bring this to your attention and, possibly, to the saints' attention. You said in the book,

We wish to comment on two of John's closing remarks. John says, "if we have offended any of you saints, we ask you to please forgive us. We surely never intended to offend anyone of you." **On the one hand, offended saints should receive the grace to forgive from their hearts. To maintain a sweet, harmonious church life we need to forgive one another. On the other hand, John's word** "If we have offended any of you saints" **is somewhat disturbing for it is altogether too general and superficial and it displays a lack of consciousness of the grave offenses caused not only to saints but also to other churches. Certain things said and done in Anaheim since August 28, 1988, have caused damage and distress and should not be dealt with generally and superficially. There is the willingness to forgive but there should also be the willingness to repent.**

Brothers, what I will be addressing in my book is what you did not address in yours. You gave a slanted version of "certain things said and done in Anaheim" that caused "damage and distress". You did not give the full story of what took place there. You left out vital detail that would give the saints the whole picture, the true scenes of the major factors of "damage and distress" in Anaheim, and also in the recovery.

Although the truth of what happened in Anaheim remains hidden by the leadership, there are windows into the real situation. I would like to share about two such windows, as Philip Lin and Francis Ball allow some light to shine in on the subject.

Philip Lin Comment

Philip Lin, an Anaheim elder during the late eighties on the Chinese side, spoke honestly during the turmoil. A brother, Paul Kerr, relates a time with him,

I recall a leaders' meeting before a Sunday morning meeting in Anaheim during the late eighties turmoil. A few of us younger brothers who were learning to serve in the church, helping the elders, etc. were there and had been involved in such meetings for quite some time. I had asked the question: "Why should we let two brothers [Brother Lee & his son] who don't even come to the meetings wreak havoc on a church of over 500 people? Let's just ignore them and go on." Just after I asked it, Philip Lin walked in late. He asked what the question was that was asked and Godfred replied, "It was a very good question, and told me to ask it again. So I did, and this was Philip Lin's almost verbatim response: "I know in my conscience you brothers are right according to the truth, but in my culture I must be loyal to Brother Lee." Of course he was not just referring to my question but to the overall situation, the 16 points the faithful elders had previously ministered, etc. Frankly, I appreciated and admired his honesty. It was so striking I still clearly remember it today.

Francis Ball Comment

Paul Kerr relates a word from Francis also,

In a leaders meeting held in Rosemead during the Pasadena conference, Brother Lee was complaining about how much the church in Anaheim was mistreating him and his son and how much he and his family were suffering because of the church in Anaheim. At the end they had a question period so I got up to ask a few questions, stating something like, "I just wanted to preface my questions with a remark to clarify this issue publicly before all the brothers here so there is no misunderstanding. In fact, it is not the church in Anaheim causing suffering to Brother Lee and his family but it is Brother Lee and his son Philip that is causing suffering to the church in Anaheim. Now I have a couple of questions... In the Genesis life-studies you [Brother Lee] claimed that John So was a pillar in the church, and we should follow his example. In the Timothy training you turned to John Ingalls and declared publicly that he was your Timothy. But now that they disagree with you and your son, instead of accepting their fellowship you attempt to discredit them before others and cut them off. How could a pillar and Timothy so easily be cut off? Why would you treat these brothers in such a fashion?" Then immediately after my questions the so-called "question and answer fellowship" part of the meeting ended, and Francis jumped up to abruptly end the meeting, shamelessly declaring that he was delighted to be an ostrich with his head in the sand. Shortly thereafter he was chosen as a replacement "elder" in Anaheim.

In other words, Ron and Kerry, there is another side of the story to the partial and superficial version put forth in your book and in other "official" writings and speakings of the church. It has been the habit, the practice, the tradition of our leadership in the recovery to be non-transparent concerning themselves and their failings. Blame is nearly always shifted to others; it is never placed on yourselves. In view of this, I urge you to read my book and consider what truly is an incredible "lack of consciousness of the grave offenses caused not only to saints but also to other churches".

"There is the willingness to forgive but there should also be the willingness to repent", so you have advised John Ingalls to do. Brothers, so I urge you to do. This is not an attack, but an appeal to you to examine yourselves.

Yours in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Steve Isitt

November 2006

INTRODUCTION

Two members of the current leadership in the Lord's recovery wrote a book in 1989 of what they felt was a "careful scrutiny" of the challenging words spoken by John Ingalls on March 19, 1989 when John notified the church of his decision to withdraw from the eldership of the church in Anaheim.

Ron Kangas and Kerry Robichaux stated in the first chapter, "In our response, we will examine brother John's opening remarks, his eighteen numbered points, and his closing words" (p. 7). "Those who are inclined to believe John's word and follow him would do well to consider seriously what the basis of his speaking is and whether this basis is trustworthy" (p. 9).

The Basis of Speaking

Likewise, we would do well to consider seriously what the basis of Ron and Kerry's speaking was in their book, *A Response to Recent Accusations*, and whether or not *their* speaking is a fair and accurate portrayal of the former prominent co-worker and elder, John Ingalls.

They wrote in the preface,

Since the material in this document concerns an event that took place in the church in Anaheim and since we, the authors, do not live in Anaheim, we believe that it is appropriate for us to state our grounds for writing this material. First, we are organic members of the Body of Christ, and what took place in Anaheim was not only a local matter but also a Body matter. For this reason, it is a matter that concerns us and affects us. Second, the speaking of John Ingalls was transcribed, edited, and distributed. His word has spread beyond his locality, and this word has been brought to our attention. Third, since John's speaking is actually an attack on Brother Lee and his ministry and on all the churches and saints who continue to receive this ministry, we felt responsible to respond to this attack for the sake of our brother, the churches, and the saints. Fourth, because John's speaking is subtle and deceptive, some of the saints may appreciate help in discerning the nature and character of this speaking. Finally, John's speaking presents a distorted picture of the Lord's recovery and of the Lord's up-to-date move in His recovery. It is necessary that this distortion be exposed and refuted and that a word of truth be given. In view of the foregoing, we have prepared this analysis of and response to John Ingalls' speaking.

Was Their Speaking Trustworthy?

We must be careful people when we represent others. According to our history in the recovery, since 1984 at least, our leadership has been anything but careful in this regard. A prime example of a book misrepresenting others is *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion (FPR)*, which purports to be a truthful account of the late 1980s turmoil, yet leaves out pertinent information for the reader's understanding..

That book, though it is a book of defamation, has been accepted among the churches as the official story of the so-called rebellion of former leading ones, including John Ingalls as a supposed ringleader of a conspiracy to take over the recovery. Its claims were based, not on substantial evidence, but upon suspicion and imagination. It is similar to Ron and Kerry's book in that regard, both books featuring the effacement of John Ingalls,

with Ron and Kerry's book focusing only on him, not including others as *FPR* does.

In this current atmosphere of litigation over defamation against the local churches and Witness Lee in a few obscure pages of an obscure book, it behooves us who do not want to be responsible ourselves for defamation of character to consider the far more serious cases we have among us in the churches that have had a vastly more profound impact on the recovery than that which is now costing the churches millions of dollars to litigate.

The Lord is no respecter of persons. If false witness has been borne in these two books by brothers of repute, the churches should be informed about this, one and all, and the saints should be advised to destroy the books, and thorough repentances among us ensue. *Deviating from the Path in the Lord's Recovery* is a book that deals with the inaccuracies, unfairness, and outright falsehoods found in *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*. This writing deals with the book by Ron Kangas and Kerry Robichaux and its misrepresentations of John Ingalls.

A Knee-Jerk Reaction

One element involved in being careful in representing others is to investigate, to research. Did Ron and Kerry do this? Or, was their writing a quick, knee-jerk reaction, based on the *appearance* of rebellion, with very little research applied, if any at all. As they said, they were not even in the church in Anaheim; therefore, they did not have the experience and perspective that John Ingalls had. Neither did they fellowship thoroughly with him or with the other Anaheim elders to learn the facts from them.

John Ingalls, however, was in the same locality as Witness Lee and his son who were causing serious problems in Anaheim that outsiders had no way to understand without thorough investigation.

John Ingalls, as the leading elder in Anaheim had responsibility for the oversight of the church and conscientiously sought out fellowship with Brother Lee. After many unproductive sessions with Brother Lee to deal with the problems, and after unsavory developments took place in Anaheim, and after a group of brothers declared that they would not follow John's leadership, John felt that it was best for him to resign from the eldership. At the time he announced his resignation, he also gave a rather short and concise word to the church about his concerns, which became the object of rebuttal by Ron and Kerry in their book.

The Five Points

Ron and Kerry used five points as *their* basis for speaking. Let us look at those five points and "consider seriously what the basis of [their] speaking is and whether this basis is trustworthy".

- 1) They felt that since they were members of the organic Body of Christ and that what took place in Anaheim was not merely a local matter but also a Body matter, that it was then something that concerned them and affected them in their locality, Irving, Texas. Yes, whatever happened in Anaheim, was not merely a local matter but a Body matter. But *what actually* did take place in Anaheim? What happened that brought John to the point of resigning from the eldership? Ron and Kerry didn't touch this important matter. Further, what was happening in other localities that alarmed John, and his fellow elders, that contributed to John's concern for Anaheim? This information is not documented in the book offered by the Irving brothers. They left out crucial background information in their book, which made John appear in the

worst light to their readers.

John's decision to resign did not happen overnight. There was a long process leading to his decision. He did have a strong basis to resign from the eldership, and had initially planned to continue in fellowship with the church just as a brother. Without this *strong basis*, he would have had nothing to share negatively and would not have resigned. Did Ron Kangas take the time to consider John's experience and the paradigm from which he spoke? Or did he just take the hard-core line established among the leadership in the local churches that condemns anything that *appears* to be an attack and anyone who *appears* to be attacking?

The following word by Witness Lee reveals the character trait needed to appropriate truth, that is, if someone actually is seeking the truth. He should be deep, not superficial, when representing other people, matters, or the church. The brothers from Irving did not have this trait during the writing of their book. They, therefore, came to quick, disparaging, and unthoughtful conclusions that were simply in line with the "one accord" movement in the churches.

Deep—Searching Downward and Digging Deeper, Not Being Superficial

The book of proverbs says that a foolish person is a shallow person. The observation of a shallow person is not accurate. His understanding of the church, people, matters, and things is superficial. Being deep is closely related to being thorough and serious. A shallow person always makes superficial observations, whereas a deep person always searches and digs when he looks at things.

We should not draw conclusions quickly concerning people or matters.
(*Character*, W. L. p. 22-23).

- 2) Ron and Kerry said John's speaking was printed and distributed, spread beyond his locality and brought to their attention. Since John's word concerned them, they responded by writing a book and distributing it in 1989. Likewise, *their* book came to my attention in 2002, and it concerns *me*. Because I believe their work was superficial and lacked a sufficient knowledge base for representing John Ingalls, I am responding to give the background and present the facts that they did not, or would not, offer.
- 3) Ron and Kerry alleged that John's speaking was actually an attack on Brother Lee and his ministry and on the churches and saints who continue to receive this ministry. In the five-year period I have researched and studied the events and concerns of the late eighties turmoil, I never had the impression John Ingalls was attacking anyone or anything. He certainly *was* addressing and responding to negative developments in the recovery and chose to speak according to his conviction with the saints and the churches.

I do have the registration within, however, that *he* has been attacked and maligned and misrepresented by a host of brothers, including brothers Ron Kangas and Kerry Robichaux. To tell the saints that John's speaking was an attack on Brother Lee and his ministry is a common *attack by LSM-oriented brothers* on those who differ from their view and who speak accordingly. Truth is not the object with brothers like Ron and Kerry. Whether or not one is speaking the truth on a given matter is not what concerns them. Their concern is the "one accord". They want others to line up with the leadership, right or wrong, "take the cross to their own opinion", "submit to the ruling ones" and "not make an issue about *anything*".

John Ingalls wasn't attacking, but was speaking according to his conviction of heart before the Lord and the saints. Do Ron and Kerry feel that they were *not* attacking John's person to assert otherwise in making the following evaluation of him and his speaking?: "*Since John's speaking is actually an attack on Brother Lee and his ministry and on all the churches and saints who continue to receive this ministry, we felt responsible to respond to this attack.*" Ron and Kerry did as LSM-trained brothers do: they protect the image of Brother Lee at any cost in order to preserve his ministry and maintain their "one accord".

- 4) Ron and Kerry said that John's speaking was subtle and deceptive and that they wanted to help *the saints discern the nature and character of his speaking*. But how can they help the saints when they don't tell them the whole story or know the whole story themselves? With insufficient knowledge, they themselves cannot discern *the nature and character of his speaking*.
- 5) Ron and Kerry felt that John's speaking presented a distorted picture of the Lord's recovery and of the Lord's up-to-date move in His recovery. They felt it was necessary to expose and refute "this distortion" and that a word of truth should be given. Having thoroughly considered both sides of the matter, it isn't John Ingalls who gave a distorted picture of the Lord's recovery; rather, he spoke honestly and faithfully. However, Ron Kangas and Kerry Robichaux have given a much distorted picture of John Ingalls in their analysis and response to John's speaking. I ask Ron and Kerry to consider the facts about John, the church in Anaheim, and the recovery in those years of turmoil, 1986-1989, and to be willing to adjust their concept accordingly.

CHAPTER TWO

(chapters correspond to Ron's book)

John's Opening Remarks

Ron and Kerry say, "*The basis of John's speaking here is not the Word of God, the leading of the Spirit, or the sense of the Body. The basis of his remarks on this occasion is his own personal, subjective feelings and opinions*" (p. 9). They say further that he presumed to be the "*spokesman for the recovery or for the church in Anaheim or for the elders of the church or for the saints*" (p. 9) Actually, John did speak according to his convictions, which were surely based on the Word of God, the leading of the Spirit, and according to the sense of the Body, since many felt as he did, not only in Anaheim but wherever John traveled.

As far as being a spokesman, why would John not speak out since he was indeed according to the Word, the Spirit's leading, and the sense that he and many others had in the Body? *Seven months before* John's resignation, John and Godfred Otuteye presented to the church in Anaheim similar points as John did at the time of his resignation. Some saints responded positively; some negatively, but the church was already familiar with the points John gave at the time of his resignation and he knew the feeling of the saints. Fellow elders Godfred and Al Knoch had the same sense and leading as John. They were in agreement with his fellowship, as were many in the church he represented. He *was*, therefore, a spokesman for others' concerns in Anaheim, as well for his own. (p. 13)

He also represented those in other places, speaking on their behalf at his resignation.

Conferences In Charlotte and Miami April 1988

On Easter weekend, April 1-3, 1988, the church in Charlotte, N. C. invited me to come and share the word of the Lord. I did so. Many saints representing the churches in North and South Carolina plus some from Virginia and Georgia gathered for the conference. I ministered to them concerning the Lord's word to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, mentioning nothing whatever of the problems we had encountered. We emphasized the need of coming back to the beginning, as the Apostle John emphasized in his ministry, back to Christ as the tree of life and back to our first love for Him.

A number of brothers in North Carolina – in Charlotte, Greensboro, Chapel Hill, and Raleigh – already had very much the same concerns as we had, and we fellowshipped with them outside the conference meetings regarding our situation in the work, the ministry office, and the churches. We also talked with Brother John Little, who came there from Nashville, about some of the present problems, and he was very open to us, agreeing at that time with all our concerns regarding the present situation in the work, the ministry office, and the churches. We were burdened to open to him since we had known him well for many years and wanted him to know how we felt. At the end of April 1988 I was invited to come to Miami, Florida, for a conference with the churches in Southern Florida. It was held April 29th through May 1st. I spoke there again on the Lord's word to the seven churches, but in a different way, this time emphasizing the practicality and spirituality of the local churches: the practicality being embodied in the local nature of the church, and the spirituality in the three matters of love, life, and light, so stressed in John's ministry. Concerning the practicality, I emphasized the need for local administration in every church balanced with mutual fellowship together among all the churches.

Further Conferences *May – June 1988*

During the months of May and June 1988 I was asked to minister in a number of places, in almost all of which I was burdened to share from the Lord's word to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. We emphasized the need to come back to the beginning, saying that the way for us to go on is to come back – back to the living person of Christ as the tree of life. We also spoke in some places concerning the need for local administration in the churches to preserve the Lord's headship as we did in Miami. Some saints who were in these conferences were disturbed because we were not speaking exactly the same things as Brother Lee concerning the "new way", although we certainly were not teaching anything different from God's economy, Christ and the church.

The brothers in Orange County, California, were desirous of having a conference and arranged for one meeting to be held in Long Beach (Friday night), another in Huntington Beach (Saturday night), and the last in Irvine (Lord's Day evening). This transpired over the weekend of June 3-5, 1988. The Lord's blessing was on these meetings as we spoke here locally the same as we had spoken in other churches elsewhere: coming back to the beginning, Christ as our unique Head and center, and local administration and universal mutual fellowship. In Irvine we also stressed the need of all the saints to feed richly on the Word of God for the building up of the church.

Attending the conference meeting in Irvine were Joseph Fung of Hong Kong and Paul Ma of Santa Cruz, California. It was the first time I had seen these brothers in years and I did not know just where they stood in regard to the concerns we had. They, on the other hand, did not know where I stood. They asked to have a time of fellowship with me the next day, Monday, June 6th, at which time I testified to them what we realized and passed through in recent months. They fully echoed our concerns. I was impressed to learn that Joseph Fung, as well as many others in the Far East had the same burden and realization as we had. This was an encouragement and strengthening.

The brothers in Anaheim wanted me to share the Word in a little conference there. This I did in two meetings, Saturday evening and the Lord's Day morning, June 18th and 19th. On Saturday evening we ministered from Ezra on leaving Babylon (which had been manifested in the confusion, division, and depression among us in Anaheim) and returning to Jerusalem to build the house of the Lord. There was a strong sense of the Lord's speaking and presence, and the sharings of the saints were excellent and very inspiring.

John Ingalls traveled and found out the feeling of the elders and saints in many places. He had fellowship with them in order to know their real situation and condition. Ron and Kerry were employees for LSM. They worked long hours to produce ministry-related materials for the churches. They did not have John's exposure to the churches or his function in the Body; therefore, they could not have the same feeling and opinion that he had. Based on John Ingalls' fellowship with others in the recovery and his sense within, he spoke at his resignation, voicing not only his concerns, but also that of many saints in the churches.

Opening Remarks continued

The Accusation that Our Practice Does Not At All Match Our Teaching

Ron and Kerry's keen intellects were very much engaged in their critique of John Ingalls. In their "careful scrutiny" they picked John's accusations apart, such as "Our practice does not at all match our teaching". Having more heart and more understanding of the essential message John was trying to convey would have helped Ron and Kerry in their judgment of him. But they cared for scrutinizing the letter of his word, rather than hearing his heart and his spirit. They said,

Please notice the *our* here. It clearly indicates that John is presuming to speak on behalf of the whole recovery, including all the churches, with all the saints. The word *practice* denotes the totality of the practices in the local churches; it refers to the whole of the practice in the Lord's recovery. Then we have the extremely crucial words *not at all*. These words mean exactly what they say; they are part of an absolute, universal, and exclusive statement, a statement that applies everywhere and at all times and that allows for no exceptions...Is it not evident that John's statement is far from accurate? Instead of saying that our practice has *not at all matched our teaching*, John could have said something more moderate and temperate. He could have said, "Our practice is deficient", or "certain of our practices have not been wholly in keeping with some of our teachings" (p. 10-11).

Yes, that would have been better. Sometimes we overstate things to make a point. Brother Lee was *always* doing this. *Always*. He made statements such as, "Nowhere in the recovery is there a proper vital group". Or, "There is not one case that anyone who has left the recovery has prospered spiritually". These are absolute statements, but to pick at the letter of his word to prove him wrong would be to miss his heart, his spirit, and the essential message he desired to convey. Ron and Kerry got carried away in their scrutiny. They over-scrutinized throughout their book. If they had transferred their scrutinizing exercise of the letter of John's word to engaging in a proper investigative exercise of John's burden, they would have understood John. John meant that he was concerned for our practice and this especially was so after having had much fellowship with other churches in the U. S. and having heard of serious problems overseas. His speaking as he did at his resignation was not as Ron and Kerry say in their book, "his personal views", as if he alone had these views. There was a consensus among many responsible brothers that our practice was seriously not in line with our teaching.

During the months of October and November 1987 **the elders in Anaheim met regularly with the other elders in Orange County.** We expressed to them our burden concerning the low condition of the churches and the need for the **revival of our vision and some of the basic things of life.** Others shared similar things.

...**A few days later** Benson desired to meet with some of the elders representing churches in the area. A lunch was arranged in a nearby restaurant to be followed by fellowship. Present at the meeting were **Benson, Dan Towle, Dan Leslie, Ken Unger, Ned Nossaman, Dick Taylor, Frank Scavo, Godfred Otuteye, Al Knoch, and John Ingalls.** During the fellowship the brothers began to question Benson concerning current events with the full-timers and the Living Stream Office and the prospects for the church's relationship with the full-timers. **The involvement of the LSM office and its management was a real concern. Benson found it very difficult to answer the brothers' questions and was alarmed at the attitude of the brothers toward the LSM office.** He remarked that the atmosphere in Orange County had changed, and he was bothered. We also were greatly bothered. J.I.

Factors of Problem and Concern

John Ingalls wrote about the factors of problem and concern that he and other brothers had in Southern California that: **1)** “the work and the ministry was being promoted and given a place of undue preeminence and centrality.” **2)** “the burden of the ministry to find a way to preach the gospel and increase the numbers dramatically led to an inordinate emphasis on numbers and increase, with a great stress on budgets, goals, plans, methods, and ways, coupled with predictions of millions being baptized over a period of several years... but the fervor was beginning to diminish and many saints were left languishing” **3)** “numerous examples of the growing influence and control of the LSM office over churches, elders, co-workers, and the full-time training in Taiwan were an intolerable and unscriptural situation”. **4)** “the aberrational speaking and activity in the FTTT was alarming... nothing more than the fact that Philip Lee was the administrator of the training... he was in daily fellowship with twenty-four of the trainers and leading ones who called and reported to him all activities (failure to do so resulted in an offense). The trainees were even told that Philip was administrating the training. His power and position were growing immeasurably”. **5)** “the matter of serious misconduct related to the personnel in the LSM office could smear the Lord's testimony and damage Brother Lee's ministry”.

John's statement, “Our practice does not at all match our teaching” had merit. All that is needed is an “ear to hear” and a heart to understand the heavy matters weighing on John, and on many others.

Opening Remarks continued

The Accusation that the Lord's Recovery Has Changed in Its Nature

Ron and Kerry say on page 11, “*With [John's] personal feelings as the basis, John says not only that none of our practices matches our teaching; he even goes so far as to say that the nature of the Lord's recovery has changed. 'I also began to realize,' John tells us, 'that the nature of what we call the Lord's recovery has changed'. Here John simply makes the accusation; he doesn't support it...If John persists in his view, having neither a change of mind nor of attitude, he may take himself out of the divine stream, the flowing of the Triune God, which he once so dearly cherished.*”

What flowing of the Triune God? There was dissension, division, and saints leaving the churches due to the change in nature that John refers to. There was no flow of the Triune

God. Brother Lee spoke to this matter again and again for several years, especially in elders' meetings, making statements, such as, "We all have to hate deadness, lukewarmness and barrenness. We must seek to be vitalized in desperation, considering this to be a matter of life or death"; "We may feel that we have been enjoying the Lord every day, but a tree is known according to its fruit. The real church life can be evidenced only by fruitbearing"; "As I have said before, the spirit of not shepherding and seeking others and being without love and forgiveness is spreading in the recovery everywhere. I believe that not having the Father's loving and forgiving heart and not having the Savior's shepherding and seeking spirit is the reason for our barrenness. I realize that you all work hard, but there is almost no fruit. The Lord says, 'By the fruit the tree is known' (Matt. 12:33), but we are a tree without any fruit." "Everywhere among us barrenness is very prevailing"; and "the Lord's recovery in the United States has come to a point where we cannot go on further without the shepherding." (Quotes from *A Word of Love*) These are representative examples of much more speaking along these lines **after the new way began, as well as before.**

The question is why were the churches in such a condition? John realized that there was really no flow, and he searched for the answers. He, and others, were not without spiritual discernment and began to address the idea that there had been a **change in nature** to the Lord's recovery.

Godfred

John relates a conversation he witnessed between Brother Lee and Godfred that begins to tell the story of the **change in nature.**

The next afternoon, Friday, August 26th, I joined Godfred and Al at Brother Lee's home. Godfred spoke strongly, asking Brother Lee first if he had spoken anything against us recently. He replied that he had not. Then Godfred reasoned with him: How is it that you speak against autonomy, considering that a problem, but you will not deal with the problems that we brought to your attention. Godfred spoke earnestly and impressively. He said, "**the center of the church should be Christ, but He has been replaced by you and your ministry.**" Brother Lee was touched by what Godfred said, and perhaps considering that what he had just alleged afforded some light for clearing up the problem, he said, "I like to hear that." I recall the scene vividly, and his words still echo in my ears. It seemed that this time Brother Lee appreciated the frank fellowship and was trying to warm up to us. But we could not seem to make any real progress. Brother Lee remarked that everything that had happened in Europe, which had caused so great a problem between the churches and the Living Stream Ministry was just a misunderstanding. After the meeting Godfred told us that he wanted to leave the eldership and was fully disgusted with the whole situation.

Two Senior Co-Workers From Taiwan

The following excerpt from John Ingalls' book explains what is meant by the recovery **changing in nature**, as expressed in a conversation John had with two senior co-workers from Taiwan. John was not merely giving his own personal views in his resignation talk, but the shared views that he had with senior co-workers and many elders and saints in the Lord's recovery. There was a feeling in the Body about the **change in nature.**

I would like now to record some of the comments made by Brother Jeng Guang Ming. He spoke as follows: "We co-workers in the past have not had genuine fellowship among us concerning any **questionable practices in the churches** due to the prevailing concept that we should have no opinion, but rather just listen and submit. Brother Lee has related his experience and attitude toward Brother Nee in order to **kill all opinions as well as all**

feelings and concerns. But our genuine fellowship is in sharing the feelings the Lord gives us, and in this **we discover the leading of the Holy Spirit.**

I very much treasure Acts 13, where the Holy Spirit spoke, “separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” I believe that the speaking of the Holy Spirit to the brothers there in Antioch must have been through the genuine fellowship of the feelings which the Holy Spirit Himself gave to them. The same thing occurred in Acts 15. **As long as the Holy Spirit speaks among us there will be no problem.** But we don't have today the leading of the Holy Spirit as in Acts 13 and 15, a leading in fellowship, a subjective leading manifested by each one speaking his own feeling before the Lord. **The plurality gives the Holy Spirit opportunity.** If we emphasize the one leadership so much how can the Holy Spirit have opportunity? The Spirit's leading in the Body is in the prayer and fellowship of all. **The kind of submission being practiced today kills the move of the Holy Spirit in the churches through the genuine fellowship among the saints.** We have no intention to rebel or overthrow Brother Lee. We have suppressed our feeling for many years, though we sensed there were many points of deviation. In Taiwan Brother Chu [Shun Min] and I had no such fellowship concerning the abnormal situation in the churches today as we now have. We feel that the genuine fellowship must be like that recorded in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, where the Lord did not refrain **from pointing out the negative aspects as well as the positive, the real situation.**

One basic item of the **change in nature** in the Lord's recovery is that it appears the Lord's work has become Brother Lee's work; **the churches have become Brother Lee's churches; and the Lord's workers have become Brother Lee's workers. All things have become personalized, and everything appears to require Brother Lee's approval to be legitimate.** He can acknowledge and he can also deny the validity of the Lord's workers, elders, and even churches. This concept has been injected to all the brothers and sisters, particularly those who have a heart for the Lord.

Brother Chu Shun Min then told me how that on April 1, 1988, he had a conversation with Brother Lee in the Bay Area. He presented a number of serious concerns to Brother Lee and asked him to bring all these things to the Lord. Brother Chu told me that Brother Lee listened quietly and passively to all his points (with one exception), making no comment, neither admitting nor denying. The exception was a point he made concerning Brother Lee's son, Philip Lee. In conclusion, Brother Chu told Brother Lee, **“All the sweet feeling we had in the past is lost. All the rest in our spirit is over.”**

I will mention just a few more comments made by Brother Chu. He said that he feels very sorry for the present state of things – he gave his whole life to this. He has received letters from elderly ones in Taipei that are full of blood and tears. There are very few elderly ones there who are not discouraged or withdrawn. The warfare now is fiercer than in Watchman Nee's day when the issue was that of leaving the denominations. We are at a critical juncture. We cannot be silent regarding the **change of nature** in the Lord's recovery. We should have no part in it. This is a day for further recovery. We need a new beginning to recover us back from the **change of nature** to the Lord's original intention. We must discard all the **changes of nature.** The main direction is to come out of the system; it cannot change. (Italics mine -ED)

Realizations

Previous to meeting with the two senior co-workers, John met with other brothers.

In those days I had further fellowship with Godfred and with some of the brothers we had contacted, with whom we had intimate fellowship through the years concerning the Lord's work. We realized that the spiritual condition of the churches throughout

the United States and in other places, generally speaking, was very poor, very low. We searched for the reason. **Something was radically wrong.** The Lord's blessing was not among us. Life was at very low ebb. In a number of places there was considerable discord and dissension, and instead of a steady increase in numbers, there was a steady decrease. **We began to realize then that there were practices and tendencies among us that we had never considered before.** And, we ourselves as well as others were responsible, having participated in these. But we had not seen clearly or realized previously what was being done. Thus **we began to come to some conclusions.**

I believe that the **first was that the ministry was being given a place above the churches. It was being too highly exalted and emphasized, so that it became imperative for every church now to manifest that they were "for the ministry" and to "serve the ministry"**. It was no longer, as we were often told, that the ministry was for the churches and that only the churches should be built up; rather the churches now should be for the ministry, and the ministry was being built up. We felt that we should voice such a concern to Brother Lee.

About the second week of October **we began to fellowship with Dan Towle**, an elder in the church in Fullerton and a trainer from the full-time training in Taipei, who was attempting to give direction and help to the fifty or sixty full-timers who had moved from Taipei to Orange County. To his great frustration, the full-timers were taken over by the LSM office and its management, and were charged to do construction and yard work over an extended period of time to the neglect of their gospel preaching. Dan had also heard some things concerning misconduct and irregularities related to the ministry office that greatly upset him, and he had serious concerns as we did for the Lord's recovery. **At one point he told me that he considered to resign from the work and to leave.** We confirmed his feeling that the situation was indeed serious.

Godfred, Dan, and I came together a few times, joined also by Ken Unger on a couple of occasions to fellowship about the situation and what should be done. Ken Unger, who was an elder in Huntington Beach, had himself also become very concerned. We conferred about our burden to speak with Brother Lee, mentioning a number of our concerns that involved aberration of truth and practice (p. 102).

To say that John was leaving **the flowing of the Triune God** if he continued in his direction was an erroneous perception. Serious problems that were stopping the flow needed to be addressed, and John did his best to do so. In 1977, Brother Lee shared,

"Do not say, as if it were a mere slogan, 'I am following the flow.' The real flow is the Lord Himself. How wrong it is to stir up a movement! That is an insult to the Lord. It is an offense to Him. There must never be a movement among us in the Lord's recovery. Do not use the word "flow" as a cloak to disguise a movement. When some of you speak of the flow, you actually mean a movement. **To create a movement and then to encourage others to follow it is to make a tremendous mistake** (*The Spirit and the Body*, p. 9, 1977).

John Ingalls was in the church in Los Angeles in the very beginning with Witness Lee in 1962. By 1989 at the time of his resignation he knew what the flowing of the Triune God was and what it wasn't. In the new way, though it was Scriptural, there was no flow. It was a movement that *featured a man and his ministry and a way*. A system developed *without* the "real flow of the Lord Himself". John tried to address those problems effecting the flowing of the Triune God, which he did experience in Los Angeles in the sixties and early seventies, with the church on a genuine ground of oneness in those years.

Abnormal Spiritual Perception?

Had Ron and Kerry considered what other members, besides John, were experiencing in the late eighties? and how they felt about aberration of truth and practice? and the change of nature in the recovery? John did not stand alone. Ron and Kerry, however, didn't appreciate or understand John's research, study, fellowship, and public evaluation, so they could only judge by their limited concept of him and his address to the church. They said,

Before we turn to John's eighteen numbered points, we need to draw the reader's attention to a striking feature of John's speaking on March 19, 1989 – abnormal spiritual perception. As indicated by the material in the transcript, John's perception of the situation in the Lord's recovery is abnormal, and his view is biased and distorted. Again and again, his words demonstrate the failure to perceive the true character of the things about which he is speaking. "He does not see the true character of a thing; yet, he considers himself clear." (Watchman Nee, *Spiritual Reality or Obsession*, p. 48) **John claims certain things to be facts that are not facts.** We believe that a **careful examination** of the content and implications of John's eighteen points will show that his spiritual perception of the condition and direction of the Lord's recovery is abnormal and unreliable and that the conclusions he draws from this perception are erroneous and unwarranted.

Again, Ron Kangas and Kerry Robichaux were Living Stream Ministry employees, working in Irving (also Anaheim). They were daily filled with exercise in writing and editing for printing and distribution. This was a major realm of their involvement in the recovery. They were Witness Lee loyalists through and through. He was their spiritual father, as well as employer. It didn't matter what Witness Lee did, or how he did it; they stood by him. As long as he was speaking and they were writing, etc., they were happy. John Ingalls was an elder in Anaheim and not active in the LSM work. LSM was a world to itself, and its world was growing. Its influence in the churches was also growing. This was of great concern to those with the least bit of spiritual perception, and it had very much to do with the **change in nature in the recovery, as well as to John's claims in his eighteen points.** John Ingalls relates from his own book what he and others perceived. His view is not "biased and distorted", but honest and forthright, a very normal, not abnormal, spiritual perception.

As has already been shared, the influence and control of the LSM office was a major concern. Here again is some of John's fellowship about the problem:

Another matter that concerned us greatly was the growing influence and control of the LSM office, (i. e. Philip Lee) over churches, elders, co-workers, and the full-time training in Taiwan. We had numerous examples of such an intolerable and unscriptural situation. With my own eyes I saw some leading ones reporting to Philip Lee what they were intending to share with a gathering of Orange County young people and ask if he thought that would be all right. I could hardly believe it. Was this the function of a business manager? When I reported this observation to some brothers who had coordinated with Philip Lee and associated with him, they laughed at me and said that that was very common. They were amused by my being startled by this discovery. Godfred even admitted later that he had done the same thing himself: he had suggested that before someone was chosen to lead a young people's conference, it should be checked out with Philip. Godfred fully repented of that. Dan Towle remarked that this was our "life-style". How far off we were!

Moreover, elders were encouraged to call Philip Lee regarding conferences and many affairs concerning the work and the churches in their areas, asking his advice and who should come to help them. A few places actually practiced this. There are a number of

instances of churches and whole areas being cut off by the management of the LSM office from the supply of literature and tapes due to some alleged offense of the elders, regardless of the suffering imposed upon the saints in those churches. When the elders repented in a manner satisfactory to the office, the ban was lifted. Some adjustments, we understand have been made in the administration of the LSM office, but at that time the situation was bad and worsening. The portent for the future was threatening. This was a genuine concern.

Are Ron and Kerry aware of the corrupting effect that Philip Lee brought into the recovery? Are they aware of the facts concerning him? John Ingalls was well aware. (See Appendix 2)

CHAPTER 3

1. The Accusation Concerning the Building up of the Ministry

Ron and Kerry say,

The charge is made [by John Ingalls] that *there has been a change of emphasis to the building up of the work or the ministry more than the local churches*. The charge is based on his interpretation of what he sees happening in the Lord's recovery today. The fact that it is based on his interpretation should be stressed at the outset, and his interpretation should be scrutinized carefully.

What John Saw Happening in the Recovery

Firstly, we should take note of what John Ingalls and others "saw happening in the recovery" with LSM, and what they, not just John, interpreted. The Living Stream Ministry had moved past its bounds and were no longer Witness Lee's "little office" for merely the preparation and distribution of LSM material. They were an entity that began to be promoted vigorously and that all the churches were to align themselves with for the building up of the ministry, which would be for the building up of the churches.

Even though there has been a positive result to this building up, there has also a negative outcome in the churches and a black blot on the track record of LSM. So there is both a positive result and a negative outcome to the emphasis placed on the building up of the ministry.

It is easy to look at and admire the positive result, but because there was a negative outcome also that affected the local churches, this needs to be examined, "carefully scrutinized". In 1989 Ron Kangas did not address the black blot on LSM's track record. With Ron Kangas looking only at the positive result, and John Ingalls observing the black blot and the negative outcome, their views differed, though it could be said that both views could be confirmed.

The Need To Be For The Ministry

LSM's Benson Phillips and Ray Graver went on a campaign to lift up Witness Lee and his ministry, and Philip Lee and the ministry office. One elder in Bellevue, Washington at the time proclaimed in a local church meeting "if you are not here for Witness Lee and his ministry, you might as well not be here". Such an attitude and spirit came into the recovery, and is still here today, although brothers don't usually make statements like this.

A statement made by an elder in San Diego expresses what most brothers and sisters feel. He said this amongst a handful of saints at a home meeting, referring to contacts. *"If someone*

isn't for the ministry, I don't want to waste my time with them". I myself approached a brother once and told him that a brother wanted to return to the church life, and I wondered what we could do toward him. He replied that he didn't think the brother was "for the ministry", which is a very familiar phrase used to describe someone who really is not good material for fitting into the church life. One must show that he is "for the ministry" in order to "fit in".

On page 51 of *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*, John Ingalls was criticized for saying that the churches now had to be *for* the ministry. There was every indication that the churches had to be *for* the ministry or be considered "dropouts" (Atlanta elders' conference, p. 34). There was a strong pressure placed on the elders and churches to line up with the ministry and the leadership of Brother Lee and Philip Lee. There is still pressure and expectation today along this line as exemplified in the One Publication proclamation given "to preserve the integrity of the Lord's ministry among us" for "a testimony of our oneness in the Body." John's main point was that the churches now had to be "for the ministry" in order to be in "one accord" with the churches and with a system that was being established.

The Ministry/Leadership

Inherent in being "for the ministry" was also being for Brother Lee's practical leadership. Leadership and ministry became synonymous. Churches all over the globe were to line up with the ministry/leadership of Witness Lee as the unique leader in the recovery. Now to say that a certain brother is *not* for "my ministry" meant this brother is "not for my leadership".

The local churches became strongly organized under the ministry/leadership of Witness Lee. A system was set in place and developed to the point, eventually, of issuing a Proclamation of having only One Publication in the recovery. Being amenable to One Publication is synonymous with being "for the ministry", the "unique New Testament ministry", that is, Witness Lee's ministry. This ministry is for "a testimony of our oneness in the Body".

One Publication Proclamation

Evidently, we have no way to express the oneness of the Body unless we line up with this "unique New Testament ministry", which is the ministry of Witness Lee. Our oneness is based on this ministry. The ministry of Brother Lee has been built up to such a point that a strong word has gone out to effectively limit publications in the churches to LSM-approved material only. Churches that do not observe the limiting proclamation *might* no longer be considered to be in the Lord's recovery one day. Such is the *negative* outcome to building up the ministry. Churches are cut off. People are cut off. A ministry is now pre-eminent. A person is all the time referred to. A person and his ministry is a base of our oneness. This is what John Ingalls and others saw then; and this is what the sense in the Body is today among many members. It is also what visiting brethren outside the recovery perceive to be the case.

A former elder, who came into the recovery in 1964 said, "It began with Christ and the church and life in the Spirit, and it ended up with a man and his ministry". He refers to what predominates; what is pre-eminent; what is stressed, even to the point of division.

The Apostle Paul

The church in Corinth, meeting on the ground of locality, received the ministry of Apollos, the ministry of Cephas, and the ministry of Paul. Paul did not tell them that they should drop Apollos and Cephas because of their inferior ministries; and he did not say that he had the unique New Testament ministry that they all were to be one with "for a testimony of the oneness" of the Corinthian believers. He pointed them to Christ, as the factor of their oneness. If Paul *stressed* his ministry as a factor of their oneness, that oneness would have been less than that of the Body of Christ.

It would be nice to try to lock up such a marvelous ministry as Brother Lee's as the factor of our oneness today, and such a oneness can exist, but this is not the oneness we see Paul care for in the New Testament. If Paul did that in Corinth, many people would have been cut off, and the church would have become a sect. But Paul did not stress that the saints had to be for his ministry. He cared for the church, the Body of Christ, as one of the ministers of the New Testament (albeit, the most prominent minister.) His ministry was simply for the church. The church didn't have to be *for his ministry*.

Promotions of the Ministry in Stuttgart

Five co-workers of Witness Lee, employed by LSM, made a trip to Stuttgart for their expressed purpose of bringing the church in Stuttgart under the control of the office of LSM. John Ingalls was well aware of the pressure placed on John So, Stuttgart and the churches in Europe to conform to the dictates of Philip Lee and LSM. John So shares his experience as the leading one in Stuttgart and in Europe.

Promotion of Philip Lee as "the Office"

Well, the question is this: I was accused here in *Fermentation* of pretending to be one with them, the LSM, but that really I was against them. Tonight let me say a word. I don't want to vindicate, but I just like to share at least the way we look at it. Everything has two sides. I'm sorry to say, it is not that I am pretending. It is because the LSM office really has a double standard. There is a public declaration that the office is only for the business side to print books, to duplicate tapes, and to send them out to serve the churches. But to my realization, there is another aspect expected of us. During the visit of these five brothers to Stuttgart, two of them stayed with me in my home, and these brothers began to fellowship with me concerning the office, that it is really brother Philip Lee and that brother Philip Lee is the closest and most intimate co-worker of Witness Lee, and that I need to get into the fellowship with him, and that our brother, Witness Lee, needs his son. And after almost every meeting in Stuttgart, they made a long-distance call to the office to report everything that is happening. To the office! The report went to the office, to Philip Lee.

I was, in short, expected to do the same. I told the brothers in a very good way—we were not fighting—I said, "Brothers, I'm sorry, in short, I just cannot do that. You have the grace to do it, that's fine, but I just cannot do that." I told the brothers maybe some other German brothers, like Jorn Urlenbac could do it. I was told, No, no, no, you are the right person to do it. I said, Thank you, but I can't do it. This is what I realized later was the cause of many problems that we in Stuttgart began to experience with the LSM. A report had gone back to Philip Lee that I refused to do what the brothers were doing. Looking back, this is what caused a serious problem with him.

Chaos in England Due to Promotions

John So shares about the effects of LSM's building up the ministry in England. The ministry was being built up in England, but at a cost to the churches.

England in Upheaval 1986

What happened in England really shocked me. You know, in the summer of 1986 about twenty-five saints from England went to the Living Stream office in Irving to serve. And I encouraged them to go. Can you imagine that? They were there for approximately two months. When they came back, they began to say strange things. They said that Stuttgart is resisting and John So is resisting the activities of the ministry. And that John So is controlling. And that we are withholding tapes of the

Living Stream Ministry and not distributing them to other churches. My goodness. The whole church in Blackpool and all the churches in England became chaotic. Who caused this chaos? Where did that storm come from? Certainly not from Stuttgart. It fermented rather, I think, in Irving. There was a conspiracy in Irving to destroy us. Who was conspiring? Me? Was I conspiring or rebelling? I was in Taipei to try to help. And I, by accident, went back to Stuttgart and found that trouble had come in to our locality, as well as to the churches in England.

A brother from England then came and told me about what was happening. This brother, Bill Kirkham, had written a letter full of respect to Witness Lee. It was a five-page letter written November 11, 1986 about matters that had happened during that year. Yes, Witness Lee is right to say that something was fermenting, but the question is: What is fermenting? Who is conspiring? All of a sudden they drop a bomb in England. Listen, Witness Lee said himself that he begged me to go to Taipei, okay? He begged me to go to Taipei. And I went.

And then when I was in Taipei, they dropped the bomb in England against me and against the church in Stuttgart, and against the publishers in Germany, saying that since they're not cooperating, the blessing has not come to England. The LSM, therefore, set up a brother in England. This one brother really was the most problematic one in the whole of England as the head. He also testified here in *Fermentation*. I'm going to spare him tonight, okay? I don't want to be a bad guy telling everybody.

LSM's Forceful Push into the Southeast Churches

The building up of the ministry also was taking painful effect in the Southeast churches, where the elders were expected to be *subject* to the leadership of forceful LSM workers, rather than those workers to the elders in that region in proper local church coordination. Bill Mallon shares in a letter to Brother Lee some examples of the problems they incurred in the churches in the Southeast and the pressures applied by LSM that were "*coming in to subdue, control, and take over the very recovery of the Testimony of Jesus for which we have labored and fought, and in the process, trampling under foot the essential, intrinsic flow of mutual fellowship among the brothers.*"

Bill Mallon Letter to Brother Lee

(Excerpts)

December 16, 1987

My dear Brother Lee,

To write the following is extremely embarrassing, and to touch certain matters is very loathsome. In order to disassociate myself from any hint of self-interest, self-serving ambition, self-righteousness, and self-vindication, I feel inwardly pressed to reiterate the removal of myself from the work; otherwise, I could never feel the liberty to delineate the facts, which I will try to do as accurately as I can. Let us now come immediately to these facts, each of which I will summarize briefly and add a few comments.

In the Spring of 1986, the Living Stream office purchased a house near Davison campus, just north of Charlotte. Their fellowship with the brothers was not only withheld, but the brothers were also censured as being unfit for coordination and too slow for cooperation. Roger Fiero was selected by the office to take charge as a full-time worker, a brother of whom everyone in the South was extremely reluctant. I suggested that we should go slow with this brother, but upon hearing this, the office deliberately and hastily purchased the house and installed

this brother into position, flagrantly declaring that when the Lord moves, He moves quickly, that time is important and the door is now open to North Carolina, and that we have only a little time to be faithful. They utilized this brother and went on a promotional campaign to push this project by means of video tape.

Later, at an Irving training, the office called on the carpet brothers who represented the churches in the South. With video cameras trained on them, the office reprimanded them for not financially supporting Roger, berated them for not being one with the ministry, and pressured them for monthly pledges under a cloud of intimidation. In fact, the brothers were asked to write out checks totaling \$6,000 right on the spot for his personal debts, and then to pay monthly amounts for his pledged support. But before this time, not once was the opportunity for fellowship given to the brothers, for they were not aware of this matter. Afterwards, when Tom Cesar asked Ray Graver for an explanation for the seriousness of the meeting, Ray sharply answered, “we do what we are told!” This incident is contrary to your fellowship with the churches in that the full-timers should be approved by the churches. (Recently, it was discovered that Roger had received double, overlapping support for a few months after this training from both the office and the churches—what a bungled mess!)

Several months later, Roger Fiero was manifested to be the wrong brother, because of such weaknesses as fabricating stories and practicing opportunism. Once Tom Cesar and John Little called the office about problems he was causing; they were accused of an impure heart, being not supportive of the work on Davison campus. Later, Tom was told that the ministry never makes a mistake!

Although the brothers in the South are not perfect, having many weaknesses, they nevertheless attempt to run backwards in order to be in one accord, but the office fails to give them the opportunity of fellowship to demonstrate their oneness. The principals from the office who are involved in these affairs are Philip, Benson, and Ray (I hesitate to mention these dear ones by name, but please allow me this liberty for the sake of honesty). Much embarrassment, confusion, harassment, and demoralization resulted from their attitude and behavior. On June 11, 1986, during the time in your home when you fellowshipped with me, you identified the problem in every region as having the deficiency of the intrinsic fellowship of the one accord, but in this case, it is not the region, but the office who violates this principle and practice. It takes both the giving and receiving sides to release the intrinsic flow of mutual fellowship.

A few months ago, after Bob Ellis returned from Taipei, he gave this admonition to the elders at a meeting of elders from the South: Turn everything over to the office and the ministry; Philip and Brother Lee have big plans for this area; it is imperative for us to give our coordination to Philip and the office, and they need evidences that we will do anything they want; we have to coordinate with Philip, and if Philip beats us to the ground, we have to learn to get up and come back to him, for he has seen Benson and Ray beaten to the ground and they have gotten up and come back.

Is it too much for me to make this honest assumption: Is the one accord which the office promotes the one accord of fellowship, or is it the one accord of lining up with the office? Let me strongly declare that the brothers in the South are committed to do anything and everything in their power to cooperate with any burden you, Brother Lee, may have, but why this harangue?

While I have demonstrated the grace to rectify any issue with the office, nonetheless, the office has made a quarrelsome issue over my personal notes on “the-one accord” training which were simply copied for the situation as it existed in Miami, but were unfortunately

circulated more widespread than I had expected. Why was the matter of these harmless notes inflamed with such furious indignation that this became like a major court case requiring overbearing action? Did anyone consider how delicate and tenuous the Miami situation was, and that to withdraw my notes might be erosive and repercussive? Was this incident taken presumptuously as rivalry and considered to be competitively embarrassing to the office? If so, how ridiculously absurd! Also, was this little instance utilized to make me a public example so as to undermine my service in the South (I heard that Ray Graver's secret motive for telling Philip was "to do me in"? Please know that I am willing to bend over backwards to comply with the requirements of the Living Stream, but Philip's second letter seemed unduly warranted, insisting on demands that were oppressive to my mind and spirit as well as chilling to my function and my service.

Brother Lee, although I have written this letter, it does not take away one iota from the deepest appreciation I have for the concern and care both you and Sister Lee have shown for me, my health, and my family over the 24 years that I have been in the recovery. Yes, I do remember how we have worked together – first, shoulder to shoulder for 10 years in Los Angeles, and then from a distance in New York, Atlanta, and Miami for 14 years—and how we have fought many battles together for the Lord and His recovery. Yes, we can testify that we never had any personal trouble between us for these 24 years. Notwithstanding, and I know we both mutually agree, the problem both you and I should face together is beyond the personal and beyond personalities. The very first step in having love, care, and concern for others is to 1-i-s-t-e-n! I earnestly hope you will not take this letter and misapply it to mean that a problem exists between us. A thousand times "no"! But the situation as defined in this letter demonstrates a much deeper and broader problem. Both of my letters reveal the insidious pressures of a menacing hierarchy in all of its ramifications, coming in to subdue, control, and take over the very recovery of the Testimony of Jesus for which we have labored and fought, and in the process, trampling under foot the essential, intrinsic flow of mutual fellowship among the brothers.

Now I wish to conclude this long letter. You will never know of the intensity of my consternation. I have suffered a great dilemma over this matter of speaking with you about the affairs surrounding the office. You probably do not realize how much of a promotional campaign that went on for the office, which would correspond to a political campaign. What compounded the problem and prevented me from coming to you is that Philip, being your very own son, was positioned into a very prominent place of the work. A message you gave in Anaheim, on April 18, 1983, entitled *Practical Talks to the Elders # 6* --- "Avoiding Family Entanglements" [see pp. 128-129—Ed]: Here you testified that Watchman Nee never brought his relatives into the church leadership or into the work. I can now see the wisdom of this, because in your case, I say this kindly, to have Philip established into such a prominent place of the work has frustrated and hindered transparent fellowship between you and the workers as well as between you and the churches. In my case I agonized long as to what to do. Finally, I decided to withdraw from the work, thus giving me the basis for writing a letter to you indicating some signals, hoping you could see that these signals are symptomatic of a more fundamental root, as I have attempted to explain above.

Finally, I believe that a kind of blind loyalty has been promoted, which issues into a propensity to obstruct truthfulness and single-hearted faithfulness. Blind loyalty is very much of the soulish, natural life. It blinds us to honesty and reality, leads us down a narrow and false pathway, and protects our self-serving ambitions from challenge and criticism. Honesty opens ourselves to grow in wisdom and effectiveness. May we lay ourselves open to the deepest challenge that is called upon us in this hour until we transcend and transform the natural.

I apologize for the lengthiness of this letter and its frankness. This letter is not meant to be judgmental or cruel. My motivation for writing it is to extend myself to you, for the purpose

of nurturing you for our spiritual growth, just as you have always done so in the past. May His prevailing blood cover us, and His sufficient grace supply us.

Always respectfully yours as a faithful brother in Christ,

William E. Mallon (Please see Witness Lee's response, Appendix 4.)

LSM Ascendancy

The building up of the ministry, honestly speaking, caused turmoil and division in the late eighties. This was not the positive result that Ron Kangas speaks of in chapter two of his book. While so many members suffered, Ron did not suffer with them. To brother Ron, to Brother Lee, and to the other LSM brothers, it seems that the end justified the means to gain their objective for LSM ascendancy in the recovery among all the churches.

CHAPTER 4

2. The Accusation Concerning Uniting The Churches Around a Leader And An Organization

Brother Ron Kangas says in chapter three of his book, "This charge actually encompasses three smaller charges. The strongest of the three is, of course, that which concerns *a certain leader and organization*, but we also wish to deal with the charges concerning *a great effort and promotion* and *the uniting of the saints and the churches*."

Brothers and sisters, again it needs to be noted that there was a great difference between John Ingalls' environment and that of the Irving brothers. John Ingalls learned from his environment. Just as Ron Kangas did not have John Ingalls' environment in Anaheim, he did not have the experience of John So and the brothers in Europe. The following letter shares about some of the aspects of the *negative outcome* I have spoken of concerning the building up of the ministry. It also has to do with the inexplicable use of an errant son, who wreaked havoc in the churches of the Lord's recovery.

Letter of Disassociation *John So and nine churches in Europe* 1989

Dear brother Witness Lee,

It has come to our attention recently through several witnesses that gross immorality and some other sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:11 have been committed by your son Philip Lee (who is identified as your Ministry Office) on more than one occasion over a long period of time. This deeply disturbs us. It grieves us even more that you and some of your close co-workers were aware of the situation and yet not only tolerated it but covered it up. What is worse is that, while this was happening, you and your co-workers were promoting and exalting him to the extent that he was able to intervene in the churches' affairs in recent years. The peak of this promotion was evident at your elders' training in Taipei in June 1987. Some of your co-workers were not only themselves under the influence and control of Philip Lee, but were also openly bringing elders and young people of many local churches to come under the same influence and control in your name and for your sake. The five brothers whom you and your Office sent to Europe in your place in May 1986 were trying to do the same here. Our young people who went to your training in Taipei have also testified of the same.

Before God, before the brothers and sisters in the local churches, before the Christian public, and for the sake of the Lord's testimony, we are compelled by our conscience to fully disassociate ourselves from such sins and behaviour in your work.

Ron shares, "The charge [John Ingalls] makes is that there is a great promotion to unite the saints and the churches around Brother Lee and some organization he controls. We suppose that he is referring to the frequent recommendations of his ministry made by the saints. But are these declarations and recommendations in and of themselves an evil? Is it wrong in and of itself to declare support for the ministry and further to recommend the ministry to others? Apparently John and those who have been drawn after him feel that it is. We, however, feel that there would be a problem only if the ministry being supported and recommended was deviant from God's economy as revealed in the Bible.

From John So's disassociation letter to Witness Lee a more careful observation is made. The moral character of the person representing the ministry office was "deeply disturbing" to John So and the brothers in Europe. "It grieves us even more that you and some of your close co-workers were aware of the situation and yet not only tolerated it but covered it up." Does Ron realize this took place? Brother Lee did not deny that this did take place.

Benson Phillips admitted that a sister told him about Philip Lee's moral misconduct. He was the top promoter of the ministry office, yet, when John Ingalls brought up with Benson the matter of Philip's immorality, Benson said that he already knew and became angry with John for trying to spread this information from Anaheim to Irving, even though it was an LSM matter, and a matter that affected Irving and all the churches associated with LSM..

John So shared further,

What is worse is that, while this was happening, you and your co-workers were promoting and exalting him to the extent that he was able to intervene in the churches' affairs in recent years.

Does Ron agree with this intervening work of Philip Lee, who's said function was to be limited to that of manager of Witness Lee's "little office?" Besides his usurpations of elders, his violations of principles of oneness in the Body of Christ, and the exercise of his evil temper around the saints, Philip Lee was an immoral person acting as manager of LSM. Top elders and co-workers answered to him and came under his sway and sphere of influence. His relationship with the elders corrupted them. His relationship with sisters in LSM corrupted them. It was a huge mistake to hire him. It was also a huge mistake not to fire him (earlier). His leadership relationship with his father damaged Brother Lee and spread corruption throughout the recovery. Does Ron understand this as the facts of our history? And, would he still say the ministry "being supported and recommended" was appropriate?

Brother Ron stated that there would be "*a problem with the promotions only if the ministry being supported and recommended was deviant from God's economy as revealed in the Bible.*" That concept falls short of recognizing the inherent pitfalls with Philip involved. Ron fails to take care of *how* the ministry was being supported and promoted. Any work carried out in the flesh could also cause problems (and di) no matter how noble the cause. Consider the following examples of this.

Examples of Problems with the Promotions

"In all the years of the Lord's recovery in Europe, we have never had any shadow of division between here and Germany, but now we are hearing things that will cause such a division." _ *Bill Kirkham on the trouble brought to England by LSM promotions*

Here are comments by John So regarding a letter Brother Lee wrote that addressed nothing in response to England's expressed written concerns about the LSM office in England: He talked about his itinerary and the progress of the LSM movement John So says, "...that is all that [Brother Lee] did to clear up the situation in England. When the brothers in England read [his] letter, they thought, what is this? How are we going to clear up with that letter all the divisions and problems and what-not caused by the LSM office in England. You just tell me. You judge. How can the brothers use that letter to clear up anything? When we read that letter, we thought, oh my goodness, what is this all about? What can we do? The brothers were feeling, 'I give up, I give up.'" – *John So on the divisions and problems caused by LSM promotions in England.*

- "Several months before the door knocking training the English-speaking saints in the Church in Rosemead were led by John Kwan to go out door-knocking. Often, the Lord's Day meeting was cancelled. There were divisions and complaints everywhere." – *David Wang on one of several examples of following strong promotions for Witness Lee and his ministry office that led the church in Rosemead into division and disassociation with LSM.*

- "Since the start of the so-called New Way and the System Reform, serious division and confusion occurred among the saints. This happened firstly among English-speaking saints, then among Chinese-speaking saints. Anyone who hoisted the emblem of the ministry could do whatever he pleased and the elders were rendered helpless." – *David Wang, an elder, on LSM promotions in Rosemead.*

"At the beginning, we were expecting that [Francis Ball] came here to help the local church, especially the English-speaking saints. If he would come to Rosemead with the burden to take care of the church and shepherd the saints, he should first of all visit the saints and spend time to observe the saints and to realize their situation and needs. He should meet with the serving ones and pray with them looking to the Lord for leading. Regrettably, he disappointed all the saints. The first Lord's Day after his arrival, he gave a message on following a man, meaning to follow Witness Lee. Isn't this the spirit of division and parties which we see in the Church in Corinth which resulted in the Apostle Paul's condemnation? Due to Francis Ball's message, anger was stirred up in the meeting. Most of the saints were already unhappy. He should have had some feelings about the reactions of the saints. The way Francis Ball delivered his message was not accidental or a mistake. After that, his behavior and actions proved his intentions. These included: contact with the ministry station in dealing with the so-called dissenters, locking up the meeting hall, and forcing the saints to go to Anaheim's ministry meetings, to express his absolute oneness with "the ministry". This is concrete evidence that Francis Ball came to Rosemead with the mission to force the church to submit to "The Ministry of Witness Lee" using highhanded tactics. It was not only against our intention to invite him to Rosemead, but also contrary to the vision which we have seen." – *David Wang*

- "Commencing with your arrival here in The Church in Rosemead, you, along with both your attitude and actions, have been a constant and increasingly great offense to the majority of the saints meeting here as The Church in Rosemead. What you have consistently espoused and expressed in both words and actions has irreparably damaged the already existing fragile stability and autonomy of The Church in Rosemead (which came about as a result of problems that had arisen through the actions of John Kwan with respect to his apparently secret and subtle instigation of the unscriptural and unrighteous removal of Donald Hardy from the eldership of the Church in Rosemead by you and other "co-workers" of the "ministry"). You and your continued presence here have brought about and sustained the complete polarization and division of the brethren meeting here as The Church in Rosemead." – *David Wang on Francis Ball and his divisive work in Rosemead.*

“Benson and Ray, as well as others, promoted Philip Lee, proclaiming everywhere that Philip is Witness Lee’s closest co-worker, that Brother Lee has no one with as much wisdom, energy, and insight as Philip Lee, that Philip is Witness Lee’s choice regardless of his anger and abuse of the saints, that everyone must submit and contact Philip Lee and/or the office—such audacious promotions are obviously symptoms of a disease.” – Bill Mallon on LSM’s divisive work in the Southeast through the promotions and recommendations of Witness Lee and his son

These are a few representative examples of the *negative outcome* of inordinate promotions of Witness Lee and the ministry office.

The Crusades

During the Crusades, it can be said that the Christian invaders had a noble cause and that they had an overall positive result. But the legacy left by the crusaders creates a very negative image of Christians in the minds of people everywhere. It has been a source of negative reference to Christians to this day – not for deviance from the Bible in teaching – but certainly in their living. This anti-testimony of God has been a stumbling block and a sore spot to Muslims, who until in recent years, found “no church authority” admitting to the wrongs and atrocities of the Crusades. (In fact, Pope John apologized not only for the Crusades, but also for the moral deviance of priests that has brought shame and anguish to the Catholic Church.)

Campaigns For LSM

The campaigns that LSM went on had a similar effect with people. “The ministry being supported and recommended was *not* deviant from God’s economy as revealed in the Bible”, Ron said, but there was still a huge problem with the promotions. They caused turmoil and division.

The LSM’s occupying agenda inspired John So to speak out and explain by analogy the occupation of the church ground by Witness Lee and his ministry. John likened the forceful movement of LSM into various localities to the Japanese invasion of the Philippines in WWII (p. 73, *FPR*). The concern of LSM was not for the local ground and the keeping of the oneness with the elders and the churches, as LSM moved into localities to set up shop. Their concern was for their “big plans” (p. 23).

No Accountability

With no accountability shown by any “church authority” for the “gross immorality” of Philip Lee; the co-workers’ tolerating and covering it up; their “promoting and exalting him” anyway; his intervening in “the churches’ affairs”; and Brother Lee’s non-response to these concerns of theirs, John So and the European brothers wrote their letter of disassociation, listing their observations of “uniting the churches around a leader and an organization”, saying, “the peak of this promotion was evident at your elders’ training in Taipei in June 1987. Some of your co-workers were not only themselves under the influence and control of Philip Lee, but were also openly bringing elders and young people of many local churches to come under the same influence and control in your name and for your sake. The five brothers whom you and your Office sent to Europe in your place in May 1986 were trying to do the same here. Our young people who went to your training in Taipei have also testified of the same.”

Where control is exercised, there is a sense of an institution, or organization existing.

If he is honest, Ron Kangas cannot deny the facts of our history. He can only try to keep them buried as other brothers have been doing for years. The accusation concerning uniting the churches around a leader and an organization is valid.

Making Light of the Promotions

Ron Kangas made light of the promotions, as did Benson Phillips and Ray Graver.

Ron said in his book, “Is it wrong in and of itself to declare support for the ministry and further to recommend the ministry to others?” (p. 24). Was it wrong in and of itself to bring the gospel to Muslim-controlled countries during the Crusades? Ron misses the point of what was wrong. Benson and Ray said, they didn’t “think the promotions were so wrong.” This was their lack. John Ingalls relates a talk he had with Brother Lee who did feel their promotions were wrong: “*At this juncture, he [Brother Lee] said, the problem of Philip Lee came in and made the clouds thicker. If the brothers were stronger, Philip Lee could never have come in. Benson Phillips’ and Ray Graver’s promotion of Philip Lee was wrong.*” (p. 113)

Minoru and Godfred

He [Minoru Chen] also referred to Godfred’s apology for participating in certain promotions, which, he said, took place mainly in 1986. (He was alluding to the promotion of the LSM office and Philip Lee.) He said that he wanted to amen what Godfred had shared and declared that there was an excessive amount of this promotion, thereby bringing the saints into confusion and despondency, and the church into suffering. He also wanted to ask the forgiveness of the whole church for his part in this very matter. – John Ingalls (p. 130)

Minoru and Godfred apologized for their part in the promotions. Al Knoch and John Ingalls, as elders in Anaheim, apologized for their part in the promotions, but Ron Kangas, Kerry Robichaux, Benson, and Ray did not have this sensitivity.

Ron, Benson, and Ray Today

In the late eighties, there was a strong pressure placed on the elders and churches to line up with the ministry and the leadership of Brother Lee and Philip Lee (the office). This change was led by Benson Phillips and Ray Graver. There is still pressure and expectation today along this line, as exemplified in the One Publication proclamation given “to preserve the integrity of the Lord’s ministry among us” for “a testimony of our oneness in the Body.” This is the highest promotion of the ministry that the churches are encouraged to comply with. Ron, Kerry, Benson, and Ray are strong promoters of the proclamation and remain grossly insensitive to the driving wedge of division that such promotions produce.

CHAPTER 5

3. The Accusation Concerning Conforming The Churches To The Burden Of The Ministry And Making Them Identical

In this chapter Ron said, “John Ingalls charges the churches with exercising *much pressure with full expectation that all the saints and the churches will conform to the burden of the ministry and be identical with one another in full conformity of practice, to carry it out*”.

In the last paragraph of the chapter, Ron says,

When all is said and done, it is difficult to point the finger at anyone and say that this one has pressured the saints and the churches. Further, when one stops to consider the expectations that John speaks against, one finds that one expectation is not so bad and is in fact desirous according to the New Testament and that the other is not an expectation that exists at all. Over these matters he has taken such drastic steps. In our view, no other charge made by John Ingalls illustrates so clearly how petty the issues are that motivate his actions.

Ron felt that John Ingalls was being petty, again Ron being light about a serious concern that John and many co-workers and saints had in the recovery. The key word that John used here is *pressure*. Leaders that apply too much pressure in the churches might cause division. Ron Kangas' statement below shows how far away Ron was from the reality of understanding and appreciating John's accusation.

Is "much pressure" being exerted by the co-workers to make the saints and the churches conform to the burden of the ministry and to be identical in practice? Hardly so. Indeed there have been some co-workers who have gone out to share with the churches what the burden of the ministry is and how to carry out that burden by means of many helpful practices. But was pressure ever exercised? Did they ever threaten the churches into conformity? Did they ever tell any church that if it did not conform there would be serious consequence? Absolutely not! In fact, as we have mentioned before, there was always a warm reception to the coming of the co-workers, even to the extent that in one place several churches wrote a letter attesting to the profit they gained from the time with them. This place now says that they were being controlled through this visit.

From what has already been shared about Europe, the Southeast and Rosemead, we can discern the kind of spirit LSM had in their endeavor to build up the ministry. Witness Lee was not *unaware* of the pressures to conform to the burden of the ministry that were being applied by his LSM representatives. Reports came to him, but he chose not to act, since his objectives were actually being accomplished.

LSM Sister

One sister wrote an eleven-page letter to him, describing the pressures on localities and saints being applied by LSM. As an employee working in the office of the Living Stream Ministry, she had day to day exposure to the interferences that were being encountered by dear saints, elders, co-workers, and churches in places around the recovery. She had been troubled to the extent of writing to Brother Lee to express her concerns of ill-treatment the saints were receiving in different places at the hands of the LSM. She and her husband, who was an elder in Huntington Beach, went to Brother Lee to read him the letter, and as she began to read Brother Lee cut her off soon after she started, and he took over and dominated the time, sharing his own burden about "the Lord's move." She was very discouraged, but Brother Lee granted her another visit to him with her husband at her husband's request, and again as she began to read, Brother Lee stopped her, before she could get through half a page. He then dominated the remainder of the time with his own burden concerning "the Lord's move" on the earth, not showing interest in her report of the damaging pressures placed on the saints and churches. That was this sister's last contact with Brother Lee, and with the church.

England

Reports came to Brother Lee from England in 1986, describing the upheaval that occurred when pressures to conform to the burden of the ministry were exercised. John So shares,

What happened in England really shocked me. You know, in the summer of 1986 about twenty-five saints from England went to the Living Stream office in Irving to serve. When they came back, they began to say strange things. They said that Stuttgart is resisting and John So is resisting the activities of the ministry. And that John So is controlling. And that we are withholding tapes of the Living Stream Ministry and not distributing them to other churches. My goodness. The whole church in Blackpool and all the churches in England became chaotic. Who caused this chaos? Where did that storm come from? Certainly not from Stuttgart. It fermented rather, I think, in Irving [Philip Lee, Benson, Ray were all in Irving - Ed]. There was a conspiracy in Irving to destroy us. Who was conspiring? Me? Was I conspiring or rebelling? I was in Taipei to try to help. And I, by accident, went back to Stuttgart and found that trouble had come in to our locality, as well as to the churches in England.

A brother from England then came and told me about what was happening. This brother, Bill Kirkham, had written a letter full of respect to Witness Lee. It was a five-page letter written November 11, 1986 about matters that had happened during that year. Yes, Witness Lee is right to say that something was fermenting, but the question is: What is fermenting? Who is conspiring? All of a sudden they drop a bomb in England. Listen, Witness Lee said himself that he begged me to go to Taipei, okay? He begged me to go to Taipei. And I went. And then when I was in Taipei, they dropped the bomb in England against me and against the church in Stuttgart, and against the publishers in Germany, saying that since they're not cooperating, the blessing has not come to England. The LSM, therefore, set up a brother in England. This one brother really was the most problematic one in the whole of England as the head.

The Southeast

Bill Mallon shares with Brother Lee an example of many pressures in the Southeast churches to conform to the burden of the ministry.

A few months ago, after Bob Ellis returned from Taipei, he gave this admonition to the elders at a meeting of elders from the South: Turn everything over to the office and the ministry; Philip and Brother Lee have big plans for this area; it is imperative for us to give our coordination to Philip and the office, and they need evidences that we will do anything they want; we have to coordinate with Philip, and if Philip beats us to the ground, we have to learn to get up and come back to him, for he has seen Benson and Ray beaten to the ground and they have gotten up and come back.

Is it too much for me to make this honest assumption: Is the one accord which the office promotes the one accord of fellowship, or is it the one accord of lining up with the office? Let me strongly declare that the brothers in the South are committed to do anything and everything in their power to cooperate with any burden you, Brother Lee, may have, but why this harangue?

Rosemead

The church in Rosemead enjoyed fellowship, meeting on a ground of oneness in their locality, and they were one with all the churches till the pressures applied by LSM to conform them to the burden of the ministry brought division into the church. David Wang shares,

Most of the original saints in the Church in Rosemead moved here from Elden Hall of the Church in Los Angeles. In 1974, there were less than one hundred saints left in Elden Hall after the migration to Anaheim. They were greatly blessed by the Lord for the saints were in one accord. In April 1982, a parcel of land, where the meeting hall in Rosemead is now situated, was purchased. The construction of the meeting hall began in July 1983,

and was completed in February 1984. The attendance increased to two hundred fifty because the saints were in one accord in the gospel, coordination of service, and there was harmonious building up of the church. In 1985 we began outreach. On January 13, thirty saints from Rosemead began to meet in Hacienda Heights. On March 3, several saints from Rosemead went to meet in Torrance. On December 1, ninety plus saints originally from the Church in Rosemead began to meet in Alhambra and raised up the Lord's testimony there. Brother Abraham Chang had personally reported to brother Witness Lee that he had never seen any church among the churches with as much blessing by the Lord as the Church in Rosemead for the genuine and sweet oneness and coordination there.

The Church in Rosemead began to suffer heavy trials in early 1986. This situation reflected that the relation between the work and the church was very abnormal. The matter in the Church in Rosemead is a typical "symptom" and just the tip of the iceberg. The ministry work is for the church. The church should not be for the ministry work. That is in accordance with the principle in the Scriptures. Unfortunately, things have gone the wrong direction and men have tried their best to let the work control the churches. "Authority" has been emphasized. The saints are required to follow a person without any questions. This is definitely against the principle in the Bible. I absolutely believe that today there would not be the so-called "Rosemead Incident" if the abnormal situation never happened (from *A True Account*)

Francis in Rosemead

Francis Ball was only called to Rosemead after the unscriptural and unrighteous removal of Don Hardy from the eldership in Rosemead. The brothers who at first received him had no idea of the pressures he would bring to the saints to conform them to the ministry. David Wang and other Rosemead elders wrote a letter to him, saying,

With respect to your attitude, which is clearly evident by all the above listed deeds and actions, it has simply reflected your position as an insensitive, hardhearted, stiff-necked, hardened, deceived, and deceitful "co-worker" to a possibly well-intentioned extra-local individual [Witness Lee] rather than one who genuinely cares for and seeks the welfare of the local brothers and sisters meeting here as the Church in the city of Rosemead. You have made it absolutely clear that your priority is the goals and activities of this extra-local individual without any regard to the feelings of the majority of the local brethren and the local situation here in the Church in Rosemead. The clearest and best example of this is that in spite of the strong vocal objections to you and your presence here in the Church in Rosemead which was expressed by the majority of the local brethren in two of our regularly scheduled Lord's Day morning meetings (October 18, 1987 and November 1, 1987), you still have not departed from the Church in Rosemead as you told the saints you were going to do in their November 1, 1987 meeting in response to their vehemently expressed desire and request. Moreover, your failure to depart as requested by this majority has brought about the division that is among us today.

In the light of all that has been stated above, and after patiently waiting for six months for you to voluntarily remove yourself as you had said you were going to do, we, the undersigned brothers in the church in Rosemead, hereby inform you that you are no longer permitted to use the facilities of the Church in Rosemead for any reason whatsoever. Furthermore, according to the authority vested in us, and based on all of the damage having been wrought and still being wrought on the Church in Rosemead by you and your continued presence here, commencing May 21, 1988, you may no longer set foot on the premises of the Church in Rosemead. Should you not comply with this directive, we will take any and all appropriate measures to have you forcefully evicted.

Ron commented, “as we have mentioned before, there was always a warm reception to the coming of the co-workers, even to the extent that in one place several churches wrote a letter attesting to the profit they gained from the time with them. This place now says that they were being controlled through this visit.”

Ron is referring to the five co-workers of Witness Lee coming to Stuttgart in 1986 and to a letter from John So and 63 leading ones to Witness Lee that read, “In these days, through the fellowship of the brothers you have sent, the vision of God’s New Testament economy and the new move in His recovery has been renewed and strengthened in us. Furthermore, through the sweet fellowship with the brothers a deep desire for fellowship with all the brothers in the Lord’s recovery has been awakened in our hearts.”

This was the positive result of building up the ministry that Ron Kangas’ treasures, (as did John So). But we have to consider the *negative outcome* of an improper way of handling people in the name of building up the ministry. It had to take a major matter for John So to have a change of mind. His ensuing experiences with Philip Lee and LSM, as well as with Witness Lee affected him greatly, and he did indeed have a change of mind as a result.

Five Brothers Come to Stuttgart

So the five brothers came. You have to realize I’m speaking retrospectively—I’m looking back. At that time we thought their intention was to give a conference, even the “one accord” conference that Witness Lee had just given in the elders’ meeting in Anaheim. So we welcomed them. But to our surprise, these five brothers themselves proclaimed that their burden was not for the conference, but that their burden was for the afternoon fellowship with the leading brothers from Europe, concerning their becoming one with the office of Living Stream Ministry. In those afternoons the brothers’ burden was very strong to propagate and to promote the ministry office, and at that time, really, none of the leading brothers had any idea what the office was. At one point, somebody ignorantly and innocently asked, “Well, what is the office, anyway?” And everybody laughed. Of course, we found out that the office is really Brother Lee’s son, Philip Lee.

Now, this was the motive of these brothers’ coming. It was to line up the churches in Europe with the ministry office. This is not my judgment—this was their proclamation. They said it themselves.

At that time my understanding of the business office of Witness Lee was exactly what he publicly proclaimed it to be – an office to take care of producing tapes, printing books, and distributing the books and tapes to serve all the churches, and I fully agreed with Witness Lee that if the LSM is only operating on the business side to print books and to distribute tapes, then we brothers should accept this, and cooperate with them. I really meant what I said according to my understanding of the function of the ministry office;

Indeed, in the earlier years in Germany we had enjoyed marvelous liberty to translate and print books. In fact in 1981 when the Irving office for the Living Stream Ministry was being built, the brothers in Germany asked me, “John, maybe you should go and ask Brother Lee if they want the publishers in Germany to be all under one administration, because we don’t want to be doing our own thing”. And, really we did not. I went to Brother Lee that summer and in his own home I shared what the brothers asked me to tell him. Brother Lee said, “No, no, no, no, you are doing a good job. Go ahead.” So I really appreciated that. We were really one with the office at that time. In a proper way, we were one with the Living Stream Ministry, according to my understanding of the function of the office.

Promotion of Philip Lee as “the Office”

Well, the question is this: I was accused here in *Fermentation* of pretending to be one with them, the LSM, but that really I was against them. Tonight let me say a word. I don't want to vindicate, but I just like to share at least the way we look at it. Everything has two sides. I'm sorry to say, it is not that I am pretending. It is because the LSM office really has a double standard. There is a public declaration that the office is only for the business side to print books, to duplicate tapes, and to send them out to serve the churches. But to my realization, there is another aspect expected of us. During the visit of these five brothers to Stuttgart, two of them stayed with me in my home, and these brothers began to fellowship with me concerning the office, that the office is really brother Philip Lee and that brother Philip Lee is the closest and most intimate co-worker of Witness Lee, and that I need to get into the fellowship with him, and that our brother, Witness Lee, needs his son. And after almost every meeting in Stuttgart, they made a long-distance call to the office to report everything that is happening. To the office! The report went to the office, to Philip Lee.

I was, in short, expected to do the same. I told the brothers in a very good way—we were not fighting—I said, “Brothers, I'm sorry, in short, I just cannot do that. You have the grace to do it, that's fine, but I just cannot do that.” I told the brothers maybe some other German brothers, like Jorn Urlenbac could do it. I was told, No, no, no, you are the right person to do it. I said, Thank you, but I can't do it. This is what I realized later was the cause of many problems that we in Stuttgart began to experience with the LSM. A report had gone back to Philip Lee that I refused to do what the brothers were doing. Looking back, this is what caused a serious problem with him.

In my view, however, what they were doing in reporting everything to the office had nothing to do with Witness Lee's public declaration of the proper function of the office. I didn't feel there was a need for me to report to the office what we were doing. But these brothers who came to Stuttgart were telling me that Witness Lee's son is his closest and most intimate co-worker. I have to say I had never heard such a thing before. But these two brothers who stayed with me assured me that this was true though Brother Lee doesn't say this publicly. Well, I say, if I haven't heard of this, I just haven't heard of it. Anyway, a report went back to Anaheim, and somebody wasn't happy with me. I was happy with everybody, but somebody, was not happy with me.

The reason for Ron Kangas' surprise at John So's change is that he didn't know the history. Understanding people and situations gives us perspective. See appendix 6 for details of John's demoralizing experience with Philip Lee, LSM, and Witness Lee.

These are a few of numerous examples that could be given showing the pressures applied by the co-workers to the saints and churches to conform to the burden of the ministry. Ron Kangas' charge that John was being petty doesn't hold true. Ron's assertion that Brother Lee didn't apply pressure (p. 33, Ron and Kerry's book) also is not correct as seen in the following representative examples.

Witness Lee

Brother Lee had asserted himself as a commander-in-chief of an army of followers. As commander-in-chief he applied inordinate pressure in elders' gatherings. John Ingalls shares,

Atlanta Conference

In September Brother Lee had a conference in Atlanta with two elders' meetings, one on Friday, September 16th, (1988) and the other on the Lord's Day, September 18th. The second meeting was exceptional with brothers from all over the country attending. I would like to briefly describe it, noting a few significant things that were said, (I myself was not present but I received reports from a number of brothers concerning it.)

Brother Lee strongly vindicated the way he had taken against all criticisms. He drew a line; any who would not take this way, he said, are "dropouts", and the Lord will have no mercy. Addressing the brothers, he said that none of them understood what he was doing. None knew what he was doing in Taipei; hence there was no one that he could fellowship with. When I went to Taipei, he said, "I did not fellowship with one person concerning what I was going to do." He continued: "None of you is perfected. Who can say that he is perfected? So you are not qualified to criticize what I am doing. I didn't include you in my fellowship – how can I? So let there be no more talk about anything I do. You criticize my young trainers in Taipei, telling me their mistakes, but I was doing everything; what they did was to carry out my burden.

Don Rutledge, an elder in Dallas before moving to North Carolina, told me, "That meeting was the most devastating and discouraging experience of all my time in the church." What particularly bothered him was Brother Lee's attitude toward the brothers. The atmosphere, he said, was heavy, oppressive, and abusive. (Reports came to my ears from a number of brothers who attended that meeting; all indicated something similar.) Brother Lee had wanted to have a time of fellowship with Don immediately following the session, but Don was so troubled and depressed that he told Brother Lee he had to go home. As he walked out the door, Titus Chu came up and said to Don, "I'm afraid this will make our situation worse. I hope not." (p. 126).

Churches in Southern CA

In the late eighties, during "the Lord's new move", the elders pondered many things in their hearts and were not short of desire and need to open up and talk about what was on their heart for their localities and for the recovery. In a surprising elders' meeting in 1988 when they did open up to one another and share in an honest way about what they felt, Brother Lee was unable to truly hear them or understand the problems they faced in their localities, as morale in locality after locality declined. He was only interested in their conforming to the burden of the ministry and applied pressure accordingly. John Ingalls shares,

Dick Taylor, an elder in Long Beach, started [the sharing] with a lively, full-of-enjoyment kind of testimony, such as Dick is well-known for, thanking the Lord for the door-knocking and the Gospel preaching in Long Beach, but ending with an honest word about the depression and the discouragement among some of the saints. This was unusual for Dick but he was telling it like it was. Other brothers followed who also spoke very honestly about dissensions concerning the new way and discouragement among the saints in their localities, for which they were very concerned. In some places divisions had arisen over the new way. John Smith, an elder in San Diego, ended the time of sharing with an honest account of his concerns for the saints in his church, mentioning how he feared that with the overemphasis on methods, numbers, and increase, the saints would become activity-centered instead of Christ-centered.

What was extraordinary was the elders speaking up in such an honest and forthright way, knowing that such reports were not what Brother Lee liked or wanted to hear. We were not accustomed to doing this due partly to a sense of intimidation. To my

knowledge this was the first time that had been done. This was encouraging. But Brother Lee was visibly bothered, and later reacted strongly to the brothers' speaking, saying of one brother's sharing (John Smith's) that it was like pouring iced water on him.

Previous to their sharing, Brother Lee had shared about the burden of the ministry and expected to hear good reports from the elders that would show their conformation.

On the evening of Monday, December 14, 1987, Brother Lee called a meeting of the elders of Southern California. There was a fair number there representing most of the churches in the area. After prayer, Brother Lee opened the fellowship by giving a long word concerning the new way and its great success in Taiwan. Then he asked for fellowship from the brothers, desiring especially to know how successful the new way had been in their locality.

When the brothers shared how they felt, Brother Lee said it was like "pouring iced water on him". In saying this to them, he showed his disapproval of them and his expectation of them to do a better job of conforming to the burden of the ministry. His terse comment was his message to them, and a form of applied pressure upon them to conform.

His Encouragement For Elders to Leave the Recovery

In 1986 during a large gathering of elders and co-workers in Anaheim, Brother Lee said that his toleration was over. He said, "whatever I practice, if you don't take it 100%, please don't do it. You go your way. You shouldn't stay and pretend. If you feel different, I beg you to take your own way. The outline says all the churches should be the same in teaching, practice, thinking, speaking, essence, appearance, and expression. Do you agree; would you agree; could you agree? If not, I ask you to walk out. I ask you to be honest. Don't sit here pretending that you agree with this, yet you don't." Brothers from Moses Lake did leave, following Brother Lee's very absolute stance on the matter and repeatedly talking about those who "pretend to be one with his ministry", but are not.

The quote was taken from **a tape** of Brother Lee's message on the churches being identical. This early message on lining the churches up with the burden of the ministry was idealistic and could not be applied, as Brother Lee reported later, only after dissensions and divisions set in. He said, "It is altogether wise and profitable that we do not expect all the churches to be the same. This is impossible. Even twelve brothers within a local church cannot be the same in everything..."(*A Timely Word*, p. 41).

Ron, speaking along the lines of a quote he used by Brother Lee, said "To expect the saints and the churches to conform to the burden of the ministry accords with what we see in the New Testament, but to expect them to be identical in practice is altogether unwise and unprofitable."

Ron then said, "we have established, based on the quote above, that Brother Lee cannot be accused of pressuring the saints and churches to conform in practice." Ron is very soft on Brother Lee and not at all thorough in his reporting. Brother Lee spoke one thing, and did another. He was *forced* to backtrack on saying that the churches should be so identical, but in practice he of course wanted as much sign of cooperation and conformation as possible. Just **two months after** he gave this word in Anaheim at an elders' conference, July 1988, he spoke vastly different in word and tone at the aforesaid Atlanta elders' meeting in September with brothers from all over country attending. "*Brother Lee strongly vindicated the way he had taken against all criticisms. He drew a line; any who would not take this way, he said, are "dropouts", and the Lord will have no mercy.*" *—Speaking the Truth in Love*, John Ingalls

This speaking negates Ron's word that it is "established that Brother Lee cannot be accused of pressuring the saints and churches to conform in practice." He only used one quote to "establish" that Brother Lee did not pressure the saints, a word Brother Lee did not keep. To say that anyone who would not take this way are "dropouts" is total psychological pressure. Brother Lee's speaking was strong, as was his tone.

Ron didn't "establish" anything on this point in his book. Brother Lee had the same attitude in Atlanta as when I heard him in Taipei, October 1987. He said strongly and emphatically at the end of his message there, "Anyone who doesn't take the new way is foolish", as he pounded his fist on the table, then turned to take his seat. This is pressure.

To repeat the last paragraph in this chapter of Ron's book, Ron said, "When all is said and done, it is difficult to point the finger and say that this one has pressured the saints and the churches." No, it is not difficult. One just has to do his homework and be honest. John Ingalls' accusation was indeed valid.

CHAPTER 6

4. The Accusation Concerning The Signing of A Letter By Over Four Hundred Brothers

Ron shared that John Ingalls took issue with "a letter that was written during the February 1986 elders' training and signed by over 400 brothers attending those meetings." *"To demonstrate our concern, we wish to quote John's words exactly: 'We agreed in that letter that we would be identical with all the churches, that we would follow the ministry absolutely, and that we realized that Brother Lee's leading was indispensable to our oneness. Then, at the bottom of the letter, we said that all these things were according to the teaching of the Word of God. But those things are not according to the teaching of the Word, and we regret very much that we subscribed to them.'*

Ron had a problem with John saying boldly that these matters were not according to the Word of God, and Ron added that many brothers believe there is "at least some foundation" for them in the Bible. Ron then asserted that John "acts as if he were the sole authority on the teaching of the Bible".

John Ingalls had signed the letter in 1986. After three years of experiencing and observing the outcome, he regretted that he signed such a letter. Whether or not all the things in the letter were fully Scriptural wasn't the essential point. The way they were carried out and practiced was the issue and what can be questioned. The following example is representative of the spirit of the "new move" that LSM embodied and then transferred to others. Brothers can do things that are Scriptural but have a wrong spirit and cause a problem. The LSM, led by Philip Lee, Benson Phillips, and Ray Graver not only had a wrong spirit, they violated Scriptures and the oneness of the Body of Christ again and again as their history tells us. I have used this example before, but I share it again to make an important point about the unscriptural practice of LSM that adversely affected many brothers, including John Ingalls. Bill Mallon shared in a letter to Brother Lee,

A few months ago, after Bob Ellis returned from Taipei, he gave this admonition to the elders at a meeting of elders from the South: Turn everything over to the office and the ministry; Philip and Brother Lee have big plans for this area; it is imperative

for us to give our coordination to Philip and the office, and they need evidences that we will do anything they want; we have to coordinate with Philip, and if Philip beats us to the ground, we have to learn to get up and come back to him, for he has seen Benson and Ray beaten to the ground and they have gotten up and come back.

Bill Mallon shares in his resignation letter to Brother Lee:

Is it too much for me to make this honest assumption: Is the one accord which the office promotes the one accord of fellowship, or is it the one accord of lining up with the office? Let me strongly declare that the brothers in the South are committed to do anything and everything in their power to cooperate with any burden you, Brother Lee, may have, but why this harangue? - Dec 1987

Brothers Bill Mallon, John Ingalls and John So were all willing to follow Brother Lee in the new way. But what they saw and experienced in practice did not match the Word of God and did not match the sense in their spirit, which alarmed them, and in the end stumbled them.

The ascendancy of LSM was indeed a stumbling block to them, as LSM's respect for these elders was no more than the respect they had for the ground of the church in the localities of these brothers. LSM had its "big plans", and they gained the ground they were after on their way to their ascendant place in the churches.

By reading the testimonies of these three elders, one can understand what they faced and why John Ingalls might regret having signed the letter. What looked Scriptural to him in the beginning looked different to him now, based on the spirit, attitude, and practice of Living Stream Ministry. As Brother Lee said, "History tells people everything". Yes, it does. LSM's track record told John something; and, he responded in word and by action. (Quote is from tape on Churches Being Identical, 1986, W. L).

CHAPTER 7

5. The Accusation Concerning An Emphasis On A Kind of Centralization of the Churches

Ron and Kerry said, "John charges that "there has been quite an emphasis, at least in practice, on a kind of centralization of the churches and the work, which we also find contrary to the Word of God."

Ron also asks the questions,

Has there actually been a centralization of the churches? Has the authority of the many local churches been concentrated under a single source of control, under Brother Lee, under his office, under his co-workers, under a particular church that follows his ministry? Is there a local church on the earth today that must go to any of these for permission to do anything? Do edicts flow from any of these directing the actions of any local church? We believe that John is confusing the desire of some local churches to follow Brother Lee and his ministry with "a kind of centralization of the churches." But there is a big difference between the desire of a church to follow the ministry and its administration being centralized. A church is free to follow Brother Lee's ministry,

to practice what he is speaking, and to support him as they will, just as another church is free not to do so. That this freedom exists confirms the non-centralized nature of the churches today, even in their practice. But John wishes to relabel a church's desire to follow Brother Lee's ministry closely as "a kind of centralization". Actually, he is the one who commits an injustice, because he will not tolerate the free decision of any church to do what he does not agree with. In fact, so intolerant is he that he felt compelled to resign from the duties and responsibilities of the eldership of his local church, which has decided to hold to Brother Lee's ministry.

In asking these questions and in describing John as intolerant, Ron does not show any sign of having done any serious digging. There is no depth or breadth to his understanding of the real situation. It is not correct to say that John Ingalls was intolerant, but there were certainly ones in his locality that were intolerant of him. Ron stated, "A church is free to follow Brother Lee's ministry, to practice what he is speaking, and to support him as they will, just as another church is free not to do so."

John Ingalls encouraged both in his locality – following Brother Lee closely or not to do so - he and the elders on the English-speaking side took a line of tolerance and generality.

He describes a meeting he had with dissenters *to this way*. These dissenting ones insisted on being in lock step with Brother Lee, "the move", and the system. They exhibited no tolerance and either did Brother Lee who worked behind the scenes to influence the outcome. This action brought John closer to the point of resignation, not due to his intolerance, but due to theirs.

These brothers, with two or three exceptions, had been with us for many years and knew us well, as we did them. Most all of them were exceedingly quiet and retiring brothers, **but they represented a number of saints who desired to receive Brother Lee's ministry and leadership** and were not happy with the way we were taking, although we endeavored to practice generality toward all saints regardless of their preference. They obviously did not agree with that or appreciate that. It was abundantly clear that, at least to them, our eldership was in name only. It was a grievous situation and one that could not continue much longer.

On Monday evening, January 9th, 1989 we met then with the brothers [the dissenting brothers—ED] who had signed the letter to us. On February 7th, about one month later we met with them again. During those times the brothers grilled us and accused us in a manner that was quite out-of-character for them. **This led us to suspect that they were receiving direction from behind the scenes. (We received a definite report through one of them to another brother that they had met with Brother Lee and talked with him about the Anaheim elders.)** The atmosphere in these meetings was tense and oppressive. We felt that it was altogether not profitable for anyone or for the whole situation to meet in such a way. The chief spokesman for the brothers said to my face bluntly, emphatically, and with great finality, "We will *not* follow your direction!" Minoru Chen, one of the other elders in Anaheim, strongly confirmed and supported them. The meetings succeeded only in letting us know how they felt about some things, matters which we held an altogether different view and told them so.

On Tuesday, March 14, 1989, Godfred, Al, and I had fellowship and prayer during the morning and then lunch together. It was a memorable time, a decisive time. I expressed strongly to the brothers my feeling **concerning the futility and**

dishonesty of playing the role of elder in Anaheim any longer. It was hypocritical to go on in that status feeling as we did with **strong conviction that we were in a system.** Moreover, **we were totally incapable of changing the course of the church or of practicing a generality with the saints where all were free to follow their own conscience. These considerations dictated that we should resign.** Both Godfred and Al agreed. Of course, Godfred had already resigned and withdrawn from the eldership on November 13, 1988, about four months earlier, but he was still concerned for Al and me. **We fellowshipped about this matter and felt very clear that we should take the step and resign.** I proposed that we wait to announce this to the saints until I would return from a trip to Europe planned for the end of March, but both Godfred and Al urged that we should do it immediately. We decided then to make a statement to this effect in the coming Lord's Day morning meeting, giving the reasons for it.

This was a critical and momentous decision for us. I had been an elder in the church in Los Angeles for twelve years and in the church in Anaheim for fifteen years, during all this time closely associated with Brother Witness Lee. This decision would change the course of our lives and of the church, but we believed it was of the Lord.

On Friday evening, March 17th, Al and I met with the other elders, Minoru Chen and Philip Lin, and announced to them our intention to withdraw from the eldership, giving them some explanation. They received it and urged us to notify Brother Lee immediately. This we intended to do, and did so by letter the next day.

Thus on the Lord's Day morning, March 19th, I rose at the close of the meeting and announced our decision to withdraw from the eldership of the church. I made a few introductory remarks, saying that "I began to realize that our practices have differed and deviated from our vision. Our vision was the same, our teaching was mostly the same, the truth is always the same, but **our practice has really differed.**" **I included a statement that the nature of what we called the Lord's recovery had changed,** and then spoke in a number of points the reasons and basis for our decision to withdraw. I did this briefly without much elaboration, speaking for twenty-two minutes. (See appendix 5)

Paul Kerr points to aggressive undermining of the elders by a certain group

Anaheim was in an uproar. It was chaos at almost every meeting. I wasn't thinking about whether I was personally shunned or not. It was not in my consciousness because I was trying to help the faithful elders rescue a situation that was quickly becoming a theater of the absurd. They were being aggressively undermined by a certain segment of the church and I countered this at every given opportunity publicly and privately, not as a matter of "sides" or preferred personalities but as a matter of truth. When Godfred resigned I talked to him after the meeting and tried to encourage him to continue leading in an "unofficial" capacity to help bring the church through the proverbial shark infested waters. He appreciated my efforts but I could tell, and he basically stated, that he had enough. Of course I understood this completely. – P. Kerr

Ron's Questions

Ron stated, "To charge that there is a centralization of the churches is a serious matter, for centralization is against what has been practiced by the churches since the days of Watchman Nee. To charge that there has been a centralization of the churches is to charge that the administration of the local churches has come under a single authority."

Has there actually been a centralization of the churches? Carl Althaus was made an elder after leading the group of “retiring brothers” in dissension against their elders. That is because he helped the church in Anaheim get lined up with the churches under a single authority, Witness Lee, who was in talks with them about their stance against the brothers. He didn’t want to take the general and tolerant way of the elders, where saints were free to attend the trainings of Witness Lee, or not. The regular meetings would still be in place and not shut down or limited, as was the practice in many churches. Where was Carl’s tolerance; where was Brother Lee’s tolerance? It was in word only.

The group was instrumental to bring down the elders and kind of centralize the administration of the church under its “unique leader”, Witness Lee. In Huntington Beach, Ken Unger received a letter from two fellow elders, Minoru being one of them by that time. **In the letter the two elders asked Ken to resign from the eldership.** Ken had been trying to practice generality and hold two sides together for a long time. He met with Brother Lee twenty times to try to get through on matters in his locality and in the recovery. The elders, **after fellowship with Brother Lee,** asked Ken to step down. Why? So the church could be in lock step with the other churches and bring its administration under “a single source of control”, under Brother Lee, in a kind of **centralization of the churches,** including Huntington Beach.

“Has the authority of the many local churches been concentrated under a single source of control, under Brother Lee, under his office, under his co-workers, under a particular church that follows his ministry?”

Under Witness Lee

From the time Brother Lee announced that he was commander– in –chief, the wise master-builder, and the unique leader in the Lord’s recovery, he was intolerant of anyone’s opinion, not respecting the feeling in the Body, and not regarding the elders as being qualified to fellowship with him. **In the message on the need for the churches to be identical, he refers to churches as the “so-called churches”, as if he didn’t respect their stand. Then he proceeded to behave like they were not genuine local churches, as he purposely didn’t listen to reports about LSM interferences, usurpations, and divisive activities, while his objectives were being met to line up churches with him, with his office in Anaheim, Philip Lee, and with his ministry/leadership.** Or, sometimes he did know what was happening and turned away from the facts that those who were representing him were violating at will the oneness in the Body of Christ, having little regard for elders or churches standing on the ground of oneness in their localities. Because of what he did and didn’t do and because of the way LSM was allowed to conduct themselves, **it gave legitimate ground for discerning ones to consider that the local churches, in reality, became converted into ministry churches.** Brother Lee overturned elders or encouraged their stepping down. In Don Hardy’s case, the co-workers set him aside, unscripturally and unrighteously. Brother Lee, admitting to Don this was wrong, still did nothing to re-instate him. Why? Everywhere **he wanted to have elders who were synchronous with him in bringing their administration under one source of control, Witness Lee.** There was enough truth to this for John Ingalls to say there was **“a kind of centralization of the churches and the work”, as the work was surely centered in Anaheim or Taipei, wherever Brother Lee was.** There is no need to have the centralization as in Catholicism related to the Pope and Rome; “a kind of centralization” among us is enough to raise serious concern.

The current leadership was raised up by Witness Lee and trained by him to do the same thing, that is, to bring the churches under their leadership and direction in the “one unique ministry, Brother Lee’s ministry. The churches and the work are under “a kind of centralization” with Anaheim, where the blending brothers lead, and work. Currently the core blending brothers have called for having only One Publication in the Lord’s recovery. Any written refutation to this is a “work of darkness” and the churches are warned not to associate with the author/brother. They have asserted themselves officially as The Leaders in the recovery. So, as to the question, “*Has the authority of the many local churches been concentrated under a single source of control, under Brother Lee, under his office, under his co-workers?*” Yes.

Under the Office

Examples of the history of the ministry office controlling people, places, and activities has been covered, and there is still much more to be said. Some examples are:

Friedel Hansen Report

Friedel Hansen just left the recovery in 1999 and was compelled to speak the truth, according to his experience and understanding of the real situation. Here are a few excerpts from a letter to a co-worker 2000.

My testimony [in *Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*] finally provided the “proof” Witness Lee had required to show that there was indeed a worldwide “rebellion”. It was no rebellion. The brothers [in Europe] had just had enough of Philip Lee’s bullying and Witness Lee’s covering up. That infamous brothers’ meeting in Stuttgart was arranged with one purpose: to draw the line and to convey to Witness Lee in no uncertain terms that they had had enough and they refused to have any further dealings and/or communications with Witness Lee or his office. Call it a “rebellion” if you want, but it was no rebellion. They just drew the line and cut the ties. Period.

You remember the “mercy seats” assigned to the German full-timers coming from Taipei – when Philip refused them training seats (for no apparent reason, but most likely out of spitefulness and probably because of the strained relationship he had personally cultivated with the brothers in Europe and this was further “punishment” to show who was in control.) It was only after Jorn Uhlenbruck had complained to Witness Lee, that Philip Lee relented and gave them special name tags and assigned them special “mercy seats” at the back of the hall. During the meeting when the brothers were present for John So’s discussion on the telephone with Witness Lee, John So mentioned these mercy seats and that Witness Lee had flatly denied having any knowledge of such a thing. That was when Jorn became so angry and shouted, “He knew, he knew! I told him myself!”

The whole debacle, when the churches in Europe decided to sever their ties with Witness Lee, was primarily and solely over the attitude and treatment they had received from Witness Lee’s office, i. e., Philip Lee. In fact, when somebody in that Stuttgart meeting pointed out that should they sever ties with Witness Lee’s office, it effectively meant severing ties with Witness Lee himself, the general feeling among the leading ones was simply, that it is his, [Witness Lee’s problem]. The severing of ties was also over **Witness Lee’s constant denial** of having any knowledge of whatever problem was brought to him. There was thus the bigger question: Was Philip Lee in charge or was Witness Lee lying, or was it both? **The brothers in Europe were angry, bitter, disappointed, disillusioned, and heartbroken:** the very thing for which they had devoted all their time, all their effort, and all their energy was destroyed by **two seemingly callous people who cared nothing about their hurt.**

These brothers had had enough of Witness Lee and his office dominating and manipulating them. One evening in Stuttgart, a sad and forlorn Vincent Jornod from Neuchatel, spent more than two hours detailing to me aspects of how they had suffered so much under the hands of their formerly respected senior co-worker and his “office”. (taken from a letter to a co-worker by Friedel, 2000)

Bill Mallon

After the following run-in with Philip Lee, Bill Mallon had to perform the expected penance before he was accepted back into the good graces of Philip Lee. Philip expected elders to virtually cow tow to him, or else pay the consequences, in some cases cutting off whole localities from LSM material and, in varying degrees, from the fellowship in the churches. Bill shares,

While I have demonstrated the grace to rectify any issue with the office, nonetheless, the office has made a quarrelsome issue over my personal notes on “the-oneaccord” training which were simply copied for the situation as it existed in Miami, but were unfortunately circulated more widespread than I had expected. Why was the matter of these harmless notes inflamed with such furious indignation that this became like a major court case requiring overbearing action? Did anyone consider how delicate and tenuous the Miami situation was, and that to withdraw my notes might be erosive and repercussive? Was this incident taken presumptuously as rivalry and considered to be competitively embarrassing to the office? If so, how ridiculously absurd! Also, was this little instance utilized to make me a public example so as to undermine my service in the South (I heard that Ray Graver’s secret motive for telling Philip was “to do me in”? Please know that I am willing to bend over backwards to comply with the requirements of the Living Stream, but Philip’s second letter seemed unduly warranted, insisting on demands that were oppressive to my mind and spirit as well as chilling to my function and my service.

Stuttgart Printers Cut Off By “The Office”

Philip Lee, for about a year and a half, cut off the church in Stuttgart, by not cooperating with them for completing printing materials they sent to him. **He knew that John So was not going to centralize the church and the work and line up with Anaheim and the office in the way that others were doing. Philip didn’t like that, so he withdrew his cooperation. Ray Graver did not help either, rather, he seemed to be in cooperation with Philip. This is one of many instances of control exercised by the Living Stream office and Philip Lee.**

JOHN SO - I didn’t realize it at first, but as time went by I could see that we had problems with “the office” because we lacked cooperation with the manager of the office. Listen to this, dear saints. When I encouraged the brothers to follow the office and to cooperate with the office one hundred percent, I meant it. And we did. We did. The office, however, began to behave in a strange way. They wanted us to stop printing books and send all of the camera-ready pages to Irving. There they would print the books and send their finished work back to us, which according to our feeling, was not logical. The Germans are very logical people, you know, and this was not logical because we have the whole facilities right there in Stuttgart, right next to it, you know. It’s just like in the kitchen: You knead the dough. Afterwards, you pull out the dough and the oven is right there to bake the bread. But we were only able to knead the dough, we just couldn’t bake the bread! We had to send the dough, the kneaded dough, somewhere. To South Africa, I don’t know where, to America, and then they will bake the bread and send it to us. For a German mind, this is a little bit illogical. You know the Germans, right? They are very systematic; they are very logical. We did it, though, believe it or not, we did it. In fact, at that time, some brothers were

slightly irritated. I told them, I said, “Brothers, listen. All the books bear Witness Lee’s name, he is the author. It does not matter where the books are printed.” You may not believe that **we sent within a year and five months over 4100 camera-ready pages to be printed, and we did not receive a response. We did not get at that time one page printed, nothing...nothing...!**

I’m not following the chronological order any more or what I’ve written down. Maybe it’s better that way. In fact, brothers, listen, in spite of our hearing nothing from them, the brothers wrote a letter to Philip Lee on March 2, 1987. You see, when I say “follow the office”, I meant what Witness Lee publicly said about the office, that it is for book distribution, etc. Anyway, the brothers wrote to Philip Lee himself because Witness Lee says, “Please don’t come to me concerning the books. Concerning the books, you all have to go to my son, Philip Lee.” So they write, “Dear brother Philip: We would like to fellowship with you briefly regarding the future publication of the ministry in European languages here.” You could read this. In spite of sending already at that time to LSM so many pages and yet we heard not one word, we still sent a letter to brother Philip Lee. Let me just read a little bit. Okay, we reported to them all of our activities, pending at that time, and we wanted to finish that work, then ask them what we should do next.

Our letter stated, “We are concluding the translation work of the following books which were started earlier and we hope to complete them by the end of April: Life-study of John, Message 1 to 51, Life-study of Hebrews, Message 1 to 69, Life-study of Romans, Message 1 to 31, Life-study of Philippians, Message 1 to 31. We would appreciate your fellowship with us concerning the books we should start working on after this time. If you have the time to see us, we would be happy to meet with you for further fellowship. We hope to hear from you soon.” **The brothers were even willing to go all the way to Anaheim to see this brother to coordinate with the office concerning the books. No reply. This is written on March 2, 1987. Until this very day we did not receive a reply from this person, from the manager of the LSM office.**

It is not right, therefore, to say that on one hand I declare that I am for the ministry office, but on the other hand, I don’t cooperate with it. I want to let you know that something more was expected of us at LSM that we could not cooperate with, and, someone was not happy with us about that.

So here I would say is the proof of our cooperation with the office—this letter and our sending of 4,100 pages of camera-ready copies. We kept our mouths shut, not complaining, waiting for the books to come. Nothing came. Nothing came. - *John So*

The history of the ministry office controlling people, places, and activities was much more than can be accounted for here, but it was as real as it was tragic.

Ron asks, “*Is there a local church on the earth today that must go to any of these [LSM officse, the co-workers] for permission to do anything?*” John Ingalls shares,

Another matter that concerned us greatly was the growing influence and control of the LSM office, (i. e. Philip Lee) over churches, elders, co-workers, and the full-time training in Taiwan. We had numerous examples of such an intolerable and unscriptural situation. With my own eyes I saw some leading ones reporting to Philip Lee what they were intending to share with a gathering of Orange County young people and ask if he thought that would be all right. I could hardly believe it. Was this the function of a business manager? When I reported this observation to some brothers who had **coordinated with Philip Lee and associated with him**, they laughed at me and said that that was very common. They were amused by my being startled by this discovery. Godfred even

admitted later that he had done the same thing himself: he had suggested that before someone was chosen to lead a young people's conference, it should be checked out with Philip. Godfred fully repented of that. Dan Towle remarked that this was our "life-style". *How far off we were!*

Moreover, elders were **encouraged to call Philip Lee** regarding conferences and many affairs concerning the work and the churches in their areas, asking his advice and who should come to help them. A few places actually practiced this. There are a number of instances of churches and **whole areas being cut off by the management of the LSM office from the supply of literature and tapes** due to some alleged offense of the elders, regardless of the suffering imposed upon the saints in those churches. When the elders repented in a manner satisfactory to the office, the ban was lifted. Some adjustments, we understand have been made in the administration of the LSM office, but at that time the situation was bad and worsening. The portent for the future was threatening. This was a genuine concern.

CHAPTER 8

6. The Accusation Concerning Pervasive Control

Ron shares in chapter seven that John Ingalls asserts there has been *a pervasive control over the church...*"Now we can see what John is actually saying. His accusation is that there has been and still is the exercise of domination, command, restraint, and direction over every aspect of the church life in every church. This is the meaning of the words *pervasive control*.

Ron Kangas went on talking in this way attempting to "examine carefully" the word pervasive and to describe what John must mean in this accusation.

For control over the church to be pervasive means that this control permeates every part of the church in such a way as to be prevalent and dominant. Therefore, John is saying that the dominant and prevalent thing in the church is control. Since this supposed control is allegedly pervasive, it must then pervade every aspect of the church: the time, nature, and content of all church meetings; the arrangement of and the materials used in the children's meeting; the finances of the church, including the counting and recording of offerings; all the practical service in the church; the arrangement of home meetings and small group meetings. This is only a partial list. From the foregoing we can see that John's accusation, when examined carefully, and reduced logically, turns out to be not only baseless and false but also absurd and self-refuting.

Ron did more technical examining of this sort, then he described the proper relationship between a church and other churches and the need for the teachings and leadership function of apostles. Ron did a very thorough analysis of how the churches are set up to receive the apostles' ministry and get the leading from the Lord, both directly and indirectly. But he is not thorough when it comes to considering John's experience and what he actually meant by pervasive control. Ron is supposedly representing another person but he doesn't know the person he tries to represent, so he never touches the spirit and heart of John Ingalls, and thus is far off in criticizing him.

Chefoo

No matter how much Brother Lee strove, emphasizing his leadership and his ministry, he could not match what took place in the church in Chefoo. Before talking about what John

meant about pervasive control, let us enjoy, not examine, a church that truly was not under any kind of pervading or invading influence, and then compare to today, as Brother Lee did at the end of his labors in the Lord's recovery.

The following sub-headed sections are taken from a booklet I wrote that got me removed from the church in 2001. The brothers surely did not know my spirit and heart, which was not against Brother Lee and the new way, but was *for* something, the prevailing love in the church life that we so much lacked.

What The Recovery Needs

From the beginning of Brother Lee's ministry in the United States clear to the end of it, although we heard marvelous things, we heard comparatively little about love. Near the end of his ministry, however, he did speak more concerning the need for love among us. He said, *"In the last few years, we have appreciated the Lord's showing us the high peak of the divine revelation. My concern is that although we may talk about the truths of the high peak, love is absent among us. If this is the case, we are puffed up, not built up. The Body builds up itself in love"*.

He actually began to speak in this way starting in 1988 and, intermittently, to the end of his ministry, addressing the elders on a number of occasions more definitely about this need. He said, *"according to my observance throughout the years, most of the co-workers have a human spirit of "power" but not love. We need a spirit of love to conquer the degradation of today's church...this is what the recovery needs."* He also stated, *"only love prevails"* and that *"love is the most excellent way"*. He said it is the way to be an elder or a co-worker, and that it is the way to handle the saints. He proclaimed that it is the way to do everything and to be anything in the church life.

It was about this time that he looked back over his church life experience and recalled that his best days were in Chefoo. He said that that was his most prosperous, fruitful time in the church due to the love and the practical shepherding of the saints. He testified that it was the shepherding that brought in the blessing. Although he had shared so much with the saints on the revelation of life in the Scriptures throughout the years, he said that even the gospel of John, a gospel on life, needed the last chapter on shepherding to make it meaningful. The shepherding is needed to bring the loving seekers of God into the corporate relationship of God and man.

The Revival In Chefoo

Our brother seems to have pondered the non-encouraging results of the Lord's new move and the damage that had been done, having summed up his feeling in an elders training, testifying that the result of his labor in the United States had not been satisfactory. In fact, it had been *"disappointing"*. He also testified that his work in both Taipei and the Philippines never brought *"satisfactory results"*, and that only one place had done so where he had labored – *"Chefoo, my home town."* He was locked in by the war then and could not leave to minister to the churches. So, he gave his full attention to the needs in his locality.

A vital practice in Chefoo was for the leading shepherding ones to meet for hours and consider all the *"difficulties and deficiencies"* among the saints in their locality, then find a way to meet the need. He said, *"This fellowship was not superficial, but deep, getting to the bottom of things."* Brothers, as well as sisters were there, and they fellowshiped, prayed, and coordinated in oneness with the Lord for the shepherding of *all* the saints. As a result, the morale in that place was high and the real one accord was produced that made an impact on their city. This caused a revival to break out that lasted for ten years. They were the real spiritual parents taking care of the spiritual welfare of their spiritual children.

The Church Family in Chefoo

The church in Chefoo was like a family. It was a church family with an atmosphere of a spirit of love prevailing there. The love inspired the people and motivated them. Love kept people in the church, and love brought new ones in. This church family experience was their oneness providing the Lord a base to move in their locality.

Besides being one of the shepherding ones visiting the saints in their homes regularly and when there was special need, a young Brother Lee liked to have meals at the meeting hall and invite ten or twenty brothers and sisters to come and eat. During that time he would talk to them one by one. In this way he made contact with every one of the few hundred brothers and sisters. He said that by sitting down with them, chatting with them and getting acquainted with them he could get a clear impression about them and their need.

In Chefoo there was no centerpiece, no special group as a distraction from the fundamental need to care for the members equally. The ministry was in place with no special emphasis on it or allegiance to it. All the leading ones gave their attention, time, and energy to the Body. Thus, the one accord was struck. Their increase came due to the love and the one accord! They had the same care for the rickshaw boy as for the banker, the same love for the coolie and his wife as for the “promising ones.” It was their family. The Lord poured out His blessing on this!

Today, we all need to be in a strong church family and deal with any atmosphere of a spiritual institution or education center. That is, we should have an atmosphere of a spirit of love prevailing, not just of spiritual seeking and of learning the deeper truths. We should notice if a brother or sister hasn't been meeting, or if they are having difficulty. Our thought is often about certain members that because they aren't meeting the church standard and expectation, maybe they're just not for the church. That wasn't the apostle Paul's thought. He said to “uphold the weak”. They are our brother or sister, and they are necessary family members.

Strong *church families* form the essential base for the one accord. Regardless of the outward activities and move of the Lord taking place in the churches, we all belong to a church family that should be practical in caring for its members. This is where the breakdown has been. A real family takes care of its members, being accountable for each one of them. It is the secret to having morale. A thriving church family affords the Lord a way to move on the earth with joy.

Chefoo Brother

In 1943 Brother Chu Shun Min experienced with Brother Lee the shepherding in Chefoo that brought in that revival. He knew Brother Lee and his family well. In 1988 he expressed to Brother Lee the great concern that he and other senior-coworkers had about him and what was taking place in the churches under his direction. He felt that “all the sweet feeling we had in the past is lost”. John Ingalls shares about that conversation,

He then told me how that on April 1, 1988, he had a conversation with Brother Lee in the Bay Area. He presented a number of serious concerns to Brother Lee and asked him to bring all these things to the Lord. Brother Chu told me that Brother Lee listened quietly and passively to all his points (with one exception), making no comment, neither admitting nor denying. The exception was a point he made concerning Brother Lee's son, Philip Lee. In conclusion, Brother Chu told Brother Lee, “All the sweet feeling we had in the past is lost. All the rest in our spirit is over”.

Another church that was full of enjoyment and fruitful was Rosemead, before LSM moved in.

Abraham Chang Assessment

David Wang from Rosemead shares about Abraham Chang's visit and sense about the church in Rosemead. Rosemead was not a lock step church, which is what bothered LSM concerning them and their lead elder, Don Hardy. So, some brothers removed him.

Most of the original saints in the Church in Rosemead moved here from Elden Hall of the Church in Los Angeles. (In 1974, there were less than one hundred saints left in Elden Hall after the migration to Anaheim.) They were greatly blessed by the Lord for the saints were in one accord. By January 1980 there were about two hundred saints. In April 1982, a parcel of land, where the meeting hall in Rosemead is now situated, was purchased. The construction of the meeting hall began in July 1983, and was completed in February 1984. The attendance increased to two hundred fifty because the saints were in one accord in the gospel, coordination of service, and there was harmonious building up of the church. In 1985 we began outreach. On January 13, thirty saints from Rosemead began to meet in Hacienda Heights. On March 3, several saints from Rosemead went to meet in Torrance. On December 1, ninety plus saints originally from the Church in Rosemead began to meet in Alhambra and raised up the Lord's testimony there. **Brother Abraham Chang had personally reported to brother Witness Lee that he had never seen any church among the churches with as much blessing by the Lord as the Church in Rosemead for the genuine and sweet oneness and coordination there.**

In these two examples, we have churches without any controlling influence or factor. They received the ministry, and did not reject it, yet the ministry isn't what was emphasized or pushed. It did not have the pre-eminence. One has the sense that Christ was pre-eminent in the hearts of the saints and in the leadership and in the church meetings. Once the ministry gets overly-emphasized, there is a change. There is a change in the saints, in the leadership, and in the church meetings. There is also a change in the response of new ones. They keep hearing this name, Witness Lee, and they notice that no other teachings are used but his. Now, if they learn that a One Publication proclamation is in effect, it creates yet another hurdle for many of these people to clear.

Godfred

John Ingalls' sharing about Godfred's word to Brother Lee affords a window into the problem of control and pervasive influence:

He [Godfred] said [to Brother Lee], "the center of the church should be Christ, but He has been replaced by you and your ministry." Brother Lee was touched by what Godfred said, and perhaps considering that what he had just alleged afforded some light for clearing up the problem, he said, "I like to hear that." I recall the scene vividly, and his words still echo in my ears. It seemed that this time Brother Lee appreciated the frank fellowship and was trying to warm up to us. But we could not seem to make any real progress.

Pervasive Control

Ron quotes John Ingalls, who said, "This control has not been exercised so much directly but very much indirectly, through videos, conferences, trainings, and elders' meetings."

When John Ingalls and other brothers were considering the factors for the low morale that they discovered in the churches, they considered the high place of the ministry in the churches. John shares,

I believe that the first [factor] was that the ministry was being given a place above the churches. It was being too highly exalted and emphasized, so that it became imperative for every church now to manifest that they were “for the ministry” and they were to “serve the ministry”. It was no longer, as we were often told, that the ministry was for the churches and that only the churches should be built up; rather the churches now should be for the ministry, and the ministry was being built up. We felt that we should voice such a concern to Brother Lee.

The Jehovah Witnesses train their people in their one ministry and there is a positive result, according to their assessment. But their “oneness” is based on their teachings and on their strongly organized system that unites their body of adherents. They are locked up tight with their own one publication mandate. They even practice being in the same “reading” at the same time in their various settings in different countries around the globe. Their leadership is set and clearly defined as part of their system.

The pervasive control John speaks of relates to the system that has been developed in the local churches. No matter how good the conferences and trainings are, they are a part of a system. The system controls. The system has developed to the point of issuing the One Publication Proclamation. This is said to be for the preservation of the ministry, but it is also being used to control. The local churches are running like a well-oiled machine, with conferences and trainings providing fresh oil, and LSM playing a large part in maintaining the system.

An historical counterpart of Witness Lee was John Nelson Darby who systematized the Exclusive Brethren assemblies around the world under his own leadership and cut people off, mercilessly, who were not in accordance with his view. It is easy to form a system, with our eyes on a person and his teachings. It is not easy to love people and meet on a proper, inclusive ground of oneness with Christ pre-eminent as our person.

Many of Brother Lee’s own longtime senior co-workers from Taipei felt the same way John Ingalls did about developments in the recovery. John Ingalls shares,

I will mention just a few more comments made by Brother Chu. He said that he feels very sorry for the present state of things – he gave his whole life to this. He has received letters from elderly ones in Taipei that are full of blood and tears. There are very few elderly ones there who are not discouraged or withdrawn. The warfare now is fiercer than in Watchman Nee’s day when the issue was that of leaving the denominations. We are at a critical juncture. We cannot be silent regarding the **change of nature** in the Lord’s recovery. We should have no part in it. The main direction is to come out of the system; it cannot change.

John shares his own feeling about being in a system.

On Tuesday, March 14, 1989, Godfred, Al, and I had fellowship and prayer during the morning and then lunch together. It was a memorable time, a decisive time. I expressed strongly to the brothers my feeling concerning the futility and dishonesty of playing the role of elder in Anaheim any longer. It was hypocritical to go on in that status feeling as we did with strong conviction that we were in a system.

Since the local churches have become unified through so much organization, no one stands up to declare, “I’m home”, as we heard so often in the earlier days. That is because we are not home in a system. We are not even on the proper ground to be home.

CHAPTER 9

7. The Accusation Concerning the Lord's Recovery Becoming A Denomination

Ron shares, "John then goes on to charge the churches with going down a path that will eventually lead us to become a denomination." We believe that John realizes how much this hurts the heart of every saint who hears it, and we believe that John is counting on that pain to bolster his claims. We find this kind of tactic most offensive and condemn the use of it as being a tool of destruction among the churches. How many saints have been stumbled by these words, which were spoken unnecessarily and, even worse, falsely!"

"We are amazed that John wishes to present himself as an expert on church history, when all the saints know him not to be such. But if that is his wish, we are compelled to test the integrity of his historiography. "Church history reveals", he boldly declares "that in the history of one denomination after another...the first step is affiliation under one leadership; the second is some sort of training center." John wishes to establish a cause and effect relationship: affiliation under one leadership and a training center cause a group to become a denomination. We would like to expose the fallacious nature of his presentation of church history."

Maybe John wasn't an expert on church history but his concern came from Watchman Nee who *was* such an expert. The following is taken from *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 184.

THE EXTRA SPHERE OF A TRAINING CENTER

Watchman Nee

Whenever a special leader, or a specific doctrine, or some experience, or creed, or organization, becomes a center for drawing together the believers of different places, then because the center of such a church federation is other than Christ, it follows that its sphere will be other than local. And, whenever the divinely-appointed sphere of locality is displaced by a sphere of human invention, there the divine approval cannot rest. The believers within such a sphere may truly love the Lord, but they have another center apart from Him, and it is only natural that the second center becomes the controlling one. It is contrary to human nature to stress what we have in common with others; we always stress what is ours in particular. Christ is the common center of all the churches, but any company of believers that has a leader, a doctrine, an experience, a creed, or an organization as their center of fellowship, will find that **that center becomes the center, and it is that center by which they determine who belongs to them and who does not.** The center always determines the sphere, and the second center creates a **sphere which divides those who attach themselves to it from those who do not.**

Anything that becomes a center to unite believers of different places will create a sphere which includes all believers who attach themselves to that center and excludes those who do not. This dividing line will destroy the God-appointed boundary of locality, and consequently destroy the very nature of the churches of God.

Brother Lee spoke similarly,

We should not practice in a way that attracts people to our place or to us instead of to the recovery. Let people appreciate the recovery more than your ministry and more than your doing. We are not here for our own work and we are not doing a piece of the so-called Christian work. We are all here bearing the Ark and the Ark was unique. There was only one tabernacle with one Ark, and today there is only one Christ and one universal church. We are now carrying this tabernacle with this Ark. ***We are not the attracting center, but the tabernacle with the Ark is. Christ and the Church—this should be the attracting center.*** We are not attracting people to our own work, to our own place, or even to ourselves. (Italics mine) Elders' training, Book 4

As uplifted and heralded as the ministry became, it could easily be said that Brother Lee and his ministry became ***the attracting center***, which the majority of saints and churches attach themselves to. This attachment to a second center “divides those who attach themselves to it from those who do not”.

CHAPTER 10

8. The Accusation Concerning Brother Witness Lee's Being Honored Above What is Written

Ron shares in chapter nine “John charges that *Brother Lee has been exalted and honored above what is written, according to 1 Corinthians 4:6*. This charge is no doubt directed against the saints and the churches who wish to follow Brother Lee's ministry.”

John's concern began with such examples, as the following, which seem to indicate the attachment of the saints to a second sphere, other than Christ, a center of fellowship that became the controlling one, focused on a leader. To John, the God-appointed boundary in the local churches had disappeared by virtue of inordinate attention and over-exaltation of a man and his ministry. John shares,

Aberrational Speaking and Activity in the FTTT

In addition we began to hear reports, see video tapes, and read printed messages published by the Full-time Training in Taipei of some of the things that were being said and done. Now this really alarmed us. **Foremost among these was the fact that Philip Lee was the administrator of the training,** supposedly only on the business side, but actually **exercising supervision in much more** than business affairs.

Statements made by some of the trainers in Taipei amazed us, as I am sure they did many others. Some examples are as follows:

“There is no need to pray about what to do; just follow the ministry.”

“We don't even need to think; we just do what we are told.”

“Follow Witness Lee blindly. Even if he's wrong, he's right.”

“If you leave the training, you'll miss the kingdom.”

“Our burden is to pick up Brother Lee's teaching and way to make us all Witness Lees, like a Witness Lee duplication center.”

“To be one with the ministry is to be one with Brother Lee, the office, and Philip Lee.”

“Since Christianity is in ruins, the Lord raised up the recovery; since the recovery is in ruins, the Lord raised up the FTTT.”

An account of Brother Lee's position was given by one of the leading trainers of the FTTT to a group of brothers in Dallas, Texas, in the summer of 1986, in the context of how to be one with the ministry. There are witnesses to confirm it. It goes as follows.

"The Father is number one, the Son is number two, the Spirit is number three, and Witness Lee is number four; and then there are those who are with Witness Lee." A brother asked, "And who is number five"? The trainer replied, "It is not yet quite clear who number five is", but pointing out "You brothers do not have access to Brother Lee. I and another trainer do. We can walk into Brother Lee's apartment any time and have breakfast with him. The way to know what brother Lee wants us to do is to be in contact with those who have access to him. They will tell you what he wants you to do. The hosting brother asked, "Isn't this a hierarchy?" The trainer replied, "No!" The brother asked, "How then does this differ from what we've been condemning?" The trainer answered, "If the elders in a local church would practice in this way to carry out their burden, it would be a hierarchy; but if this is practiced to carry out the ministry's burden, it is not a hierarchy."

When Brother Lee heard through us the above speech of his trainer, he took steps to rebuke and correct him. That such nonsense could be spoken by one chosen by Brother Lee to lead his training after all we have passed through and heard from Brother Lee's ministry is difficult to understand.

Many aspects of the training bothered us considerably. Elders who attended the training in Taipei were instructed explicitly to carry out the same training in their localities. **Pressure was exerted upon the churches and elders to follow, implement, and conform to everything that came out in Taiwan. Failure to do so created problems. The effect on so much emphasis on ways, methods, and practices – all externals – resulted in a wilted wilderness condition among many of the saints.**

Many faithful older saints were rebuked and given the impression that because of their age they were through. All official assertions to the contrary, **the full-timers became a special class of people, and the full-time training was exalted above the churches, which were considered to have grown decrepit and were at best "better than nothing"** (Andrew Yu, in Voice of the Young Heart). The elders were publicly degraded and blamed for all the ills. And yet the churches with the elders, and especially many of the older saints who were somewhat despised, gave generously and sacrificially to support the training. Their money was gladly accepted. **In fact some of the churches were drained financially due to the heavy burden of supporting their full-timers and other projects that were promoted...**

I have no relish in mentioning these things. My object is to record and inform the readers of the matters that burdened and concerned us in the fall of 1987.

John shares this also,

On the Thanksgiving Day weekend of November 1988 Brother Lee, just returned from Taiwan, held a conference of five meetings in the auditorium of the **Pasadena City College in California**. The conference was followed by an elders' meeting November 27th in the meeting place of the church in San Gabriel. In that meeting Brother Lee proclaimed that though he had a hall in Anaheim, he was not happy to use it (no doubt because of certain people who were in Anaheim). The brothers in the Los Angeles area invited him to have a conference and arranged the place in

Pasadena. He said that when he heard that it would be in Pasadena he was happy. These people, he said, “exalt” me: I am happy to be exalted.

In the conference meetings he strongly vindicated himself and his work. He gave a message in which he recounted a number of revelations brought forth by him which he said no one else besides the Bible authors had ever seen. Regarding the enjoying of Christ he said, “I invented this term, enjoying Christ.” He continued, “I invented this term, experiencing Christ, exhibiting Christ.” I believe a number of saints could testify that they heard of enjoying Christ or enjoying the Lord long before Brother Lee ever came to the United States. I for one did. My step-mother, seeking to help me, spoke to me of this in 1949. No doubt she heard this from other Christian teachers. The term, experiencing Christ, has also been spoken by other Christian teachers for years. Brother Lee did not invent that term. He mentioned many other items, claiming that they had all been revealed to him in the past twenty or so years; no one else had ever seen or spoken of them.

He referred to the title he has used for the Holy Spirit – “the all-inclusive Spirit of Christ as the consummation of the processed Triune God” – **and asked who made such a title. Webster? he asked. Then he answered his own question, “That Lee! Lee has to be famous! Lee! Lee! Lee must have the credit! And if you listen to me, you do not listen to Lee, you listen to the very God in His oracle spoken by me.” A little later in his message he said, “Going with God’s oracle, surely there is the deputy authority of God in this oracle. Whoever speaks for God, he surely has certain divine authority. I’m claiming this for Lee!”**

Now I would ask, are these the words of a sober man, the words of a spiritual man, a man of God? To me it is shocking to hear him speak this way, for he has indeed been used of God in the past to speak His Word. But to vindicate oneself so blatantly and boastfully indicates to me a fall. May the Lord have mercy on us all. (See p. 64 for more on this Pasadena conference meeting.)

Rosemead Training Remarks

The following remarks were from trainers of the new way in Rosemead, specifically door knocking in this case.

- “The New Way requires no prayers. The more you pray, the more confused you are. Just follow the instructions and do it. You’ll be all right.”
- **“At the end of 1987, we’ll have ten new churches set up in the San Gabriel Valley to present to Brother Lee as a present to please him.”
“Even though he says he does not want people to elevate him, actually in his heart he likes us to do it. Therefore, just go ahead and do it. This is the secret I have learned in the past years.”**
- “We need to squeeze money out of brothers and sisters. For where their treasure is, there will their heart be also.”

John Ingalls felt that the local churches were on an irreversible track away from the vision brought to him in the very beginning years in Los Angeles in 1962. He states,

Brother Lee has told the brothers who were serving with him a number of times, including myself, that if he ever left the way of God’s recovery, we should not follow him; rather we should go forward according to the truth to follow the Lord. We believe that in some degree this very thing has occurred, and we are taking Brother Lee’s own word to go on in the truth. May the Lord grant us mercy and grace to be faithful.

CHAPTER 11

9. The Accusation That Brother Witness Lee Has Become a Factor of Division

Ron shares, “*John points out that ‘our oneness is not based on any spiritual leader, gifted person, or teaching.’ We can see no other reason why John would mention this except to imply that Brother Lee and his ministry have become the real basis of oneness among the local churches. Further, he explicitly charges that Brother Lee and his ministry “have been made a great issue and factor of division among us.... There was a time when all the brothers and sisters happily followed the light and truth issuing forth from Brother Lee’s ministry. John Ingalls, it is safe to say, took the lead to follow this issue.”*

That is all true. The accelerated movement in the “the Lord’s new move” featured the leadership/ministry of Witness Lee and oneness with him and his office, Philip Lee. This was the new center that became a factor of oneness. John Ingalls shares about the added oneness in the recovery.

Our problem in the past has been related not mainly to the truth itself, but to its practice, which we are seeking diligently to remedy. However, one crucial matter affecting the truth I will mention here. In Ephesians 4 there are seven factors of our oneness and only seven. But today other factors, at least in practice, have been added, such as, one ministry, one leadership, one deputy authority, and one divine oracle. These have been made factors of our oneness, so that if any individuals or churches do not adhere to the “one ministry”, or the “one leadership”, etc., they are cut off or labeled negatively. Now, is this not true? We have many examples to substantiate it.

The additional center was not Christ. The second center was a man with his ministry as a factor of our oneness, and also of division. As I mentioned earlier, a former elder said, “We began with Christ and the church, and life in the Spirit; and we ended up with a man and his ministry.” And, some could not go along with the change in center, or with the additional center, and no longer felt they were home in the church.

Today, the One Publication Proclamation is a product of the second center and equates to an official mandate for the churches to adhere to, thus becoming a factor of oneness and of division among the saints in the churches.

CHAPTER 12

10. The Accusation Concerning The Question of Questions

Ron shares in chapter 11, “*John claims that the question asked of the Pharisees in Matthew 22:42, “What do you think concerning Christ? Whose son is He? has been changed to, “What do you think of Witness Lee? What is your relationship to him?” ...John may wish to charge the saints with attending more to Brother Lee and his ministry than to Christ Himself, but this is merely his delusion.”*

Delusion? John Ingalls knew how pre-dominant the name of Witness Lee became and the divisive effect this brought into the churches. For me in Taipei, 1987, “we were initially taken to the rooftop of hall 3 for a check-in procedure. A brother standing near a table faced us, asking each one privately in a serious tone: ‘**Are you for the ministry of Witness Lee?**’ I was stunned to be asked such a question, for I hadn’t heard there was controversy among leaders.”

John's perception was keen and his question legitimate. I had encouraged a new one, who had Bible training and leadership experience to go to a home meeting in her locality to introduce herself to the fellowship among the saints in the local church. Her response to a meeting she attended was not what I expected. She said they kept talking about a Witness Lee and what he said. Her testimony is that she didn't hear them mention Christ at all. I told her that would be an unusual meeting, but she received her impression and did not return, thinking it was a cult due to one thing – the lifting up of a man, one leader. This alarmed her as it does many people who come into local church gatherings.

A 26-year old sister in Texas, who was just drawn back to the recovery after a few years in the world, brought a young man who loved the Lord and the Word of God into the presence of the saints in young people's meetings. She was hopeful that their relationship would result in marriage. At first he had a good response in the meetings, but noticed that the name of Witness Lee was mentioned so many times that he considered this must be a cult, and withdrew himself first from that fellowship, then from the sister.

The testimony of several former leading ones and many saints is that when they left the recovery, they "found Christ" and renewed their relationship with him. Many express thankfulness to the Lord to have been led out of the local churches and away from a system that placed inordinate emphasis on a man and his ministry. This was *their* experience.

Brother Chu, who was in the simple yet profound church life in Chefoo in 1943, and knew Brother Lee there, said in 1988 that "Brother Lee's position among the churches was overly exalted. The matter of greatest concern is that he would be idolized and thus replace the position of the Lord and the Holy Spirit in the church."

Both Ed Marks and Ron Kangas noticeably lavish praises of Brother Lee in showing their appreciation. In his eulogy, if it was these two brothers who wrote part or most of it, they depicted Witness Lee as a perfect God-man, without sin, and as someone who virtually made no mistakes. At any rate, Witness Lee's co-worker(s) wrote of Witness Lee, using the sub-title, *Witness Lee's God-Man Living in and for the Body of Christ*:

"There can be no greater assessment of Brother Lee's work in the Lord's recovery than to say that he was fully what he taught the saints to be. With Brother Lee there was no distinction between his person and his message. He was a man who lived God out in all his actions, who moved and had his being among the brothers and sisters in the churches, and who labored absolutely for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ." WL: "But when the Lord put me in quietness, I examined myself according to this light and found out that I have not really entered into it that much [the genuine God-man living]. What I have seen is very thorough, and what I have preached may also be considered quite complete, but it is really questionable how much of the reality of Christ as life I have in me."

(from messages in Taiwan, W. L., 1994) reflecting on his life 3 years before his passing)

At Brother Lee's memorial, former elder, Don Bowen, said he couldn't believe the ceremonial display, that it was like a funeral for a head of state, and that "no early apostle had such a regal ending". This was the sentiment of many, an elders' wife said.

John Ingalls knew Brother Lee and understood the eulogy sentiments to a degree; and importantly he would understand also W. Lee's honest reflection. John was not a deluded leader as Ron suggests. (Witness Lee had more admissions in his final message 4 months before his passing in 1997.)

CHAPTER 13

11. The Accusation Concerning Divisiveness and Narrowness

Ron shares, *“In accusing the local churches and the saints in the churches of divisiveness and narrowness, John’s speaking is extremely presumptuous, even audacious. John’s words here make it particularly evident that he is presenting himself as a spokesman for all the churches. Although his actual knowledge is very limited, he speaks as if he were familiar with the situation of all the churches and all the saints around the globe.”*

By the time of John’s resignation from the eldership, he had direct contact with the California churches and with the Southeast churches, and with Austin, TX, Eugene, OR, and had been in contact with co-workers from Hong Kong, Stuttgart, Taipei and possibly others. He also was in trainings and elders’ conferences where fellowship would be conducive with brothers from various localities. Any brother he was in contact with might have passed on fellowship from yet another locality. His “actual knowledge” was not limited, and he *was* “familiar with the situation around the globe”, enough so to speak with conviction on his last day.

If indeed Witness Lee and his ministry have become the ground for meeting in many places, those places have become sectarian and are no longer local churches meeting on a proper ground of oneness in their locality. It is indeed possible to have the teaching of the ground of locality, but not the reality or the boundary. If we do have the reality and the boundary, Watchman Nee warns that “There are two attitudes we must hold: on the one hand, our attitude is to keep and maintain the ground of the oneness of the Body; on the other hand, it is to be humble, never arrogant.” (Love One Another, (pp144-148).

Ron continues, “John says, *Our attitude toward other Christians is one of belittling them and thinking we’re superior to them...* John is saying that it is common among us to disparage other Christians as if they were small and insignificant...the word *belittle* means to disparage, to depreciate, to make small or make to appear small. John is saying that it is common among us to disparage other Christians, that is, to treat them slightly...However, he has no right to assume that an attitude of belittling other Christians is the general attitude among the saints in the churches. In fact, the prevailing attitude is one of loving, receiving, and appreciating our fellow believers...”

Ron shares in chapter 13, *“Concerning the saints’ attitude toward other Christians, John actually claims to know what the saints think. This is indicated by the words ‘thinking we’re superior to them’...regarding how or what the saints think in relation to other Christians, the saints are well able to speak for themselves. As for us, the writers of this response, we wish to testify that we do not think of ourselves as superior to other Christians...Before God and before the readers’ conscience, we bear witness of the fact that we do not view ourselves as superior to other brothers and sisters in Christ.”*

Ron continues, “Furthermore, we believe that a thorough and unbiased study of the situation in the local churches throughout the earth will substantiate the claim that the general and prevailing attitude is one of *receiving all* believers in Christ even as the Lord received us, without *narrowness* and without prejudice.” (italics RK’s)

Ron likes to dream. I am sure he thinks the same way today. In a sense what he says is true; in another sense, it is not true, which is what John Ingalls was addressing.

It is due to the brothers’ *narrowness* in the leadership that many people are not meeting in the churches today; and why the blending brothers have been on the verge of cutting off a whole

section of the country, the Great Lakes area saints. This development is not due to their large heart and prevailing attitude of “receiving all believers in Christ even as the Lord received us”, but it is due to their narrow, sectarian heart that has developed over the years that *does not* and *cannot* include others according to God’s receiving; that is, according to Christ alone.

In 1996 Brother Lee addressed his real concern about the brothers at an elders’ training meeting, saying, “My concern is that although we may talk about the truths of the high peak, love is absent among us. If this is the case, we are puffed up, not built up. The Body builds up itself in love”. Further, he said, “according to my observance throughout the years, most of the co-workers have a human spirit of “power” but not love. We need a spirit of love to conquer the degradation of today’s church...this is what the recovery needs.” A spirit of love and an enlarged heart to include all who God receives. This was John’s heart.

CHAPTER 14

13. Going Outside the Camp

Ron shares, “*Quoting Hebrews 13:13, John says, ‘This verse...is very much with me and has been with me for weeks. I desire to do that. I’d like to go out of every camp, especially the camp of myself, and not only to go out, but go out to Him... Hebrews 13:3 says, ‘Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.’*

“What is the ‘camp’ out of which John intends to go? It seems to be the camp of ‘what we call the Lord’s recovery’. John is saying that what we have known as the Lord’s recovery, including the local churches and the ministry which produced churches, has become a camp’, another religious organization or denomination.”

Throughout Ron Kangas’ book, he makes surprisingly derogatory comments about John to the point of mockery at times, about his character, motives, and intentions that I haven’t been addressing. He does so in this chapter. But rather than spend time on those comments, I would like to share what John has to testify about his own character, motives, and intentions taken from the introduction to his book, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, regarding events and concerns during 1986-1989.

Having been a close observer of the tumultuous events that have transpired and the change of course that has taken place during the past few years in the local churches under the leadership of Witness Lee, and having been myself an intimate co-worker of Witness Lee’s and an elder in the local churches for more than twenty-five years, I feel it is appropriate and indeed obligatory for me to relate an account of my own observations, inward exercises, and responses. I do this for the sake of an historical record and for the benefit of any who may be profited thereby. My burden is not to write exhaustively, for that would be too tedious for the reader, but to give an objective and as accurate an account as possible of the main concerns and burdens that have brought me to my present position and of the related events that have transpired over the past few years.

Moreover, many things have been spoken in recent elders’ meetings by Brother Witness Lee and his co-workers that totally misrepresent the facts and contain many untruths. Motives and intentions are imputed to us that we never imagined, not to say practiced. We are being called despicable names and are being displayed in the worst light. But we do not desire to stoop to the level of name

calling, pejorative epithets, or blatant vindication. We would like to speak the facts sincerely before God in Christ. May the Lord judge us in every attitude and action, as indeed He has continually been doing with all of us. We commit ourselves to Him. We desire to give a true account of the facts and our intentions and let the readers judge.

We certainly never imagined that we would pass through the experiences and conflict that we have in recent years. We loved the Lord's recovery and gave everything for it for over a quarter of a century. It was this love and investment of our lives that compelled us to respond and speak out. We had seen something that was exceedingly precious, and it was in jeopardy. Moreover, we were concerned that the Lord's testimony would be brought into shame and disgrace and suffer great damage. Sadly, our fears have eventualized. But we believe the Lord will still go on to recover and rebuild.

Since Ron wasn't in Anaheim, hadn't read John's book, hadn't had fellowship with John about his experience, how can he represent him, his character, motives and intentions before God and the saints. He has done so in the most superficial way and not only misrepresents John Ingalls, but also God, concerning him.

Ron shared, *"There may be something sadly ironic about John's appeal to and use of Hebrews 13:13. According to his view, what we call the Lord's recovery has become a camp, and John seems to feel led to leave it in order to go forth unto the Lord. Actually, the real situation may be that John is going forth, or going back, to a camp, perhaps a camp resembling the open Brethren."*

In fact John did go back to the Brethren teachings, especially to Austin Sparks' ministry. He also went to Stephen Kaung's ministry. Maybe that can be said to be taking a step back. But when you touch John Ingalls, you touch a man who has gone forth unto Him from what was to him, a camp.

CHAPTER 15

14. The Scope of Our Oneness

Ron says,

John here speaks two sentences related to the scope of our oneness. "Our oneness should be as large as the whole Body of Christ. Any oneness that is smaller than this, we should leave, we should not keep". It appears that these statements are a pure and simple affirmation of the truth. Actually, John is once again accusing the churches in the Lord's recovery and the saints in the churches of not keeping the proper oneness, the oneness of the Body of Christ....By asserting that our oneness should be as large as the whole Body of Christ, John is actually saying that our oneness is not as large as the whole Body; he is in fact accusing us of practicing a oneness that is narrow, exclusionary, and sectarian, a oneness that we should leave, we should not keep.

We reject John's accusation that our oneness is lesser in scope than the whole Body of Christ. The local churches being local expressions of the one, unique, universal Body of Christ, are established on the ground of the oneness of the Body of Christ. John knows this all too well. In his preface to Brother Lee's book *The Genuine Ground of Oneness*, John says, "We worship the Lord that in His present move on the earth he has brought to His people the revelation concerning the

genuine ground of oneness.” John goes on to say, “His recovery of the church life in this country began with this revelation and has grown and spread with churches under the Lord’s commanded blessing just because of this God-ordained unique ground. We thank the Lord that by His mercy this vision with this practice has never been dropped, though it has been severely attacked.”

Ron continues,

By standing on the genuine ground of oneness we renounce all narrow, exclusionary, and sectarian oneness. By taking such a stand we also testify that our oneness is the unique oneness of the Body of Christ. In keeping with this standing, we receive all blood-washed, Spirit-regenerated, believers in Christ—all who have the common faith and the common salvation. All whom the Lord has received, we also receive and welcome to all church meetings and especially to the Lord’s table.

It is regrettable that John no longer believes that this is our standing and practice. It is sad that John has come to feel that our oneness in the Lord’s recovery is something less than the oneness of the whole Body of Christ. John’s view, however, is far from the truth and fails to conform to the facts. Before God, man, and Satan we testify that our oneness is nothing less, and nothing more, than the oneness of the whole Body of Christ.

Ron Kangas made a living with LSM for years editing life-studies, then began to be groomed as a blending brother, then became a blending brother, who also works on *Affirmation and Critique* and gives conferences in various places, spending all this time immersed in the ministry of Brother Lee. His appreciation of Brother Lee is enormous and ideal. Ron’s grasp of Brother Lee’s teachings are strong and comprehensive and his utterances smooth. As LSM rose in ascendancy, he rose with it. He embodies LSM and LSM embodies him. He is a chief spokesman for LSM and a representative of their ascendant position in the church today. When it comes to the person and character of Brother Lee he sees only the positive side; when it comes to Philip Lee, Ron would say nothing negative about him. When it comes to representing the truth about John Ingalls and his experience, Ron is at a loss to say anything good or appropriate about him. In telling the truth of the real situation in Anaheim, he is idealistic, looking only through rose-colored LSM doctrinal glasses, with no human feeling or concern for the Body of Christ and the suffering of so many under the tandem reign of Philip Lee and his father.

That the scope of oneness became narrow and less than the Body of Christ in Anaheim was evident, and the brothers were compelled to address the situation by alluding to certain practices that narrowed the scope. Before John had spoken at the time of his resignation, he had given a similar address months before to the church, referred to as the sixteen points fellowship. Major points that were covered were that the church was central or supreme with Christ as our center and no extra body or entity being recognized in the Bible and no ministry or leader being emphasized. This was not an attack on Brother Lee but a word of truth to encourage generality and oneness as broad as the Body of Christ.

Sixteen Points August 28, 1988

As the day drew near for special fellowship with the church as we had announced, Godfred, Al and I came together for prayer and fellowship regarding the content of the coming gathering. We only knew that we needed to clear up some matters, and set a direction for the church, and we had been praying individually for guidance concerning

the specific points that should be covered. I proposed to the brothers that we briefly expound a number of basic matters according to the Word of God that set forth the proper standing of the church, touching especially the aspects both of truth and practice that related to our current situation. The brothers consented. After some consideration we decided that I would cover eight points concerning the truth and Godfred would cover eight points regarding the practice; in conclusion Al would give a testimony of confirmation.

The appointed time arrived for the meeting. (Brother Lee meanwhile was in San Gabriel, meeting with the Chinese-speaking saints.) This time, we felt, was very crucial to our going on. There were over two hundred saints on hand, including some on the Chinese-speaking side who understood English (a good number considering our usual attendance). Brothers Minoru Chen and Philip Lin with the three of us sat together in the front. We launched into our burden and experienced much strengthening, release, and anointing. As contemplated, I covered the points concerning our standing related to the truth. This touched the following points (in a greatly abridged form):

1. Our standing in relation to the Word of God. It is our sole authority, our constitution, and we should check everything by it.
2. Our standing concerning the church. In this age the church is central and supreme; no other corporate body is recognized by the New Testament.
3. Concerning the genuine oneness. It is organic; it can never be organized or forced. Spiritual leaders should not divide us.
4. Concerning other Christians. We should never mock or belittle other Christians with an elitist attitude; rather, we should love, honor, and receive them all.
5. Concerning our vocation. It is to build up the Body of Christ, not any work or ministry.
6. Concerning our purpose or aim. It is to be the Lord's testimony; we are not here for any work.
7. Concerning the ministry. It is the imparting of God into His people to produce the church. It is not the ministry of any one person; we all have a share in it.
8. Concerning the apostles. They are always plural, and there are a number of them on the earth today. We should not exalt any apostle or servant of God beyond what is written.

I spoke honestly and frankly according to the solid principles revealed in the Word, which we had been taught and which we had believed and held for years, applying some of the points to our present situation. I was not aiming at Brother Lee. I was burdened to present the basic truths concerning our standing and correct some misconceptions held by the saints. The present need demanded that we touch specifically the matters which we addressed. I have heard Brother Lee repeat a number of times what he had been told by a brother. "These sixteen points are sixteen bullets aimed at you {Brother Lee}." That is not true. If anything hit him it is not because we were aiming at him.

Godfred followed and covered eight points regarding our practice:

1. In relation to church administration. It should be local, with no central control. The elders in each place should seek the Lord directly for his timely leading according to the need in their locality.

2. The Living Stream Ministry Office. It is a business office and has no authority over the church. As the church we disassociate ourselves from certain practices and conduct there that we find intolerable.
3. The Life Studies and Christian literature in general. We should never allow spiritual materials to become a crutch or replacement for the reading of the Bible. To insist upon reading only LSM material or to oppose the reading of LSM material is going too far.
4. The church book sales. We will continue this service, but we will no longer advertise or promote any books.
5. The semi-annual trainings. We will no longer interrupt our church life for the trainings. Anyone who wishes to attend the trainings should feel free to do so.
6. The other churches. We should respect and highly esteem all other churches, but we should not compel the church in our locality to practice like other churches.
7. Various practices. In all these matters we must practice generality. Any practice which is not sinful we should not oppose; neither should we impose it.
8. The gospel. There is no particular way to preach the gospel; any proper way is good.

Godfred spoke earnestly and to the point with a good spirit. He apologized to the church on our behalf for coming under the influence of external pressures in past years and not seeking the Lord's leading directly according to the local need. He confessed to the saints on our behalf the promoting of an improper relationship with the LSM office, so that we declared our oneness with that office and thus associated ourselves with its conduct. The blame for that relationship, he said, must be borne by us elders, and not put on the doorstep of the office.

Godfred closed with this statement, which I want to quote in full: "Our reason for having this fellowship is not to vindicate anyone or to condemn anyone, or to do anything for ourselves. We are having this fellowship for the purpose of bringing us all back to the Lord Himself. He is our Head, He is our center; and He should be the entire unique content of the church life! We hope that the things we have briefly mentioned will clear up the past so that we all can go forward together positively as the church in our city. This was a fitting conclusion to the sixteen points.

Al Knoch then followed with an appropriate confirming testimony, saying that we were not there to oppose anything which the Lord had given us through the years. He cited questions being raised by saints in local churches in Europe, where he had recently visited with his family. They were asking, "Are we really the local church with a general standing, open to every Christian in our city? Or are we a sect?" These are legitimate and timely questions. Then he added, "They found out that gradually they were becoming a very special kind of "church", not a local church.... Al also apologized for his part in all the promotions and for all that he had done and said.

When Al finished I spoke just a few words regarding our going on, how we needed much prayer and the Word. We did not have time to impress these matters upon the saints, so we just made a few announcements, expecting that the meeting would soon be brought to a close...

Toward the conclusion of the session as we were starting to pray, Minoru arose and made a couple of statements which I want to note for the record. He said that he agreed in principle with all the points that we had made, but he stated that he wanted to reserve

himself regarding some matters; and concerning some of the points, particularly those made by Godfred, he stated that he would not say in a definite way that he agreed or disagreed. He also referred to Godfred's apology for participating in certain promotions, which, he said, took place mainly in 1986. (He was alluding to the promotion of the LSM office and Philip Lee.) He said that he wanted to amend what Godfred had shared and declared that there was an excessive amount of this promotion, thereby bringing the saints into confusion and despondency, and the church into suffering. He also wanted to ask the forgiveness of the whole church for his part in this very matter.

Further Fellowship With Benson Phillips September 12, 1988

On September 10th, Benson Phillips, who had been in Anaheim for several days caring for LSM affairs, called me and asked for a time of fellowship. We made an appointment for Monday evening, September 12th. Al Knoch joined us that evening. Benson declared that he wanted to keep the oneness with us, not allowing anything to come between us and separate us. We appreciated that. We spoke with him further regarding our serious concerns over Brother Lee and his son, Philip, who had managed the LSM office. He told us that Brother Lee himself was now managing the LSM office. The matter of the sixteen points spoken on August 28th was brought up, and we explained that they were addressed to the local need and were intended for that. He remarked that he did not think they had any need of covering those same needs in Irving, at least not now.

John knew that the scope of oneness was not only narrowed in Anaheim, but in other places as well, as it was a legitimate cause of concern that came into the recovery.

CHAPTER 16

15. The Scope of Autonomy In a Local Church

In chapter 17 Ron shares,

“John also made a point of the autonomous administration of a local church...First, we should recognize that the church, above all else, is the Body of Christ. It is not merely a group of called-out saints...Previously, men could only be organized together; now men could be organically related to one another and to God Himself in the Body of Christ. Because of this, all notions of how men related to each other became inoperative. In this respect, terms like “autonomous” are out of place, for autonomy does not exist in the organic realm. To insist upon the autonomy of a local church is to remove the church from her unique status of the organic Body of Christ. It devaluates her worth to that of a mere organization.

“Second, the autonomy that John insists upon and supports by his reading of Beliefs and Practices of the Local Church is an autonomy in administrative matters only; it is not an all-pervasive economy that pervades every aspect of a local church's existence. While the church is indeed His Body, it is at the same time the gathering of a group of people who live in a world where times and places are fundamental. A gathering requires consent by all the gathered ones as to when and where they will gather. Determining when and where the people want to gather requires an administration; executing the consent of those who want to gather requires an administration; serving the needs of the gathering of the saints requires an administration; and, so on. And, this administration is, by God's design, local and autonomous. The saints in a locality may need to meet in the early morning because they all work until late at night. There should be an administration in the church there that determines this need and provides for it by arranging for a meeting place and communicating the arrangements to all. It would be preposterous and insensitive to have a universal or even regional administration of these kinds of matters,

for only the saints in any given locality can determine what the actual need is in such matters.

“But local administration is not all-pervasive. It merely facilitates the practical needs associated with the church’s true nature as the Body of Christ. A body cannot be administrated. Where the practical administration of a local church ends, there the autonomy ends as well...It is inappropriate in the Body of Christ, even to speak of autonomy...We must always be careful not to lose the precious status that the church has as the only corporate organic entity in the universe. Talk of autonomy is offensive to this treasured status, because it is organizational talk that allows a kind of separateness that would kill the Body. The flow of life that is in the Body of Christ is life for all the Body; membership in the Body is membership in all the Body; functioning in the Body is functioning for all the Body. There is no autonomous life supply, there are no autonomous members, and there is no autonomous function; there is just one Body, and there are just members one of another. Bluntly then, the local churches as the Body of Christ, are not autonomous. Though as groups of local saints requiring practical administration, they are. To bring autonomy outside of its very narrow realm of practical administration is to destroy the local churches as the expression of the Body of Christ; it is to deform them into mere human groups scattered about the earth, stripped of their unique status as the corporate organic expression of Christ; it is to undo the masterpiece of the Triune God, produced in the great labor of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and dissension as the all-inclusive Spirit.”

“This word by Ron Kangas certainly is in line with what Witness Lee wanted to accomplish in the churches: full submission to him and to his leadership, with elders not being allowed to speak anything of their feeling or thought, except to announce meeting times and the like. Such an unnatural concept Ron offers would certainly lead to control and a federation of churches under one leader as THE deputy authority that all were to submit to. In this idealistic arrangement for the leader, elders are stripped of their authority and responsibility before the Lord to seek Him, according to their need for the church of which they are overseers. It is said that the churches should strive to be the same as much as possible, but the view presented in this chapter is extreme.

“Ron’s word alludes to “the churches need to be identical” concept, which Brother Lee reversed in an elders’ meeting during the Summer Training in Anaheim in July 1988 after dissension and division occurred in the churches in part due to that “identical” concept.

John Ingalls shared,

In his second message of the elders’ meetings (Book Nine, Elders’ Training), Brother Lee spoke concerning our going on. After all our sessions and hours of fellowship with Brother Lee, we had hoped that he would take steps to clear up a number of things publicly. This was surely an excellent opportunity, a perfect forum, and an appropriate time. He did give a few principles for our going on which would be helpful if practiced. He did say, “It is altogether wise and profitable that we do not expect all the churches to be the same,” and, “Do not talk about who is for this or who is for that....We should not label ourselves or label others...”

Elders’ Training Book Nine Fellowship

Witness Lee shared in that elders’ meeting,

“We need to forget the past and go on. We should not even have any expectation about what will happen tomorrow. We do not need to worry about tomorrow. We live today. No one controls you. All the local churches have the full freedom to go on. As long as you do not do anything against our New Testament constitution, no one will bother you.

“Concerning practices among us, such as head covering, baptism, or preaching the gospel, we should let these things be as they are among the saints. If some of the sisters want to wear a head covering, let them do it. If others do not, give them the liberty. We should have this attitude with all the practices in the church life that are outside our common faith. If some feel that they are burdened to visit people for the gospel, let them do it. Those saints who are burdened to visit people for the gospel should not insist on this practice. We should try to avoid different kinds of terms, slogans, and sayings, and try to do our best to keep the oneness in the Lord’s recovery. We must avoid anything that damages the freedom of the saints or the oneness of the Body of Christ.

“It is altogether wise and profitable that we do not expect all the churches to be the same. This is impossible. Even twelve brothers within a local church cannot be the same in everything. If a local church has a burden to visit people in their homes, they should carry out this commission. They do not need to say that others do not preach the gospel in this way. If others feel they do not need to preach the gospel by visiting people in their homes that is not your business. Do not talk about who is for this and who is for that. We should not talk in this way. We should not label ourselves or label others. If we want to practice a certain thing, we can do it. If others do not want to practice it, they have the liberty not to practice it. We should not question who is for a certain thing and who is not for a certain thing. This does not help you or anyone else. We all must **endeavor to keep the oneness of the Spirit so that the Body of Christ can build up itself in love**” (Eph. 4:3, 16). (Elders’ Training, Bk. 9, p. 61-63)

Brother Lee’s attitude narrowed significantly by the time of the Atlanta conference a few months later. See [www.JohnIngalls.com/Atlanta Conference](http://www.JohnIngalls.com/Atlanta_Conference), 1989 for stunning details.

The current leadership [2006] gives an example in the Morning Revival this week of cutting off people:

“More than two million people traveled together, marched together, bore the same Ark, and had the same tabernacle for their worship center. There was nothing different with them. According to the record or revelation of the Old Testament type, difference is utterly prohibited. Anyone who would invent anything different had to be **cut off from God’s people**. It is a serious thing in God’s eyes to make a **difference** because God has only one move (The Church, the Ministry, and the Work”, p. 121).

Summer Training and Elders’ Meetings in Anaheim
July 1988

John Ingalls shares about the matter of autonomy in the “local churches” that became a big issue to Brother Lee.

The summer training began in Anaheim on June 29th and covered the first part of Leviticus. Godfred had no heart to attend the training, I attended part time mornings, and Al Knoch attended full time. We were troubled by the way Brother Lee used some of the messages to deal with the present situation. He was obviously preoccupied by it. This was the last training of Brother Lee’s that I ever was to

attend. Following the training Brother Lee called for two elders' meetings to be held on Saturday morning, July 9th. There were approximately four hundred elders and learning elders present. Brother Lee gave two messages: in the first he spoke on God's administration and addressed the matters of "autonomy" and "federation". This was a very clear reference to the things I had spoken regarding the local administration of the churches, warning against the dangers of church affiliation or federation, which lead to central control and denominationalism. Brother Lee believed strongly that my stress on local administration would lead to the independence of all the local churches. As a matter of fact, I never once in all my speaking used the word "autonomy." But in Brother Lee's own publication, *The Beliefs and Practices of the Local Churches*, the word "autonomy" is used positively two times. I believe Brother Lee felt that, by my speaking, his concept of all the local churches moving and acting as one body under his leadership was threatened. Therefore, he fought against the imagined devil, autonomy, in every conference of his for months to come, referring to it as a wind of teaching brought in by the sleight of men to fabricate a system of error. The word "federation," which I did indeed use, offended him greatly. He believed I was classifying all the local churches under his leadership as a federation, whereas he insisted they were the "organic Body of Christ." He began to use the word "organic" frequently. I wish the churches were so organic. We were witnessing so much that was absolutely inorganic among the churches, things that were rather organizational and exhibiting signs of a hierarchy, for example in the FTTT. Therefore, I warned the saints against a kind of federation. Actually, I used the word "affiliation" much more, which is a milder form of federation, but nonetheless fraught with perils. The local churches had surely become an affiliation.

We had seen that in church history, whenever the Lord had raised up groups of His people for His testimony, they had persistently degraded into denominations; and the first two signs of this degradation were unfailingly: 1) the affiliating of the groups under a central leadership; 2) the establishing of a central training center, where their full-time workers could be educated and equipped to serve in their sphere of fellowship. When these two steps had eventualized, they were well on their way to becoming just another denomination, however advanced in the knowledge of truth they were. It was more than obvious that we in the local churches had taken those identical steps and were going down the same road. Should we remain silent?

More Fellowship With Brother Lee
August 25, 26, 1988

On Thursday, August 25th, Brother Lee asked me to come to his home for further fellowship. He said then that he would ask Godfred and Al to come to his home the following day, Friday. It seemed strange to me that he would separate us, asking me to come on one day and them on another. But he said I could come too on Friday if I liked. On Thursday alone with me, Brother Lee asked me what changes I thought he should have. This greatly surprised me. Perhaps he was thinking of my fellowship with him on June 22nd, when I told him that if he did not have some change, it would be difficult for the churches to go on. I said, "Brother Lee, please give me a moment to collect my thoughts." I was concerned what I should say to him. Then I proceeded to mention a few of the concerns previously mentioned. Moreover, I tried to impress him that I never tried to use the term "autonomy" in all of my speaking. Throughout these months I had told him this several times. I stated that I was burdened to speak about local administration together with universal fellowship (as we have in our hymn, #824, authored by Brother Lee and translated from Chinese: Administration local, each answering to the Lord; Communion universal, upheld in one accord.) He responded, "that's my teaching." I agreed that it was indeed his teaching. So what was wrong?

The next afternoon, Friday, August 26th, I joined Godfred and Al at Brother Lee's home. Godfred spoke strongly, asking Brother Lee first if he had spoken anything against us recently. He replied that he had not. Then Godfred reasoned with him: How is it that you speak against autonomy, considering that a problem, but you will not deal with the problems that we brought to your attention. Godfred spoke earnestly and impressively. He said, "the center of the church should be Christ, but He has been replaced by you and your ministry." Brother Lee was touched by what Godfred said, and perhaps considering that what he had just alleged afforded some light for clearing up the problem, he said, "I like to hear that." I recall the scene vividly, and his words still echo in my ears. It seemed that this time Brother Lee appreciated the frank fellowship and was trying to warm up to us. But we could not seem to make any real progress. Brother Lee remarked that everything that had happened in Europe which had caused so great a problem between the churches and the Living Stream Ministry was just a misunderstanding. After the meeting Godfred told us that he wanted to leave the eldership and was fully disgusted with the whole situation.

CHAPTER 17

16. The Accusation That There is an Over-Stressing and a Distortion of the Teaching Concerning Deputy Authority

In chapter 17 Ron shares, "*According to John's perception, 'to some extent an atmosphere of fear' has been brought in among the saints and among the churches. John alleges that this atmosphere brings the conscience of the saints into bondage. John believes that 'this has been done by an over-stressing and distortion of the teaching concerning deputy authority.'* John concludes that this has made the saints 'fearful to follow their conscience, to be one with their spirit, and sometimes to speak their genuine concerns.'"

Ron Kangas then made numerous quotes from the book *Authority and Submission* by Watchman Nee to prove that God sets up deputy authority in the church. Then Ron shares,

We invite John to consider all these statements and then make it unequivocally clear if he thinks [Watchman Nee's] teaching is accurate and has the proper emphasis. If John feels that this teaching itself is right but that in general it has been overstressed and distorted among us, we would ask him to prove the truth of his allegation. For our part we reject as false and unmerited John's accusation that the general situation among the churches in the Lord's recovery is that the teaching concerning spiritual authority has been over-stressed and distorted.

Regardless of John Ingalls' opinion on the teaching being accurate and having the proper emphasis or not, his feeling was, along with a host of other members in the Body of Christ, that his accusation was valid. Again John refers to two senior co-workers from Taipei he met with, who knew Brother Lee.

Brothers Chu and Jeng opened freely and fully to me regarding their convictions and concerns for the churches and the work of the Lord. I would like to share in some detail their fellowship with me, beginning with Brother Chu Shun Min, who had been closely related to Brother Witness Lee since the revival in Chefoo in 1943 and the ensuing years. He knew Brother Lee and his family very well.

Brother Chu began by saying that he hoped that Brother Lee would have some change, but he had not seen a trace of this. Only a few know the source and the gravity of the problem. The reasons, he stated, for the present degraded situation of the churches were as follows:

Brother Lee's position among the churches was overly exalted. The matter of greatest concern is that he would be idolized and thus replace the position of the Lord and the Holy Spirit in the church.

Brother Lee's leading has become a factor of discord and even of division among the brothers and sisters (e.g., door-knocking). Originally his leading was a factor of oneness.

Today we have overemphasized deputy authority more than the Bible teaches. The result is that people follow blindly and damage the Lord's testimony. Obedience is a spiritual virtue, but we must be very careful lest we damage the Lord's testimony through blind submission. Those who coordinated with Brother Lee in the past all learned the lesson of submission, but they were overly submissive with a tendency to exalt man. That caused trouble. The co-workers did this, and they led the saints also to do this. Thus the co-workers bear the responsibility for damaging the testimony.

Today there are too many practices that are not according to the truth. It was because of the truth that Paul resisted Peter, as recorded in Galatians 2. Today we don't stand for the truth, but talk about deputy authority and raise up a pope. Thus the Holy Spirit is much restricted in the church. We talk about the Holy Spirit, but we don't have the Spirit. We should only submit to the Spirit.

In many churches **Brother Lee only set up as elders those who fully followed him. They are the ones who will execute his strategy. He did not consider whether those ones were immature or not; he only considered whether they would listen to him. Therefore someone called them "baby elders." Those who were experienced in the Lord, those who possessed the qualities of an elder and were manifested as such, were set aside.**

Brother Lee's leading was intended to help and supply the churches. However, unfortunately, he eventually used all kinds of methods to control: the ministry office, the trainings, the elders' meetings, etc. He utilizes the simplicity of the brothers and sisters as a means of control. He controls the full-timers to influence the rest of the saints. He uses some of his writings and the way of reading.

I would like now to record some of the comments made by Brother Jeng Guang Ming. He spoke as follows: "We co-workers in the past have not had genuine fellowship among us concerning any questionable practices in the churches due to the prevailing concept that we should have no opinion, but rather just listen and submit. Brother Lee has related his experience and attitude toward Brother Nee in order to kill all opinions as well as all feelings and concerns. But our genuine fellowship is in sharing the feelings the Lord gives us, and in this we discover the leading of the Holy Spirit.

This was the feeling of these two long-time senior co-workers in the recovery. Brother Chu told Brother Lee, "All the sweet feeling we had in the past is lost. All the rest in our spirit is over." John Ingalls and the two Chinese brothers were not the only ones who felt there was an over-stressing and distortion of the teaching concerning deputy authority. There was this sense from a number of concerned ones in the Body in varying

degrees. Because they became sensitive to this matter does not mean they were in rebellion against Brother Lee. It does mean they saw cause for concern.

CHAPTER 18

17. The Accusation Concerning Methods and Success

In chapter 17 Ron states that, *“John says, ‘There has been too much emphasizing of methods more than the inner anointing, and external big success more than the experience of the inner life. This surely is a deviation from the central lane of God’s economy.’”*

John Ingalls explains his feeling about the emphasis on numbers being a part of the system of the new way, as compared to the fruit bearing in the past they had experienced without such an emphasis and outside of such a system:

An Excessive Emphasis on Numbers

We have already referred to the matter of the work and the ministry being promoted and given a place of undue preeminence and centrality. The “burden of the ministry” was that over the years the rate of increase had been decreasing, and a way must be found to preach the gospel and increase the numbers dramatically. This led to an inordinate emphasis on numbers and increase, with a great stress on budgets, goals plans, methods, and ways, coupled with predictions of millions being baptized over a period of several years and guarantees that if we would follow the prescribed way the numbers in the churches would be multiplied many fold. We listened to many messages and viewed many video tapes from Taiwan to this effect. Most of the churches, including Anaheim, dove into the burden with a very good heart to follow and obey, but the fervor was beginning to diminish and many saints were left languishing.

We fully agreed that the gospel should be preached and that we were short of normal healthy increase and the proper gospel preaching, but what could bring this to pass? What was the remedy? We were not so clear. But we began to be very clear that the diagnosis of our real need and the way that was being prescribed were seriously flawed. This was abundantly confirmed not only by the word of God but by Brother Lee’s own ministry on many previous occasions. We have seen through his help a vision of God’s economy and recovery, and such an emphasis on numbers, increase, budgets, methods, etc., was at great variance with what we had seen. This was not what we had heard from the beginning. This was not what attracted us to the Lord’s recovery and brought us into the church life. Some had come out of Christian groups with this very emphasis, still unsatisfied, hungry, seeking rest and nourishment, oneness and true fellowship.

We analyzed our history in this country and saw that every time numbers and increase were stressed serious problems arose, and eventually there was a loss, not a gain. On January 17, 1983, Brother Lee said in a message to the elders which was later printed (entitled Practical Talks to the Elders), “Let us trace a little of our history. The recovery in the United States began in Los Angeles in 1962. For ten years, from 1962 to 1972, I had very little concern. My only burden was to keep pressing on....Then we became careless, or more accurately, distracted. We were distracted from what the Lord had shown us, and turned our attention to the increase. From 1972 there was a tendency to promote numbers, to be occupied with getting the proper place and the proper people. That opened the door for some things to creep in to damage the Lord’s recovery....Then I began to say that

we must turn our attention away from the increase and come back to the central lane, the lane of life, the lane of God's focus (emphasis ours)".

It was evident that we were embarked upon the same damaging cycle again. We were deviating from God's focus and God's economy. This was undoubtedly the work of the subtle one. We surely needed to return to the lane of life as Brother Lee had stated. We felt that as those who had served with Brother Lee for many years we should speak honestly and faithfully to him concerning this.

CHAPTER 19

18. The New Way

Ron shares,

John's eighteenth point is simply this: "The so-called new way is not our problem". Then he goes on to give a brief synopsis of what he perceives the new way to be:

The matters of preaching the Gospel, having home meetings, practicing mutuality in our meetings with everyone sharing are scriptural. We have no problem with these things, and we like to practice them. Indeed we have practiced them. Actually, these things are not new. Of course, our practicing of them might be new.

No one could say that John's synopsis is incorrect. As it is stated above, who could have a problem with "the so-called new way"?

Then Ron Kangas goes on to elaborate on the new way and on John's misunderstanding of what the new way actually is and expresses his regret that "some brothers have so quickly reacted to the so-called new way" and "have long ago ceased to follow closely the developments in the Lord's recovery" and instead "have been traversing the earth to undermine the saints". He adds, "Had they simply listened and considered until today, they would have come to see a new view and a new way."

The Claim that Some Brothers Were Against the New Way

Ron Kangas is claiming that "some brothers" were not for the new way to build up the churches. In reading the accounts of these consecrated brothers to the Lord's recovery that he refers to, it is easy to understand why they became alarmed over serious developments in "the Lord's new move" and why they began to meet together to discuss those developments and, eventually, to speak out concerning them, even "traversing the earth" to do so.

Their main concern was for the real situation and condition of the churches, and they endeavored to minister to the saints accordingly. It was said that they were not for the new way in the churches and that they were ambitious. Yet, their own accounts tell otherwise, that they were indeed for the new way and that they were also for the building up of the church and the churches. The following excerpts show their supportive position for the new way before the disturbing and divisive elements from LSM began to arise in the implementation process of the new way that gave them a new perspective and standpoint..

John Ingalls for the New Way – "That afternoon I went to Brother Lee's apartment according to our appointment. My desire was to assure him that I was not opposing his burden as set forth in the main points of the "new way" (as it was defined in those days). He had indicated that we were indeed opposing. I told him that I was absolutely not against the

preaching of the gospel by door-knocking or by any way; that I was absolutely not against the practice of home meetings; and that I was not against any other matter he emphasized. Rather, I was for these things. Brother Lee received my fellowship and remarked that he had never had any problem with me; he only felt that I should have stayed in Anaheim more and not traveled so much. Our talk ended peacefully, but I was not encouraged” (p. 137) 1988

Bill Mallon for the New Way – “You mentioned about what Watchman Nee saw in 1937 and 1949, how he saw the new way of practice for the church life, and that now is the time for us to fulfill his vision. I truly want to be a part of this also and give my absolute and overwhelming support... While we need to fulfill Watchman Nee’s and your burden, yet at the same time we must also beware of another side element subtly creeping in. Brother Lee I have drunk of your spirit, and I absolutely followed spiritual authority and the intrinsic element in the flow of the river, which brought in the mutual life and love of the local churches. But I fear that another thing is coming in ... May it be exposed before there is a total collapse.” - letter to Witness Lee, 1987

“Is it too much for me to make this honest assumption: Is the one accord which the office promotes the one accord of fellowship, or is it the one accord of lining up with the office? Let me strongly declare that the brothers in the South are committed to do anything and everything in their power to cooperate with any burden you, Brother Lee, may have, but why this harangue?” - letter to W. L., 1987

“I know that this is a big recovery, and I feel very happy that we are trying to return to the scriptural way, and God forbid that I should try to hinder what has been gained already. For me to take the attitude and action that I have taken, however, indicates that I am desperately concerned ...lest the subtle enemy sneaks some leavening corruption into the fine flour. We must be warned of certain danger-signs and beware of our vulnerability for being baited into a snare”. - letter to W. L., 1987

John So for the New Way – Letter from John So and 63 leading ones to Witness Lee - ...“In these days, through the fellowship of the brothers you have sent, the vision of God’s New Testament economy and the new move in His recovery has been renewed and strengthened in us. Furthermore, through the sweet fellowship with the brothers a deep desire for fellowship with all the brothers in the Lord’s recovery has been awakened in our hearts.”

“We further agree to practice the church life in our locality absolutely in the new way: to build the church in, through, and based upon home meetings; to get every member used to functioning without any idea to depend on any giant speakers...” 1986

John Ingalls – “On the weekend of January 27-29, 1989, Brother Lee had a conference in San Diego. He believed he had discerned the reason why some of the older elders and co-workers had some concerns regarding his work and the local churches, and he enunciated his feelings in one of the conference meetings. He spoke as follows”:

Witness Lee – “So today, let me tell you, the problem among us is this: there is a kind of consideration among the older co-workers – not all, but some. There was a kind of consideration – Where shall they be? Brother Lee was the one who brought the recovery to this country and was the one who through the Lord’s ministry brought many, many of the older co-workers into the recovery. But now this one who brought the recovery to this country is seemingly deviating. Deviating from what? Into what? That’s right, deviating from the old into the new. Now some of the co-workers have to consider where they should be. Shall they remain in the old, or shall they go forth into the new? Go forth? To say this is easy.

You have to pay a price, especially the older ones. They have made a success in the recovery according to the old way, but now the old way was annulled. Then what shall we do? If you were them, surely you would consider. I must tell you, this is the root of all the troubles among us today. All the other things are on the surface; the root is here. Now you know.”

John Ingalls – “This analysis absolutely missed the mark. I was surprised when I read the transcript that he could judge so superficially by saying that the root of all the problems is that the older co-workers would not leave the old way and take the new. At the present time he has revised his explanation, yet still misjudges.”

Problems in the New Way

John Ingalls – “In the following month, September 1987, due to my health, and also due to a burden to fellowship with Bill Mallon, a co-worker with whom I had an intimate relationship for twenty-four years, I decided to go to Atlanta, Georgia, for a two-week period of rest and fellowship. Bill had recently passed through sore trials and sufferings, and I hoped that our fellowship could render comfort and encouragement to him. We drove up to the nearby mountains and had a number of days opening to one another.

At that time I was entirely supportive to Brother Witness Lee and his ministry and work related to the “new way” that was being promoted. I therefore did my utmost to persuade Bill to visit Taiwan and participate in the full-time training. I felt that this might be the answer to his need. On four separate occasions during those days I attempted to convince Bill to take this step, but he steadfastly refused, affirming that he was not free or clear to do that.

During that time Bill explained to me how he had suffered in various ways by events that had transpired in recent months in the churches and in the work in the Southeast. I came away from our talks with one deep impression: Philip Lee was becoming increasingly involved in spiritual things concerning the Lord’s work, the churches, the elders, and the co-workers. I had already noticed this in Irving, Texas the preceding month. This, I felt, was completely untenable, incompatible with his position and person, and intolerable. Philip Lee was employed by his father, Witness Lee, to be the business manager of his office and was reportedly instructed to deal only with business affairs. He was totally unqualified both in position and character to touch spiritual matters related to the work of the Lord and the churches. I became alarmed and began to fear for the Lord’s testimony. With this burden I determined upon my return to Anaheim to fellowship with Godfrey Otuteye, who then was involved in coordinating with Philip Lee in the Living Stream Office. I wanted to frankly ask him about Philip’s role, expressing my alarm and concern.”

Southern CA Elders’ Meeting

John Ingalls shares.

Dick Taylor, an elder in Long Beach, started with a lively, full-of enjoyment kind of testimony, such as Dick is well-known for, thanking the Lord for the door-knocking and the Gospel preaching in Long Beach, but ending with an honest word about the depression and the discouragement among some of the saints. This was unusual for Dick but he was telling it like it was. Other brothers followed who also spoke very honestly about dissensions concerning the new way and discouragement among the saints in their localities, for which they were very concerned. In some places divisions had arisen over the new way. John Smith, an elder in San Diego, ended the time

of sharing with an honest account of his concerns for the saints in his church, mentioning how he feared that with the overemphasis on methods, numbers, and increase the saints would become activity-centered instead of Christ-centered.

If Ron Kangas wanted to give such an idealistic report and high view of the new way, with full doctrinal explanation, as he did in this chapter in his book, I wish he had been sensitive enough to also tell about the real situation, and be real himself concerning the negative factors that stumbled these brothers, who he claims were not for the new way.

CHAPTER 20

John Ingalls' Closing Remarks

Ron says in chapter twenty,

We wish to comment on two of John's closing remarks. John says, "if we have offended any of you saints, we ask you to please forgive us. We surely never intended to offend anyone of you." On the one hand, offended saints should receive the grace to forgive from their hearts. To maintain a sweet, harmonious church life we need to forgive one another. On the other hand John's word "If we have offended any of you saints" is somewhat disturbing for it is altogether too general and superficial and it displays a lack of consciousness of the grave offenses caused not only to saints but also to other churches. Certain things said and done in Anaheim since August 28, 1988, have caused damage and distress and should not be dealt with generally and superficially. There is the willingness to forgive but there should also be the willingness to repent.

John's very last words are these: "I have peace with myself, I have peace with the Lord, and I have peace with all of you." Since there is more than one kind of peace we can feel and since there is such a thing as a counterfeit of the peace of God, we are wondering what kind of peace John has in mind. During the course of his speaking, he has breached the truth again and again, falsely accusing the churches and the saints and presenting a distorted picture of the Lord's recovery as a whole, yet he claims to be at peace. What kind of peace is this? "To live peacefully after breaching the truth—this is none other than obsession." (Watchman Nee, *Spiritual Reality or Obsession*, p. 60); Brother Nee says further, "To believe what is not a fact—this is obsession"; "Obsession is self-deception," pp. 56, 48).

Whether John has peace with us or with the Lord, we do not care to discuss. However, we are very concerned about his last claim: "I have peace with all of you." Is this really the case? Does John have peace with all of his co-workers, especially with his senior co-worker, Brother Lee? Does John have genuine peace with the Body? Peace is not only an individual matter (Rom. 8:6)—it is also a corporate matter, a Body matter. (Eph. 2:15). Colossians 3:15 speaks of the peace of Christ, to which we have been called in one Body. John, by his speaking, has violated the peace in the Body. He may feel that he is at peace with the Body, but in a very real sense, the Body is not at peace with him. We invite our brother to take this matter seriously and to take that proper biblical and human course of action that will produce genuine peace between himself and the Body.

Since Ron Kangas wrote his book, making claims and filing charges without making the effort to investigate and fact-find before presenting such a book to the saints, his so-called

“response to recent accusations” is faulty, to say the least, and should be utterly rejected. For those like Ron and Kerry who are on record for misrepresenting John Ingalls all these years, the question should be put to them, How can you be at peace?

John Ingalls has this to say in the conclusion of his book, *Speaking the Truth In Love*:

We are also widely and vociferously accused of being rebellious and of fermenting and fomenting rebellion. This also is an extremely serious charge, and one which I feel obliged to respond to and deny. Against whom, I would ask, are we rebelling. And what was our act of rebellion? For my part I have always sought to have a good conscience before God and man. To remain silent in a situation of departure and degradation, or to withdraw into “judicious obscurity”, as some have done, would have been for me unconscionable. Not to speak out or to refrain from warranted action would have been for me a form of rebellion against the Lord’s inner speaking and urging. My object was to follow the Lord, obey His Word, and practice the truth, fearing only Him. Perhaps I fell short in some particulars. Apart from that, however, “I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord” (1 Cor. 4:4). I therefore consider the charge of rebellion to be totally inappropriate and unfounded. Is it rebellious to voice one’s concerns, care for one’s conscience, obey the Lord’s Word, and follow the inner anointing? This is what I did and sought to do, as this account testifies. Was I ambitious for position or did I seek to raise a following for myself, as some say? The Lord knows that this is far from the truth. I can only consider the charges of rebellion and conspiracy to be a form of character assassination, and a means to cover one’s own track.

Since Ron Kangas was an idealist in matters concerning Brother Lee and the new way; and John Ingalls was a realist involved in major battles constantly and conscientiously, how can he be condemned so readily due to appearance. One must study in order to know what he is talking about, and neither Ron Kangas nor Kerry Robichaux have done that. As a result, it is they who have breached the truth, and it is they who need to repent. They do not represent John according to the truth of the situation, or according to God. They made numerous errors in judgment of him, not knowing or understanding the person, his character, or his experience. Their false witness concerning brother John Ingalls is a most serious matter.

Postscript

It was only after many attempts to obtain fellowship with the blending co-workers in the Lord’s recovery that I felt to make this book public [2006]. My motivation is for an accurate, unbiased reporting of the late eighties turmoil and a proper representation of men and events related to that tumultuous time in the local churches. I also want to show the obvious parallel of the serious concerns that the brothers had then and that the brothers have today [2006]. Both sets of brothers have received similar treatment in response to similar concerns, and have experienced similar outcomes – rejection; public condemnation; and “quarantines”.

The LSM and the blending co-workers have a history of driving a wedge of division in the recovery to meet their goals and carry out their agendas. This has been at the expense of the oneness in the Body which oneness we should endeavor to keep, above any **special** oneness around a **special** leader and his ministry.

Steve Isitt
2006