

A F A I T H F U L W O R D

S E R I E S T W O

“That You All Speak the Same Thing and
That There Be No Divisions Among You”

**NOT
CARRIED ABOUT
BY WINDS
OF TEACHING**
(Part 3)

**Book
6**

D E F E N S E & C O N F I R M A T I O N P R O J E C T

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DCP is a project to defend and confirm the New Testament ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and the practice of the local churches.

Phil. 1:7 – Even as it is right for me to think this concerning you all because you have me in your heart, since both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all fellow partakers with me of grace.

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Unless otherwise indicated, the articles in this book are co-authored by Bill Buntain with Dan Sady and Dan Towle.

Boldface type has been used for emphasis in quoted passages and is not in the original quoted material unless otherwise noted.

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PREFACE

1 Cor. 1:10 – Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

Eph. 4:14 – That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error.

In dealing with emerging divisions, Paul charged the Corinthians, “Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion” (1 Cor. 1:10). We do well to heed this word today. Recently, some have risen up to damage the oneness among the churches by speaking differently according to their own opinion.

A proliferation of different teachings was the stimulus for the July 2005 printing of *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, an affirmation of the co-workers in the Lord's recovery of their intention to follow the pattern of the teaching and practice of Brother Nee and Brother Lee of being restricted in one publication. Although most of the workers and the churches in the Lord's recovery received the fellowship in this book, a small, but very vocal, minority openly opposed it. Because of the many misrepresentations of both what the co-workers had said in the book and what Brother Nee and Brother Lee had taught and practiced, DCP posted a series of articles on afaithfulword.org to address many of the issues raised.

This series of books reproduces that series of articles. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers of our need to grow so that “we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error” (Eph. 4:14). Today in the Lord's recovery there are some winds of teaching that threaten to carry off some of the saints and even a

few of the churches from the practice of the church life in the oneness of the Body of Christ. This is the third of three books that look at some of these winds of teaching, show how they deviate from both the Bible and the New Testament ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee, and expose what is behind them.

This book includes the following two articles:

- “‘An Informal, Voluntary, Personal Practice?’” answers a question raised in opposition to over fifty years of healthy practice in the Lord’s recovery. It shows that the question itself misrepresents Brother Lee’s clear speaking concerning being limited to one publication work. It also demonstrates the error of calling the common practice throughout the history of the Lord’s recovery among us a mere personal practice between two co-workers and of creating a false distinction between Brother Lee’s teaching and his practice in carrying out the ministry. It also shows that the nature of the co-workers’ fellowship in *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* has been misrepresented by calling it a “public policy, mandated upon the saints and the local churches.”
- “Whose ‘Historical Revisionism?’” shows that Nigel Tomes actually practices what he falsely accuses the co-workers of doing when he rewrites the historical record concerning: the Hong Kong Book Room, the content of *The Beliefs and Practices of the Local Churches*, the Writers’ Conference, and the publication of *Journey Through the Bible*.

“AN INFORMAL, VOLUNTARY, PERSONAL PRACTICE”?

“Analysis & Response” asks, “Why has an informal, voluntary, personal practice among workers (Brother Lee and Brother Nee) become a teaching which is now a public policy, mandated upon the saints and the local churches?” The claims implicit in this question miss the mark on at least four counts:

1. The question misrepresents Brother Lee’s clear speaking concerning being limited to one publication work as “an informal, voluntary, personal practice.”
2. It errs in calling the common practice throughout the history of the Lord’s recovery among us a mere personal practice between two co-workers.
3. It creates a false distinction between Brother Lee’s teaching and his practice in carrying out the ministry.
4. It misrepresents *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* by calling it a “public policy, mandated upon the saints and the local churches.”

1. Just an Informal, Voluntary, Personal Practice?

“Analysis & Response” dismisses Brother Lee’s fellowship concerning being restricted to one publication work in the Lord’s ministry as just “an informal, voluntary, personal practice among workers.” Such a misrepresentation attempts to negate Brother Lee’s speaking on the danger and trend toward division caused by certain brothers carrying out their own works within the one work of the Lord’s recovery. One cannot read the messages from the series of urgent elders’ trainings Brother Lee initiated in 1984 without perceiving the depth of his burden in this matter, both to preserve the saints and the churches in oneness and to rescue some prominent co-workers from becoming factors of division. The very first message was entitled “The Oneness of God’s Ministry and the Perils to It.” It shows that different ministries are the source of all of the divisions in today’s Christianity and warns of the danger of different ministries to the Lord’s recovery:

I am burdened to stress this point of the oneness of the ministry because of all the divisions and confusions that have taken place in the past centuries among the Christians. The most damaging thing among the Christians is the divisions and the confusions. Moreover, all the divisions and confusions came out of one source, and that source is the different ministries. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, p. 12)

We need to see this principle throughout the entire Christian era. All the troubles, divisions, and confusions came from the one source of the tolerance of different ministries. Many Christian teachers have known the peril of different ministries; nevertheless, they have tolerated them. There has been a tolerance of different ministries. In the Lord's recovery, for the long run, we should not believe that this kind of creeping in of the different ministries would never take place. Rather, we must be on the alert. Such a peril is ahead of us. If we are not watchful, if we are careless, in one way or another the enemy would creepingly use some means, some ways, to bring in different ministries. Such a thing would end the Lord's recovery. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, p. 16)

Our brother's fellowship in those days was full of concern for the future of the Lord's recovery and of those participating in the ministry of the Word. "Analysis & Response" is characterized by a **blatant disregard for our brother's warning of the danger to the Lord's recovery posed by different ministries**. In the second message of those trainings, "Lessons Concerning the Oneness of the Ministry," Brother Lee observed that many gifted ones had come into and then left the Lord's recovery during his many years in the ministry. He testified that he had been preserved in the recovery by his unswerving oneness with Brother Nee in his ministry:

Allow me to testify something from my experience in working with Brother Watchman Nee. I worked with Brother Nee for over eighteen years. There are some among us who were there at that time and did see the situation. Since the beginning of Brother Nee's work, a number of prominent Christians who later became famous preachers were there

with Brother Nee for a time. The first meeting of the Lord's table in the Lord's recovery took place with Brother Nee and another brother and his wife. These were the three who initiated the Lord's table meetings in the recovery. Eventually that brother became a problem to Brother Nee because he was not one with him in God's move at that time in China. From that time on, one prominent brother after another came in to the recovery there in China. Nearly all of them became problems to Brother Nee. If I had taken the same attitude as the others, surely I would have become a problem to him also. However, all realized that I was one thousand percent one with Brother Nee in his ministry because my standing, my attitude, and my spirit were altogether one with him. No opening was left for anyone to say that I was a problem to Brother Nee. There was no ground for such a charge.

If someone is able to ask you whether or not you are one with me, that question is a hint that you are not one hundred percent one with me. If water can leak through a roof when it rains, that surely means there is a crack somewhere in the roof. If there is no crack, no water could leak in. If you are thoroughly one hundred percent one with me, we are like a roof that has no crack for the rain to come in. When it rains, the water both testifies and tests whether or not there is a crack in the roof. If there is a leak, this is a proof that a crack is there. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, pp. 27-28)

Brother Lee spoke further of the care he exercised to avoid causing any problems to Brother Nee's ministry or to the Lord's recovery generally.

When I was with Brother Nee, I never behaved, acted, worked, preached, taught, or spoke in any way that could be taken by the enemy to create trouble. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, p. 30)

I have no interest in doing a light work according to the religious practices of today. I consecrated myself and my future for God's unique purpose on this earth. I saw this purpose in Brother Nee, I was for this, and I sacrificed everything for this. Therefore, I would not say a word

[contradicting Brother Nee's ministry], and I would not do anything at all to damage this purpose. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament, p. 32*)

I have always realized that it is a very serious matter even to affect the Lord's recovery a little bit, no need to say to damage it. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament, p. 33*)

Brother Lee's word concerning having one publication work in the Lord's recovery must be understood in the light of his struggle to maintain the oneness of the Lord's recovery. Based on that burden he made a strong appeal to the elders and co-workers in February 1986 to abandon different publication works.

BEING RESTRICTED IN ONE PUBLICATION

One thing that has caused the Lord's recovery trouble is the fact that we have different publications. If we mean business for the Lord's recovery, we must avoid any kind of involvement in problems. When we were on mainland China, **only Brother Nee had a publication**, and the Gospel Room belonged solely and uniquely to him. He asked me to help in the publication work. I did write some books, among which were a book on the genealogy of Christ, a translation of part of Pember's Earth's Earliest Ages, and some books on the kingdom of the heavens. I never published anything by myself. I always mailed my manuscript to the Gospel Room, which was under Brother Nee and his helper. It was up to their discernment whether my manuscript should be published or not. I liked to have my writings checked as to whether there might be some inaccuracy in the truth. It is not a small matter to write a book that expounds the kingdom of the heavens. I liked my material to pass through their checking. This helped and protected me. Brother Yu, the eye specialist, translated some of the mystical books, but he did not publish anything. We only had one publication. Everything was published through Brother Nee's Gospel Room because the publication is really the trumpeting. The sounding of our trumpet is not just in the verbal message but more in the publication. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-*

pulse of the Lord's Present Move, pp. 161-162; quoted on page 10 of *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*)

2. The Common Practice Throughout Our History

“Analysis & Response” also errs in misrepresenting the practice of being restricted in one publication work as only being practiced by two workers—Brother Lee and Brother Nee. In fact, it has been the common practice of the co-workers and the churches in China, Taiwan, the United States, and throughout most of the earth for the entire time of the Lord's recovery among us.

“Analysis & Response” asserts that Watchman Nee never taught the matter of being restricted in one publication work. Of course, teaching often is needed when there is a deviation from the norm, so it should not be surprising to find no specific teaching regarding one publication, since it was the common practice of the churches and the serving ones at that time. What is indisputable is that Brother Nee and his co-workers consistently referred to “the publication work” and “the literature work” in the singular and practiced accordingly.¹ Furthermore, in his 1948 training on Kuling Mountain, Brother Nee clearly stated that the literature work, as a unique and specific part of the work, was to be carried out in Shanghai, that is, by The Gospel Bookroom under his supervision there.

¹ From *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*:

Watchman Nee:

The Present Testimony (1), vol. 8, p. 88.

Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (1), vol. 41, p. 204.

The Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, vol. 57, pp. 142, 273, 284.

Ruth Lee:

The Present Testimony (1), vol. 8, p. 81.

Collection of Newsletters (2) & *Watchman Nee's Testimony*, vol. 26, pp. 297, 298.

The Open Door (2), vol. 32, p. 474.

Witness Lee:

The Open Door (2), vol. 32, p. 481.

Chen Hsi-Wen:

The Open Door (1), vol. 31, p. 77.

The literature work: The literature work, such as the publishing of books and periodicals, is considered a separate unit of the work. Such works are handled by Shanghai. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 60, p. 362)

Brother Lee's testimony concerning their practice confirms that there was only one publication work being carried out and that it was under Watchman Nee's oversight.

When we were on mainland China, **only Brother Nee had a publication**, and the Gospel Room belonged solely and uniquely to him. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, p. 161)

The Lord's recovery was raised up in China through Brother Nee's teaching for exactly thirty years, from 1922 through 1952. In those thirty years there was **no one else** who put out the New Testament teaching. (*The Practice of the Church Life According to the God-ordained Way*, p. 34)

Prior to 1952, all the literature work was done by Brother Nee. (*The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross*, p. 28)

When Brother Lee spoke concerning being restricted in one publication in the 1980s, he was merely reiterating what had long been the practice in carrying out the ministry through the literature work in the Lord's recovery. After Brother Lee's passing in 1997, the co-workers reaffirmed their intention that Living Stream Ministry would continue to publish the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee for the leading and nourishment of all of the churches. The statement in *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* is merely a further affirmation of the co-workers worldwide that they desire to continue in the same steps that have brought countless blessings to the Lord's recovery. Actually, "Analysis & Response" has matters backwards. There is no precedent, in either the teaching or the practice of the Lord's recovery among us, for its contentious promotion of multiple publication works in the ministry in the Lord's recovery.

3. A False Distinction

“Analysis & Response” claims that the co-workers have taken Brother Lee’s testimony as a basis for formulating a new “teaching”. This claim not only negates Brother Lee’s teaching, fellowship, and direction to have only one publication work in the Lord’s recovery, but it also makes a false distinction between Brother Lee’s teaching and his practice in carrying out the ministry. It is undeniable that throughout the New Testament, the Lord teaches us not only by direct word but also by presenting us with patterns to follow (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thes. 1:6; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:10, 14; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3).

1 Cor. 4:16 – I exhort you therefore, Become imitators of me.

1 Cor. 11:1 – Be imitators of²me, as I also am of Christ.

fn. 11:1² – If one is an imitator of Christ, we should be imitators of him. This makes us also imitators of Christ. Otherwise, we should be imitators of no man.

Phil. 3:17 – Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe those who thus walk even as you have us as a pattern.

1 Thes. 1:6 – And you became¹imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit.

fn. 1:6¹ – Since the preachers were the pattern of the gospel, the believers became imitators of them. This, then, led the believers to follow the Lord, to take Him as their pattern (Matt. 11:29).

2 Thes. 3:9 – Not because we do not have the right, but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern that you might imitate us.

1 Tim. 4:12 – Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

2 Tim. 3:10 – But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, endurance.

2 Tim. 3:14 – But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from which ones you have learned them.

Titus 2:7 – Concerning all things presenting yourself as a pattern of good works: in your teaching showing incorruption, gravity.

1 Pet. 5:3 – Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

According to the New Testament, the Lord raises up ones who are not only capable ministers of the Word, but also patterns in conduct, particularly related to the crucial matters related to the church, the ministry, and the work. His expectation is that the believers nourished and built up through the ministry would imitate those through whom His revelation comes to the church and walk in the same steps.

Doing Only the Work of the Lord's Recovery

Anyone who has a vision today can be clear at a glance that neither Brother Nee nor I carried out our own personal work; our work is the work of the Lord's recovery for the building of the Body of Christ. I say this with the hope that you will be influenced by me. I was greatly influenced by Brother Nee, and I hope that you will also be influenced by him. (*The Governing and Controlling Vision in the Bible*, p. 32)

Brother Lee's testimony concerning his realization of the uniqueness of the divine stream in the Lord's ministry and how he dropped his own ministry in northern China to join himself to Brother Nee's ministry set forth a pattern for us to follow. His purpose in speaking these things cannot be reasonably interpreted otherwise. He spoke of it in the message "The Divine Stream," which appeared as the lead article in the June 1, 1963 issue of the Stream magazine, the first publication put out by his ministry in this country.

If you read the Acts and the Epistles written by the Apostle Paul, you will see that quite a number of people at that time who were preaching the Gospel and working for the Lord were not in the stream. According to the record of the Scripture, they were not in the stream. For instance, in the first chapter of Philippians the Apostle tells us that there were some who preached the Gospel because of envy. They were preaching the Gospel, but they were not working together with the Apostle. Although they preached the

Gospel, they were not in the one stream of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts you can find another example. Consider Barnabas. At the beginning Barnabas was working with the Apostle Paul. Both were in the one stream. But after a certain time, Barnabas for some reason would not agree to go along with the Apostle Paul. The two were divided. Do you find any record in the Acts of Barnabas after that division? No! He was out of the stream. He was still working for the Lord, but he was out of the stream. Are you clear about this matter? If you study carefully the history of the church, you will find that throughout the generations there has been one stream of the Holy Spirit flowing all the time. Many have been working for the Lord, but not all have been in the flowing of that one stream. If you will accept the mercy and the grace of the Lord, you will be brought into that very stream that is flowing today.

At this point I would like to offer a personal testimony on this matter. In 1933 I went from North China to Shanghai for the first time in order to visit Brother Watchman Nee. I stayed with him there for several months. When I was about to leave to return to my home city in North China, Brother Nee came to me and said: “Brother Lee, we feel it is the Lord’s mind that you move your family to Shanghai and stay with us for the Lord’s work. Would you bring this matter to the Lord?” When I went to the Lord with this matter, I received the light. The Lord showed me that in the book of Acts the current of the Lord’s work, the stream of the Holy Spirit, is one. He showed me that in the Acts there was only one line on the map, starting from Jerusalem and running to Antioch, from there to Asia, and from there to Europe. I saw that there never have been two streams, but always one. I said to the Lord: “Lord, I thank Thee. There can never be two streams of Your work in China. If there is something done for You or by You or through You in North China, it must first be that I go to Shanghai to be mingled together in the one stream, in order that out from there something will flow forth to North China. Thus there will be one stream.” On the very next day Brother Nee came to see me. I said to him: “Brother, I am clear about this matter. I must do what you suggest. From this day I am working with you in Shanghai.” (*The Divine Stream*, pp. 13-15)

He repeated his fellowship in 1973 in Los Angeles in the messages that became the book *The History of the Church and the Local Churches*.

In 1934, after I had been in Shanghai close to four months, Brother Nee said to me, “Witness, we co-workers feel that you have to move your family to Shanghai so that we can work together. Bring this matter to the Lord, and see how the Lord will lead you.” I took his word and brought this matter to the Lord. Then I saw that in the book of Acts there was only one flow, one current. It started from the throne of grace and went to Jerusalem. From Jerusalem this flow proceeded to Samaria and then to Antioch. From Antioch it turned westward to Asia Minor and Europe. The book of Acts shows that there was only one current of the Lord’s move on earth. There is no record of any work which was outside of this current. When Barnabas separated himself from Paul (Acts 15:39-41), there was no more record of his work in Acts. After this incident, he no longer appears in the divine narration in Acts of the Lord’s move in God’s New Testament economy.

The Lord impressed me that the current, the flow, of the Lord’s work in China should be one. If the Lord was to do something in the north, I would have to jump into the flow at Shanghai in the south. Then eventually the flow would proceed to the north from Shanghai. Based on this revelation, I made the decision to go to Shanghai to work with Brother Nee. (*The History of the Church and the Local Churches*, p. 136)

He repeated it again in his message “No Uncertain Sounding of the Trumpet in the Lord’s Ministry” in the February 1986 elders’ training.

Barnabas was an excellent brother who actually brought Saul of Tarsus into his ministry (Acts 11:25-26). At the beginning Barnabas took the lead. On the way of their first journey, however, the Spirit records that Paul began to take the lead, and the Spirit began to refer to Saul as Paul (Acts 13:9). The change of name may indicate the change in life. From this point on Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, took the

lead in the apostolic ministry all the way, and Barnabas accepted that. Barnabas was one with Paul to go to Jerusalem to get the solution regarding the trouble of circumcision. Right after that solution was made as a decree to all the churches, there was a contention between Barnabas and Saul (Acts 15:35-39). This contention was not about something great but about something small. They did not separate from each other because of a different opinion concerning the faith or concerning the headship of Christ. The split between them was concerning a small, personal, intimate thing. Barnabas wanted to take his cousin Mark along with him on their journey and Paul said no. To us that is a small thing, but after Barnabas left Paul with Mark there is no more record of him in the Lord's move in the book of Acts. The reason for this is because the Lord would only care for one flow.

I saw this matter clearly in 1933 when Brother Nee asked me to join him in the work in Shanghai. At that time I was doing a work in north China that was quite prevailing and even promising to me in teaching the Bible. Because my eyes were opened, I told the Lord that I would go to Shanghai to join Brother Nee and the work. I realized that the Lord's flow, the Lord's current, on this earth has been only one. If north China were to be taken by the Lord, He would surely do it through the same flow. I had to jump into this current, to be one with this current to let the Lord flow. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p. 84-85)

One must consider: Why did Brother Lee speak this way? Was it just to relate his “personal practice” with no hope or expectation that the brothers would follow his example? Can the author of “Analysis & Response” seriously make such a claim? Or was Brother Lee presenting himself as a pattern to be followed, in the same principle Paul practiced with the Thessalonians?

Some Christian teachers say that a believer should not give a testimony concerning himself. According to these teachers, to testify of our experience is to preach ourselves. Therefore, they advise others not to speak of how they have

repented, believed in the Lord, received grace, and have been saved. These teachers insist strongly that we should preach only the Lord Jesus and teach the Bible, but should never say anything about ourselves. In 1 Thessalonians 2, however, Paul certainly speaks about himself. He gives a strong testimony of his living among the Thessalonians. He reminds them of the apostles coming and of their manner of life among them. Why did Paul emphasize this? He emphasized it because he was presenting a pattern of a proper living to the young saints. I hope that all the elders and leading ones will see from Paul's example that we must be a pattern to the saints. In every local church there must be some patterns, some models, for others to follow. (*Lifestudy of Thessalonians*, p. 109)

Brother Lee's unmistakable intention in speaking concerning his relationship with Watchman Nee in the work was to present the way to be under the blessing of the Lord's unique flow and to appeal to the brothers bearing responsibility in the Lord's work today to follow his pattern. In the message "No Uncertain Sounding of the Trumpet in the Lord's Ministry" Brother Lee testified that it was his absolute oneness with Brother Nee that caused him to be the one to whom the Lord committed the leadership in the Lord's recovery.

By the Lord's mercy, I can declare that in those eighteen years when I was involved in the work on mainland China, I was wise. I never caused anyone to think that they could be puffed up on behalf of me against Brother Nee. There was no such thing. Whatever the saints saw of me, my behavior, my way of living, my actions, the way I worked, my messages, and my speaking, they all considered to be absolutely one with Brother Watchman Nee. I did not leave any loopholes for anyone to think that I was different from Brother Nee. I believe that was the Lord's wisdom through His mercy given to me. Our history since that time speaks a great deal. Among so many co-workers of Brother Nee, where is the recovery? I did not have any kind of thought to be the one to carry on the Lord's recovery. Even when I went to Taiwan, I was definitely sent. That was Brother Nee's proposal to the co-workers. I never had the thinking or the feeling that I was going to be the leader. Even when I came to the United

States, I did not have the thought of being the leader in the western world of the Lord's recovery. But where is the recovery today and under what kind of leadership? Some of the so-called co-workers claim that they were so close to Watchman Nee, but nearly not one church has ever been raised up by any of them.

It is altogether not wise for you to remain in the recovery taking this ministry on the one hand, and yet on the other hand to say something else. This is not wise. It is not profitable to yourself or to your future. You may say you have a ministry, but this is not profitable to your ministry if you have one. You can never profit your ministry in the future in this way. Rather, you have dispensed your future in a cheap way. The wise way is to stay, without any opinion, with the recovery which is unique. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, pp. 85-86)

In 1993 he went further to say that it was his oneness with Brother Nee in the principle of the Body that had preserved the recovery for over seven decades.

At least I can testify for myself and for my senior brother, Brother Watchman Nee. We always behaved, acted, and took action in the recovery as one Body. This is why the Lord's recovery could exist on this earth over these past approximately seventy years. We do not have any organization to keep anything, but the recovery is still here. The recovery is still existing and has been kept by the principle of the Body. While I was ministering the word, I often considered Brother Nee. I considered what he spoke; I did not like to speak anything which was contradicting with his ministry. If I had spoken in a contradicting way, where would the recovery be today? We must know the Body. (*The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ*, p. 91)

To characterize this as a mere “informal, voluntary, personal practice” is a grave disservice to our senior brothers, Watchman Nee and Witness Lee, whose ministry is recognized as the basis for the teaching and leading in the recovery today. Even the author of “Analysis & Response,” in his earlier correspondence

with the co-workers, stated, “It is commonly accepted among us that we in the Lord’s recovery take both the biblical teaching and **practice** of brothers Watchman Nee and Witness Lee as our basis”.² How then can he justify rejecting our brother’s pattern in being restricted in one publication work, when it is clear from Brother Lee’s fellowship that he felt it was a crucial factor in preserving the oneness of the Lord’s recovery as the basis for the Lord’s blessing upon it?

Brother Lee, at considerable risk of being criticized, put himself forth as an example to be followed. Who can deny that the Lord’s recovery reaped much blessing through his willingness to lay aside his personal ministry to be one with the ministry of Watchman Nee? In his own realization, it became the key factor in his subsequent usefulness in the Lord’s hand to propagate His recovery and open up the depths of the truth concerning God’s economy. Why wouldn’t we follow such a pattern today?

4. Not a “Public Policy, Mandated Upon the Saints and the Local Churches”

“Analysis & Response” uses certain charged words to characterize *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*—“insists,” “mandated,” and “policy.” None of these words is used in *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*, nor do they convey its tone. *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* is in no sense a “public policy.” It is the blended co-workers’ fellowship to the churches concerning their desire to continue in the longstanding practice in the Lord’s recovery of being restricted in one publication work. Calling that fellowship “a public policy” implies there must be some type of enforcement mechanism, but the co-workers’ fellowship gives no hint of any such thing. Similarly, something that is “mandated” is required as a condition for continued participation together, but *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* unambiguously states that whether or not a local church or individual believers adhere to the practice of having only

² E-mail from the author of “Analysis & Response” to Kerry Robichaux and the co-workers mailing list on June 13, 2005.

one publication work does not affect their standing or being received in the fellowship of the Body.

However, the one publication should not become the basis of our accepting or rejecting any persons in the communion of faith or in the fellowship of the churches; it should not be insisted on as an item of the faith. If any are not inclined to be restricted in one publication, these ones are still our brothers; they are still in the genuine local churches. (*Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, p. 9)

In the 1986 elders' training Brother Lee declared several times that he would no longer tolerate those who claimed to accept his ministry yet who used and applied his ministry selectively.

A wife could say to her husband, "I love you and I take you as my husband, but whatever you say I have to bring to the Lord to see if it is really His leading for me. I need to pray to find out whether I should take your word wholly or in part and whether it fits in with my situation." If a wife had this attitude, how would her husband feel? Her attitude is a kind of subtle dissension, and her husband would not be able to tolerate it forever. I have been tolerating such an attitude from some, though, for the past fifteen years, but my toleration has ended. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p. 55)

I want to let the brothers who are involved in this kind of trouble relating to another line, another practice, know that some saints got bothered and troubled and were much concerned that people would wonder which line they should take. We need to make a decision as a solution to be passed on to all the churches. Let the saints be strengthened. Let them rejoice. Let them be consoled. I cannot tolerate the disease that has been spreading to weaken the Body. We need to make a solution to this problem. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p. 59)

To say that we do not like to reject the ministry, but we will have to pray to see how the Lord leads us sounds very spiritual, but this is the best cloak to cover the subtle dissension. With Paul's charge to Colosse and Laodicea, however, there were no conditions or terms. Whatever Paul

wrote was not only for a certain church or for two churches but for all the churches. We cannot tolerate anything contrary to this principle any longer. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p. 60)

At this point, however, I do not feel that I should tolerate certain situations any longer because enough damage has been done already. I do not like to see more damage done to the Lord's recovery. I have no time, dear saints, to fool around with people any longer. Let us go to fight the battle. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p. 83)

In that speaking he made a very clear distinction between the churches and the ministry and indicated that the scope of his fellowship did not apply to the saints in the churches generally, but was related to those who claimed to be participating in the ministry with him but were teaching differently.

...Some of the saints became what they are in the Lord one hundred percent due to my ministry, and I do not want my ministry to waste their time. I have to do something to insure their investment of their whole being into the Lord's recovery. They have given up their future in the world, but they can not have much encouragement in the Lord's recovery. I have to be faithful to the Lord, faithful to so many of you who have been very much affected by this ministry, and faithful to myself. For this reason, **this ministry cannot allow anyone to pretend to be in it and yet still say something different.** This does not mean that I ask you to stay away from your local church or that your local church is no longer a local church. What I am fellowshiping about is the impact of the ministry for the fighting of the Lord's interest in His recovery.

...**I am not talking about the churches, I am talking about the ministry.** The ministry is one thing, and the churches are another thing. These two things can be differentiated in the Epistles written by Paul. Paul's ministry is one category, and the churches are another category. Paul never tried to force all the churches to follow him in his ministry, but Paul surely had a ministry for the churches. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, pp. 81-82)

This same distinction is strongly made at the end of the co-workers’ fellowship in *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* (see the citation at the beginning of this section), and Brother Lee’s word about the scope of his fellowship is also included as the closing word in the co-workers’ publication. The author of “Analysis & Response” is a well-educated brother who knows the power of words. His distortion of the content, scope and tenor of *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* can only be understood as deliberate. Such a dishonest practice should in and of itself be grounds enough to reject “Analysis & Response” as unfitting among those who cherish the truth.

WHOSE “HISTORICAL REVISIONISM”?

Recently an article was printed in a journal published by one of the churches and posted on that church’s Web site which accuses the co-workers in the Lord’s recovery of practicing “historical revisionism” in *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*. This accusation is largely a repetition of allegations made in “Analysis & Response” by the same author, an article which is also posted on the same church’s Web site. Historical revisionism, in the sense it is used in these writings, refers to the manipulation of facts to support a predetermined ideological position. In modern parlance, the most common application of the term relates to Holocaust deniers, those who claim that the mass slaughter of Jews by the Nazis never occurred. It is essentially a euphemism for perpetrating lies to justify one’s own agenda.

The author of these dissenting writings claims the co-workers intentionally neglected to mention certain historical facts that, if taken into account, would negate their fellowship. Among these are³:

- The existence of the Hong Kong Book Room
- The contents of *The Beliefs and Practices of the Local Churches*
- Brother Lee’s expectation concerning the Writers’ Conference
- The publication of *Journey Through the Bible*

In fact, when read in context, the passages from which the author excerpts short statements actually support the co-workers’ reaffirmation of Brother Lee’s fellowship. The author

³ The issue of whether being restricted in one publication was merely an “informal, voluntary, personal practice” between Brother Nee and Brother Lee is addressed in a separate article, which includes a discussion of the historical precedent for “one publication” throughout our history.

of these articles selectively cut quotes from Brother Lee's ministry, in some cases quoting part of a sentence and leaving out the rest because it contradicted his opinion. It is, in fact, he who practices historical revisionism.

Throughout this article, when we cite a portion of ministry used by the author of the dissenting articles, we will put the words he quoted in italics so that it is clear what was left out. In reading these passages keep in mind that what the author of the dissenting articles is attempting to justify is a separate publication work carried out independently of the global fellowship of co-workers. This separate publication work disseminates the different teachings of a group of workers to whom he has joined himself and who publish his writings.

Hong Kong Book Room

The author claims that the lack of any mention of the Hong Kong Book Room in *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* is an intentional distortion of the historical record. He claims that "one could argue that two publishers existed simultaneously in the recovery, the Hong Kong and Taiwan Gospel Book Rooms." As justification he quotes part of a sentence from fellowship Brother Lee had with the serving ones in the Living Stream Ministry office in 1987:

In 1950, Brother Nee arrived in Hong Kong and wanted me to come from Taiwan to see him. When he fellowshiped about the matter of issuing publications, he took the opportunity to make some arrangements. **It was decided that the Gospel Book Room would remain one**, yet due to the political situations, it had to conduct business *separately in three places: Shanghai, Taipei, and Hong Kong*. Brother Nee was responsible for the bookroom in Shanghai. I was responsible for the one in Taipei, and Brother Weigh was responsible for the one in Hong Kong. However, Brother Nee wanted me also to take care of the responsibility for the publications of the Hong Kong bookroom. (*Words of Training for the New Way*, Vol. 1, pp. 34-35)

Read in context it is readily apparent that the separation of the book room into three offices was a business arrangement, but that the three were still one in Brother Nee’s intention and in the brothers’ practice. The author makes passing reference to this saying, “Of course, one could argue that all three book rooms were ‘one.’” This is disingenuous. Why does the author put “one” in quotation marks but not indicate whom he is quoting? Why does he say “one could argue” when this was Brother Nee’s plain and direct instruction? Why does he begin mid-sentence and not include Brother Lee’s complete thought: “It was decided that the Gospel Book Room would remain one, yet due to the political situations, it had to conduct business separately in three places: Shanghai, Taipei, and Hong Kong”? Even the omission of the words “it had to conduct business” seems calculated to obscure the intent of Brother Nee’s fellowship. This is not an honest treatment of our brothers’ ministry.

In 1994 Brother Lee explained further:

In 1950, when the two of us were in Hong Kong, we spent much time talking together. Because I realized that later it might not be possible for me to contact Brother Nee, I brought up to him the need to publish in Taiwan. He said, “Brother Witness, you know that among us only I personally own the Gospel Book Room. It belongs neither to the church nor to the co-workers; it belongs to me personally.” Then he made arrangements, saying, “Now the three political regions—the mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan—all differ from one another. So we will have the Gospel Book Room divided into three: one in Shanghai, one in Taiwan, and one in Hong Kong. **They are not three Book Rooms; rather, they are one.** Due to the political situation, the three places will be on their own financially.” He was responsible for the one in Shanghai; he entrusted to me the responsibility for the one in Taiwan; and he asked Brother K. H. Weigh to take charge of the one in Hong Kong. He further charged me, saying, “Brother Weigh also needs your help in bearing the responsibility for the articles.” Therefore, in the initial period, the Taiwan Gospel Book Room published books mainly in coordination with the Book Room in Hong Kong.

The two published books together, not separately. The cost of the books published both in Hong Kong and Taiwan was calculated together. It was due to such an arrangement made by Brother Nee that we have today's situation. (*The High Peak of the Vision and the Reality of the Body of Christ*, pp. 24-25)

Would it not be more honest to determine what Brother Nee and Brother Lee meant when they said that all three book rooms were to be one, rather than dismissing it as something "one could argue"? The writer attempts to reduce Brother Nee's clear word, repeated on more than one occasion by Brother Lee, to a mere view "one could argue" in order to justify his own agenda without regard to the historical facts. In 1973, Brother Lee made it clear that the purpose of all three book rooms was to reprint Brother Nee's books for the needs of the churches:

He also made an arrangement for the publication work. The publications were always under his oversight. When he and I were in Hong Kong, he made the decision that there should be a bookroom in Taipei and a bookroom in Hong Kong **to publish all of his books**. He himself would oversee the bookroom in Shanghai. He charged me to take care of the bookroom in Taipei, and he arranged for Brother K.H. Weigh to take care of the bookroom in Hong Kong. He said that all the books could be reprinted and that all three bookrooms would have a common copyright. Thus, we began **to reprint all his books for the need in all the places** outside of mainland China. (*The History of the Church and of the Local Churches*, p. 140)

A similar account can be found in Brother Lee's biography of Watchman Nee:

At this time he made the following arrangements regarding the bookroom and literature work:

1) The Gospel Bookroom should be set up in three places: Shanghai, Taipei, and Hong Kong. Watchman would personally manage the one in Shanghai; I would be responsible for the one in Taipei; and Brother Weigh would be responsible for the one in Hong Kong. Further, **I was**

asked to assist the bookroom in Hong Kong regarding literary and editorial responsibility.

2) All three bookrooms would share the same copyrights.

(In 1975, Brother K.H. Weigh and I with other related brothers rearranged, due to the situation at that time, the matter of copyright as follows: All the Chinese books would be published by the Gospel Bookroom in Taipei; all the English books would be published by the Living Stream in the U.S.A.; the Hong Kong Church Bookroom would be used only for the distribution of our publications in Hong Kong.) (*Watchman Nee: A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age*, p. 326)

Thus all three book rooms were formed to reprint the ministry of Brother Nee, and all labored in coordination to carry out that work. The record in *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* was never intended to be an exhaustive history of the administrative arrangements in the one publication work in the Lord's recovery. There have also been Living Stream Ministry offices in Irving, Texas, and London, England. These are not mentioned either. Nevertheless, the entire history of the publication work in the Lord's recovery supports the co-workers' affirmation of Brother Lee's fellowship that we all should be restricted in one publication in carrying out the ministry in the Lord's recovery. There is no justification in the history of the Lord's move among us for separate publication works, and there is certainly no justification for using separate publication works to propagate different teachings and dissenting opinions among the churches and the saints.

The Beliefs and Practices of the Local Churches

The author of these dissenting writings makes much of the fact that the publication work is not addressed in *The Beliefs and Practices of the Local Churches*. Such an argument ignores two basic points:

1. *Beliefs and Practices* is not an exhaustive document concerning everything believed and practiced in the Lord's recovery. Its very opening statement is:

Because an increasing number of people, both Christians and non-Christians, are seeking information concerning the local churches, we have prepared this booklet as a **basic introduction** to our beliefs and practices. (*The Beliefs and Practices of the Local Churches*, p. 1)

Beliefs and Practices was prepared as a "basic introduction" to the churches for those outside the Lord's recovery, not as a definitive or comprehensive manual of the Lord's recovery.

2. The scope of *Beliefs and Practices* is the local churches, not the ministry or the work. The word "ministry" is used only one time in the booklet and that in a very general sense. The booklet does not address in any substantive manner how the ministry is carried out in the Lord's recovery. For that reason one would not expect that the matter of being restricted in one publication in the ministry should be found in its pages. Yet the author takes the absence of this topic in an introductory booklet as an excuse to promote and carry out a different publication work.

Writers' Conference

One of the most shocking examples of the author's selective quoting of Brother Lee's ministry is his use of part of a sentence from Brother Lee's fellowship with the elders in 1986. The half sentence quoted says, "My intention in calling a writers' conference was to encourage you to write something..." What the author left out is very revealing.

My intention in calling a writers' conference was to encourage you to write something, **but not in the way that came out. This fellowship may preserve and protect us from doing things lawlessly.** (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, p. 163)

What was “this fellowship”? It is “Being Restricted in One Publication,” the subheading of the section in which the half-sentence quoted by the author is found. Yes, Brother Lee did call a writers’ conference. Based on what subsequently transpired, he presented the need to be restricted in one publication to avoid “lawless” behavior, behavior that is the same in all essential respects as what the author of these articles is advocating and practicing.

The dissenting author attempts to vindicate his own lawless behavior by quoting half of one sentence from a passage that condemns his activity! It is also noteworthy that the entire section in which this quote appears is reproduced on pages 10-12 of *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*, where readers can evaluate its meaning in context.

Journey Through the Bible

In one of his articles circulated through the Internet the author also cites *Journey Through the Bible* as an example of a different publication. Here the following observations are relevant:

1. *Journey Through the Bible* was initiated under Brother Lee’s direction and was carried out in coordination and fellowship with him.
2. *Journey Through the Bible* was developed for the young people in the church in Anaheim. Eventually, due to interest from other churches it was picked up as an “experiment” by the young people’s work in Southern California in fellowship with LSM with the intention that, once the series was completed, it would be turned over to LSM. It never had the same target audience and therefore was at no time in competition or rivalry with the general ministry in the churches in the Lord’s recovery. It made no pretense of having any sort of leadership role in the ministry or of defining the truth.

Conclusion

The author of these dissenting articles is an academic by training. As such, he knows that selective quoting of a source is a dishonest practice contrary to the ethics of his profession, not to mention that it is unconscionable to a believer and incompatible with a sincere desire for truth. By taking Brother Lee's statements out of context and making them say the opposite of what was intended, he demonstrates that he is the one who is trying to distort our legacy in the Lord's recovery to justify his own ends. He ignored the real facts in the cases he mentions. Nevertheless, he chose to make insinuations against the co-workers and raise questionings in the hearts and minds of the dear saints in the Lord's recovery. His representation of the facts is highly selective and biased. The fact remains that there is nothing in the teaching and practice of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee or in the history of the churches in the Lord's recovery to justify the unruly behavior advocated and practiced by the author of these articles. There is no basis in fact on which to rationalize the promulgation of different teachings and dissenting opinions through independent publications in the Lord's recovery.