

A FAITHFUL WORD

SERIES FOUR

“Who Concerning the Truth Have Misaimed”

**THE DIRECTION
AND LEADERSHIP
OF THE LORD’S
RECOVERY**

Book

4

DEFENSE & CONFIRMATION PROJECT

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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

2 Tim. 2:18a – Who concerning the truth have misaimed...

A few dissenting brothers have published criticisms of the teachings of the ministry in the Lord's recovery on crucial matters related to the preservation of the proper oneness in the Body of Christ. This series of books contains extensive responses from the Bible and the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee to the issues raised in those criticisms. The dissenting ones have misaimed concerning the truth (2 Tim. 2:18a), as the divisive fruit of their misaimings increasingly manifests. We commit these articles to the saints' prayerful consideration before the Lord in the hope that they can instruct, heal and inoculate them and equip them to inoculate others (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:1-3, 14-15, 23-26; 3:16-17).

The books in this series address the following issues:

1. The practicality of the Body.
2. Authority in the Body of Christ and in the local churches.
3. The local church life for the Body of Christ.
4. The direction and leadership of the Lord's recovery.
5. Regions of the work and companies of workers.
6. Using worldly means to gain increase.
7. Properly discerning spiritual authority to rightly follow the Lord.

This book about *The Direction and Leadership of the Lord's Recovery* includes a statement issued by the co-workers immediately following Brother Lee's passing entitled "Seven Points of Reaffirmation Concerning the Direction of the Lord's Recovery as Established by Brother Witness Lee." It also includes an article entitled "The Way of Blending and the Leadership in the Ministry in the Lord's Recovery Today." This article examines what blending is, what it results in, how it applies to us today, how it is accomplished, the Lord's sovereign arrangement for the blending of the Body, and problems that arise from not being blended. It then discusses who the "blended brothers" are and looks at certain accusations made concerning the use of this term.

6 DIRECTION AND LEADERSHIP OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY

- 1 Tim. 1:3-4 – [3] Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things [4] nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim. 6:3-4 – [3] If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness, [4] he is blinded with pride, understanding nothing, but is diseased with questionings and contentions of words, out of which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions.
- 2 Tim. 2:1-3 – [1] You therefore, my child, be empowered in the grace which is in Christ Jesus; [2] and the things which you have heard from me through many witnesses, these commit to faithful men, who will be competent to teach others also. [3] Suffer evil with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
- 2 Tim. 2:14-15 – [14] Remind them of these things, solemnly charging them before God not to have contentions of words, which is useful for nothing, to the ruin of those who hear. [15] Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman, cutting straight the word of the truth.
- 2 Tim. 2:23-26 – [23] But foolish questionings and those arising from an untrained mind refuse, knowing that they beget contentions. [24] But a slave of the Lord ought not to contend but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with wrong; [25] in meekness correcting those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance unto the full knowledge of the truth, [26] and they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil, having been caught alive by him, unto His will.
- 2 Tim. 3:16-17 – [16] All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

**SEVEN POINTS OF REAFFIRMATION
CONCERNING THE DIRECTION OF
THE LORD'S RECOVERY AS ESTABLISHED
BY BROTHER WITNESS LEE**

July 1997

- I. A reaffirmation of the direction of the Living Stream Ministry to publish the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee.
- II. A reaffirmation of the seven conferences and trainings held each year by the ministry to release the truth and to blend the saints.
- III. A reaffirmation of the Full Time Training to perfect the young people to know the truth and to serve in the building up of the Body of Christ.
- IV. A reaffirmation to practice the church life in every place according to the God-ordained way, with the function of every member replacing one man's speaking.
- V. A reaffirmation to practice the blending of the saints and the churches in every way to build up the universal oneness of the Body of Christ.
- VI. A reaffirmation to support the spread of the Lord's Recovery to Russia, to Europe, and to the whole earth.
- VII. A reaffirmation of the co-workers and leading brothers on the whole earth to continue the struggle of our Brother Lee in one accord for the building up of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem.

THE WAY OF BLENDING AND THE LEADERSHIP IN THE MINISTRY IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY TODAY

One consistent target of the dissenters' attack is the group of co-workers who serve together as "blended brothers." Brother Lee used this term in the last year or so of his ministry to refer to the brothers who were one with him in carrying out the ministry in the Lord's recovery. For example, in a "Letter of Fellowship with Thanks" written by Brother Lee on March 24, 1997, Brother Lee addressed the way the Lord was going on in the ministry in the Lord's recovery:

The Lord has shown me that He has prepared **many brothers who will serve as fellow slaves with me in a blended way**. I feel that this is the Lord's sovereign provision for His Body and the up-to-date way to fulfill His ministry.

In 1995 Brother Lee commented:

...However, after I came back from Taiwan to the United States in 1989, from the time we began to have the training here in Anaheim to this day, **I can testify that we have had a group of co-workers here who are truly in harmony**. This harmony depends on our knowing the cross and the Spirit. **The co-workers visited different places through the invitations of the churches and have thereby blended the churches as one**. This is a good phenomenon. Now **the churches around the globe all have the desire to be blended together**. There is definitely such a trend of blending in the Lord's recovery. (*The Governing and Controlling Vision in the Bible*, p. 75)

From these two excerpts we can see that in Brother Lee's realization, the blending of the churches in the Lord's recovery comes out of a group of co-workers laboring together in harmony, and it was his expectation that the way of the blending which had begun in his latter years would continue after his passing as the way for the co-workers to take the churches on.

Brother Lee's Strong Burden for Blending

In the last years of his ministry, Brother Lee frequently spoke about the need for blending. In a message given in 1994 entitled "The Need of the Blending," he said:

My burden in this message concerns the need of the blending. Even among us who are in the recovery, not many have the realization that we need the blending, and we need it desperately. **The heavy burden in the ministry that is on my heart and in my spirit is the matter of blending....** (*The Practical Points Concerning Blending*, p. 14)

The depth of this burden is also evident in Brother Lee's prayer at the beginning of the 1996 Memorial Day conference:

Father, we extol You as the Lord of heaven and earth. It is of Your sovereignty that we can have this blending conference. Your blending is our blessing. Your blending is our growing. Your blending is our increasing. **Your blending is our building. Your blending is everything to us. We long to be blended in the Body** and to be blended as the chosen people, the heavenly citizens.... (*The Secret of God's Organic Salvation: The Spirit Himself with Our Spirit*, p. 10)

To understand Brother Lee's fellowship about the way the Lord would take to blend the churches together as one Body and to carry on his ministry through a group of brothers serving "as fellow slaves with me in a blended way," a broad view of the subject of blending is needed. Like many things in the Bible, blending has both spiritual and practical aspects. The practical aspect is to bring us into the reality of the spiritual aspect. Since the issues today are mainly on the side of practice, we will focus on those points. Therefore, in this article we will look at:

1. Blending, Oneness, One Accord, the Reality of the Body of Christ, and the Organic Coordination of the Members
2. Some Results of Blending
3. How Blending Applies In the Church, the Ministry, and the Work
4. How Blending Is Accomplished

5. The Lord's Sovereign Arrangement for the Blending of the Body
6. Problems that Arise From Not Being Blended
7. Who Are the "Blended Brothers"?

Blending, Oneness, One Accord, the Reality of the Body of Christ, and Organic Coordination

Blending, the oneness of the Body of Christ, the one accord, the reality of the Body of Christ, and the organic coordination of the members of the Body are intimately and intrinsically related. The goal of the blending is to bring us into the reality of the Body of Christ as the enlarged oneness of the Triune God and into the one accord in the practice of the church life. Blending issues in an organic coordination through which God is expressed, His move can be carried out, and His administration is established. Although the principle of blending can be found throughout the Bible, direct mention of it is found in 1 Corinthians 12:24¹:

1 Cor. 12:24 – But our comely members have no need. But God has ¹blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked.

fn. 12:24¹ – Implying to be mutually adjusted. God has blended all the different members of Christ together into one Body. For this we need much transformation (Rom. 12:2); that is, we need to be transformed from the natural life to the spiritual by the same Spirit for the practical Body life.

God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24). The word *blended* also means adjusted, harmonized, tempered, and mingled. God has blended the Body, adjusted the Body, harmonized the Body, tempered the Body, and mingled the Body. The Greek word for *blended* implies the losing of distinctions. One brother's distinction may be quickness, and

¹ Blending can also be seen in the meal offering and the one bread representing the one Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:17; Lev. 2:4; John 12:24 (see *The Practical Points Concerning Blending*, pp. 18-19).

another's may be slowness. But in the Body life the slowness disappears and the quickness is taken away. All such distinctions are gone. God has blended all the believers of all different races and colors. Who can make the blacks and the whites lose their distinctions? Only God can do this. A husband and a wife can have the harmony in their marriage life only by losing their distinctions. (*The Divine and Mystical Realm*, p. 86)

The Oneness of the Body of Christ

The recovery of the oneness of the Body of Christ is a crucial matter in the Lord's recovery. This oneness is the enlarged oneness of the Triune God, which is a oneness of coinherence, that is, of mutual indwelling (John 14:10-11; 17:21; 14:20).

John 14:10-11 – [10] Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works. [11] Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.

John 17:21 – That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 14:20 – In that ¹day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

fn. 14:20¹ – This should refer to the day of the Lord's resurrection (20:19).

...The Triune God is one, and that oneness is a model of the oneness of the Body of Christ. Because the oneness of the Body has the oneness among the Three of the Trinity as a model, John 17 tells us that this oneness is altogether wrapped up with the Triune God (v. 21). The oneness of the Body of Christ is just the enlarged oneness of the divine Trinity. (*Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way* (2), p. 36)

The One Accord

One accord is the practice of the oneness (Acts 1:14). It is an inward harmony in which we are all attuned to one mind with one heart and one way (1 Cor. 1:10; Matt. 18:19).

Acts 1:14 – These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

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.

Matt. 18:19 – Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens.

In Matthew 18:19 the Greek word *sumphoneo* is used for one accord. It means “to be in harmony, or accord” and refers to the harmonious sound of musical instruments or voices.... In Acts 1:14 another Greek word, *homothumadon*, is used for one accord. This word is from *homo*, same, and *thumos*, mind, will, purpose (soul, heart). The word denotes a harmony of inward feeling in one’s entire being. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, p. 76)

The Relationship of the Blending with the Oneness and the One Accord

The only way to arrive at the one accord as the practice of the oneness is to be blended together. Thus, there is an intrinsic relationship between blending and the realization of the oneness of the Body of Christ and of the one accord.

Without the blending, the Lord has no way to go on with us. **Blending is the Body, blending is the oneness, and blending is the one accord—it is all these things....** (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, p. 88)

The Reality of the Body of Christ

The goal of blending is to bring us into the reality of the Body of Christ.

...The purpose of the blending is to usher us all into the reality of the Body of Christ. I treasure the local churches, as you do. But I treasure the local churches because of a purpose. The local churches are the procedure to bring me into the Body of Christ.... (*The Practical Points Concerning Blending*, p. 10)

This is the reason that, although the recovery has been in the United States for more than thirty-two years, **it has been only in these recent years that we have felt the need to enter into the reality of the Body of Christ. This is the purpose of the blending.** (*The Practical Points Concerning Blending*, p. 11)

Organic Coordination

The outworking of blending is manifested as an organic coordination. Coordination is not itself the reality of the Body of Christ,² but is the proper issue of blending.

To be tempered together in the Body is to be blended, mingled. By this blending we have coordination, balance, and adjustment.... (*The Conclusion of the New Testament, Messages 157-171*, p. 1791)

Some Results of Blending

If we see the Lord's intention in this age and understand the intrinsic significance of blending, we can appreciate the many benefits of blending for the building up of the Body of Christ. The following are just four out of the many benefits of blending, yet each of these benefits is crucial to the preservation of the oneness and the building up of the Body:

² See *The Practical Points Concerning Blending*, pp. 19-20.

1. Blending issues in keeping the churches and the saints in the oneness of the universal Body of Christ:

...Learn to fellowship. Learn to be blended. From now on, the churches should come together frequently to be blended. We may not be used to it, but after we begin to practice blending a few times, we will acquire the taste for it. This is the most helpful thing in the keeping of the oneness of the universal Body of Christ.... (*The Divine and Mystical Realm*, p. 87)

2. Blending produces harmony and eliminates distinctions:

We can be in harmony, because we have been tempered. Eventually, the distinctions will all be gone. Blending means to lose the distinctions. We all have to pay some price to practice the blending. (*The Divine and Mystical Realm*, p. 88)

3. Blending brings in the Lord's leading:

...If the five brothers are willing to be mingled together and are willing to fellowship together, morning and evening, today, tomorrow, and every day, you will see the Lord's leading there, and you will see God's way, God's wisdom, light, revelation, and burden all there. Through the fellowship, the burden for the gospel will come, the burden to edify the saints will come, the light from the Bible will come, and the gifts will also come. If the elders are willing to fellowship this way, at the right time some will receive the gifts. (*The Elders' Management of the Church*, p. 157)

4. Blending brings us into one accord, which is the master key to the experience of the baptism in the Spirit for the Lord's economical move:

Without the blending, the Lord has no way to go on with us. Blending is the Body, blending is the oneness, and **blending is the one accord**—it is all these things.... (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, p. 88)

...If you want to experience the baptism in the Spirit, you must have the one accord. If all the members of a local church have the one accord, the baptism in the Spirit will be there. If you really want to practice the proper way to preach the

gospel, you need the one accord. Without this key, no door can be opened. **The one accord is the “master key to all the rooms,” the master key to every blessing in the New Testament....** (*Elders’ Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord’s Move*, pp. 19-20)

How Blending Applies In the Church, the Ministry, and the Work

Since blending is a fundamental principle of the Body life, it must be applied in all aspects of our practice—including the church life, the ministry, and the work. In his last years, Brother Lee charged the saints in the Lord’s recovery to practice blending in every aspect of the Body life.

Among us we should have the blending of **all the individual members** of the Body of Christ, the blending of **all the churches** in certain districts, the blending of **all the co-workers**, and the blending of **all the elders**. (*The Divine and Mystical Realm*, p. 87)

In order for the saints in a vital group to enter into the reality of the Body of Christ, they must be blended together. Similarly, in order for a church to be built up as the local expression of the Body of Christ, the elders in that church must be blended together.

In order for a church to be built up, there is first the need for the elders to be built up. How can a church be built up if its elders are not built up? The building of the church is a matter of the coordination of the saints, but if the elders within a church cannot coordinate together, how can they help the brothers and sisters to coordinate? Therefore, the building and the coordination in the church are entirely in the hands of its elders, and they are dependent upon them. (*The Elders’ Management of the Church*, p. 114)

In the same way, in order for the churches to be built up as the organic Body of Christ, the churches must all be blended together, but this blending is dependent on the co-workers being blended together and serving together in coordination, so that

what is produced out of their labor is one blended Body. In 1948 Brother Lee said³:

...If the coordination among the co-workers is not smooth, you cannot expect the coordination among the brothers and sisters to be smooth. The crux of the matter today is the coordination among the co-workers. This is our biggest problem. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 57, p. 98)

In fact, the thought of blending through fellowship is implied in the very term “co-worker.” To be a co-worker means that one is working with God and with those fellow-servants God has raised up to serve Him in the ministry to the churches. This requires fellowship with God and with his fellow-slaves. As Kerry Robichaux explained in response to a question about whether a worker who chose to publish his own ministry independently would still be considered a co-worker:

It all depends on whether or not the worker publishes and disseminates such a publication in fellowship with the co-workers in the Lord’s recovery (not just in his locality or even area). If he does not fellowship with the other co-workers, he is not co-working. He is simply, as you say, a “worker,” not a co-worker.... If one does not wish to fellowship actively with the co-workers, he may be a worker, but he can hardly be a co-worker. It is not simply a matter of how the co-workers view him; it is more fundamentally a matter of how he views himself and, more importantly, whether or not he serves in a true co-working way. (E-mail from Kerry Robichaux, 06/21/05)

To be a co-worker in name does not mean one is necessarily a co-worker in reality. In 1934 Watchman Nee asked Brother Lee to co-sign a statement that any “co-worker” who merely taught outward things such as leaving the denominations, head covering,

³ This is the record of a co-workers’ meeting in which both Brother Nee and Brother Lee spoke. It is recorded in *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, but the speaker at this point is Brother Lee.

bread breaking, and baptism “is no longer our co-worker” (*Speaking for God*, p. 105). In 1948 Brother Lee said:

Today there are four kinds of workers. The first are the co-workers who match the need of the ministry of God in the present age. This is a small group of people who have been dealt with by the Lord and who are in one accord. The second kind are the younger co-workers. They are willing to receive the direction and to come under the coordination of the older co-workers, and they are willing to follow and to learn in humility. The third kind are those who are unwilling to submit to the senior co-workers, who do not belong to the denominations, yet who are happy to remain in fellowship with us. The fourth kind are the preachers and free evangelists among the denominations. What we need today are the first and the second kind of co-workers. (*Messages Given During the Resumption of Watchman Nee’s Ministry*, p. 147)

In these four categories of workers, only the first two are called “co-workers”. In *The Vision of the Age*, Brother Lee went even further, indicating that to be a co-worker in the Lord’s ministry in reality, one must not fall behind the vision of the age:

Not only were men like Gamaliel and Barnabas falling behind in the vision; even apostles such as Peter and James were in danger of missing out on the vision. They were of the same general group as Paul, but they were not co-working together.... (*The Vision of the Age*, pp. 44-45)

Thus the practice of blending applies not only to the saints and the churches, but also to the elders and the co-workers. In fact, the co-workers and elders must be the model of the practice of blending. Otherwise, the churches have no way to enter into the blending of the entire Body of Christ.

How Blending Is Accomplished

To enter into the reality of the Body of Christ through being blent together, we need a door. That door is much and thorough fellowship and prayer.

If we would practice the blending, we should not forget the matter of fellowship. **Fellowship is the basis for blending.** Thus, we must practice the fellowship. By so doing we will lay the foundation for the blending. However, instead of practicing the fellowship, we have practiced hypocrisy for years; we have all been hiding ourselves under a mask. Without the foundation of intimate and thorough fellowship, there can be no blending. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, p. 87)

All of these points mean that we should fellowship. **When a co-worker does anything, he should fellowship with the other co-workers. An elder should fellowship with the other elders.** Fellowship tempers us; fellowship adjusts us; fellowship harmonizes us; and fellowship mingles us. We should forget about whether we are slow or quick and just fellowship with others. We should not do anything without fellowshipping with the other saints who are coordinating with us. Fellowship requires us to stop when we are about to do something. In our coordination in the church life, in the Lord's work, we all have to learn not to do anything without fellowship. (*The Divine and Mystical Realm*, p. 87)

According to our experiences, there is **no other way to be blended except by thorough and much prayer.** We should not talk too much. We should not think that if we talk together, we will be blended. This is wrong. **Blending can be accomplished only by praying together.** We must be persons of prayer. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, p. 92)

If we are lacking in such fellowship and prayer together, we will be lacking in blending and there will be a shortage in our personal life, the church life, and the work.

We must realize that when fellowship disappears, God also disappears. God comes as the fellowship. Today our meetings, our married life, the coordination among the co-workers, and the fellowship among the local churches are abnormal because we are short of this fellowship. Today there is not enough fellowship among the local churches, and the churches are not

absolutely one in the fellowship. (*The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man*, 1996 edition, p. 155)

The Lord's Sovereign Arrangement for the Blending of the Body

Under the Lord's sovereignty, this universal blending is possible in the modern day and age by means of modern conveniences such as transportation and communications.

All the local churches on the globe today should be one. Today, unlike in Paul's time, travel and communication to nearly anywhere on the earth are very convenient. Because of this, **the churches today should be blended much more than they were in Paul's time.** Not only according to the revelation of the Bible but also according to the modern conveniences, we should be one, and **we should be blended together as much as practicality allows.** (*One Body and One Spirit*, p. 20)

Lastly, the churches also need the blending. Today due to the progress in telecommunications and means of transportation, the geographic distances have been greatly reduced. Prior to World War II, it was not easy for people to travel from the United States to Hong Kong. Because of the different modes of transportation and difficulties of travel, people could not arrive and be gathered together at the same time. If so, how could there be the blending? However, there are so many airplanes flying throughout the whole world; they are speedy and punctual. Today all kinds of inventions and instruments have caused the people in the entire world to be blended. **The blending of the Body of Christ is possible through all the modern means of transportation. Hence, all the churches should live in life and in the spirit and be blended with one another for the manifestation of the reality of the Body of Christ.** (*A General Outline of God's Economy and the Proper Living of a God-Man*, p. 68)

In light of the Lord's sovereign provision, we should not take any excuse for not blending. This blending is not limited to a few

churches in a particular region or under the care of a particular worker; rather it is global in its scope.

The local churches should fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ. Any local church that does not keep this universal fellowship of the Body of Christ is divisive and becomes a local sect. Some so-called local churches are not genuine and have become divisions; we do not need to fellowship with such “churches.” But we should have fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ. If not, we are no longer a church but a sect. A church is one that remains in the Body; a sect is a group of believers who divide themselves from the Body. When my arm remains in the body, it is a part of my living body. If it is cut off and separate from the body, it becomes a dead thing. (*Elders’ Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way* (2), p. 122)

The one expression of Christ is in the unique oneness of the Spirit of the unique Body of Christ (Eph. 4:3-4). Without the Spirit, we cannot have the oneness. This one expression is also in the unique fellowship of the unique Spirit, participating in the unique flow of the Triune God (1 John 1:3; 2 Cor. 13:14). There is only one Triune God and only one fellowship, one flow of the Spirit. The one expression of Christ is in the unique move of the unique God for the unique accomplishment of His unique economy (Eph. 1:10; 1 Tim. 1:4b) and in the unique blending in the unique life of Christ for His unique testimony in the universe (1 Cor. 12:24). Everything must be unique. **If only the group of churches in your district are blended together, that is not the unique blending. That is a “sect blending.”** (*The Ten Great Critical “Ones” for the Building Up of the Body of Christ*, p. 60)

Problems That Arise From Not Blending

Thus, it is very serious when any of the serving ones in the Lord’s recovery drop the practice of blending through times of fellowship and prayer together. This is true whether they are

co-workers laboring among the churches, elders serving within a local church, or saints serving in children's meetings, on the campuses, or anywhere else. Many problems that arise among the churches can be traced back to this point. In speaking of the eldership, Brother Lee warned that the biggest problem was an unwillingness to be blended together through fellowship:

In order to manage a church, the elders must have thorough fellowship. If there are five elders, they are like five lumps of clay. They must be mingled together in water until the five lumps become one lump, and they become indistinguishable one from another. This mingling is the fellowship. The five elders should be seeking the Lord's leading together. **The thing to fear** in the management of the church is not the ignorance of the elders in handling affairs, but **their unwillingness to fellowship.** (*The Elders' Management of the Church*, p. 157)

No matter what the reason—whether because of personal offenses, differences of opinion, or some other reason—we cannot drop gathering for prayer and fellowship. To do so creates a large opening for God's enemy to create misunderstandings, foster strifes and enmity, and eventually cause division.

We must have the reality of the fellowship and blending of the Body of Christ. **Otherwise, regardless of how much we pursue and how simple and humble we are, sooner or later there will be problems, even divisions, among us.** Hence, we must be governed by the vision of the Body and follow in the footsteps of the apostle by bringing all the saints in all the churches into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ. (*The Experience of God's Organic Salvation Equaling Reigning in Christ's Life*, p. 71)

Lack of blending is fertile ground for ambition and pride. As ones serving the Lord, we should be aware that the germs of ambition and pride are within us.

All the problems are due to two old "gophers"—ambition and pride. If our ambition plus our pride had been killed, there would never be any problem. We like a position. We like to be honored and highly regarded by people. We may not say this,

but we must be honest before the Lord. What has been within our heart? If we were not ambitious, we could never have trouble with others. If we do not have ambition and if we do not have any element of pride, we would have no problem with anyone.... (*Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery*, p. 49)

More than once in our history ambition and pride have resulted in workers treating the area where they labor as their domain and to a greater or lesser extent separating the churches receiving their ministry from the fellowship of all the churches. Those churches have suffered loss, and the practice of the Body of Christ among the churches in the Lord's recovery has been damaged. For this reason, Brother Lee addressed this issue repeatedly.

Second, your ambition may also be to get a place, even a district, for your work. Who does not have such an ambition? I was with Brother Nee, and I learned of him. I never saw that he was ambitious to get a place, a certain district to be his district or little empire. A district in this sense is a little empire. You may want to be an emperor in your district, with everything under your control and rule and where everyone must listen to you. Who is not like this? I was like this, but the Lord dealt with me. Your ambition may also be to captivate people to be your private co-workers. You may attract, charm, and capture people for this purpose. This means that in your work in the Lord's recovery you have a party in which certain ones who are very close to you have been captivated, attracted, and charmed by you. They appreciate your ability, and they appreciate your capacity, so they stand with you. Then they become your particular co-workers. They are co-workers generally, but in particular they are a certain person's co-workers. Do you not realize that there is such a situation in the Lord's recovery? I have seen this in experience.

Beginning in 1984 I called three urgent conferences of the co-workers and elders. In my opening word I pointed out that among us there is the tendency of division. By this I meant that quite a few capable co-workers in the Lord's recovery liked to keep their district as their empire, and they liked to

attract people to be their particular co-workers. We are all co-workers generally, but some became particular co-workers with certain attracting ones. Therefore, I warned you all.... (*A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord*, pp. 37-38)

The Tendency to Keep Separate Territories

Another hidden divisive factor is the tendency to keep separate territories. The Lord's work and move for the accomplishment of God's eternal economy is uniquely one. If we consider any region in which we are participating in the Lord's unique work as our particular territory, this will be a cause or a factor of division. Even the tendency to keep a separate territory should be uprooted. We should work for the Lord within His measure (2 Cor. 10:13-16), but we should not consider what the Lord has measured to us as our particular territory. Our local work in our region should be for the Lord's universal Body. In the New Testament we cannot see such a thing as jurisdiction in the Lord's work.

The Way of Not Having One's Work Mingled with Others' Work

In the past there was the hidden factor of working in a way of not having one's work mingled with others' work. The New Testament unveils to us that Peter's work for the Lord, mainly in the Jewish land, and Paul's, mainly in the Gentile world, were all for the one Body of Christ, without any distinction or separation. Rather, they were one in the carrying out of God's New Testament economy. The effect of Peter's work was realized in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12), and Paul did go to Jerusalem to fellowship with the apostles and elders there (Acts 15:2, 4; 21:17-20a). This kind of fellowship, like the blood circulation of our physical body, helps the Body of Christ in the circulation of the divine life. It mingles the different pieces of our work for the Lord's recovery into one move. If our work is void of this kind of fellowship, this may develop into another

factor of division. (*Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way* (2), p. 19)⁴

If we practice the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ, the churches in our region will not have their own flavor:

We all must see that regardless of how many regions and how many workers there are, the Lord's testimony must be one because there are not two Lords or three Lords, but only one Lord moving on this earth. Therefore, there is only one move by one ministry to produce one Body to bear the one testimony. We must consider the real situation among us. Regionally, some of the churches bear different flavors. The churches should not bear the flavor of their region and should not give people the impression that these are churches of a certain region. The impression the churches should give people is a genuine, unique testimony of Jesus. There should be no nature, no flavor, no color, and no shape of any region. The churches should only be a testimony of Jesus. (*Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 46-47)

The fact that all the churches are identical means that they all should have the same color and flavor. However, the saints from a certain region may have a special color or flavor. There should not be such a difference in color or flavor among the churches. Although the saints are of different races and nationalities, the churches should nevertheless be identical, for we all have been saved and regenerated and we are being

⁴ Among the many other ministry excerpts that address this point, the following are particularly instructive:

- *The Practical Way to Live a Life According to the High Peak of the Divine Revelation*, pp. 58-59.
- *The Conclusion of the New Testament, Messages 189-204*, p. 2179.
- *The God-ordained Way and the Eldership*, p. 29.
- *Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel*, p. 64.
- *The Governing and Controlling Vision in the Bible*, p. 32.
- *A Brief Presentation of the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 42-43.

sanctified and transformed. Regarding essence, appearance, and expression, all the local churches must be identical. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament, Messages 189-204*, p. 2190)

Actually, the emergence of different teachings among us and the tendency to withdraw from the fellowship of the churches is a symptom of ambition.

I want to say something for the sake of the young brothers. The ambition of the brothers is a problem in the church. It is a shame to say this, but it is a fact. This ambition caused Brother Nee much suffering. Brother Nee told us that no one ever gave him a position and that he had no position to give others. Eventually, those who were ambitious for position left. Some of the divisions were caused by this kind of ambition. The ambitious ones would never admit that they were ambitious. When they caused a division, they did it with a certain excuse. They put on a “cloak” of a certain doctrine. They would say that the church was wrong in this certain doctrine, and because they were clear about this they had to leave. This was altogether a pretense, an excuse, and a cloak for their ambition. (*The History of the Church and the Local Churches*, p. 88)

We all must admit that we have the germs of pride and ambition in our fallen humanity. What can preserve us? Only the fellowship, the circulation, of life in the blending of the Body.

The circulation of blood in our physical body is a good picture of the fellowship, the flow of the divine life, in the Body of Christ. If our blood circulation is not proper, this can cause much sickness to our body. The proper blood circulation swallows up all kinds of germs. I was in Taipei for about five years beginning in late 1984. After about three of those years, trouble came in among the churches. The trouble in the churches today is due to the shortage of the fellowship, the circulation of the blood. This lack of fellowship gave the enemy an opportunity to come in.

...Some may think that they are wise to keep themselves separate. But if any part of the Body of Christ is separate, that part will eventually die. The best way to stay healthy is to

“receive more blood and to give more blood,” that is, to stay in the fellowship, the circulation of life. Then we will save ourselves and promote the healing of the Body. In some places there has been no peace because of a lack of fellowship. The more fellowship we have, the more peace we have. (*Elders’ Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way* (2), p. 119)

Who Are the “Blended Brothers”?

In the last year of his public ministry, Brother Lee made a deliberate attempt in the training and conference meetings to help the co-workers not to speak their own things but to speak according to his speaking by having “blending speakers” to confirm the messages. Through this he trained them to speak the same thing and serve in a blended way as fellow slaves with him for the carrying out of the Lord’s ministry. He also had many times of personal fellowship with the brothers coordinating with him to perfect and charge them to remain in the central lane of God’s economy for the building up of the one Body of Christ.

Near the end of Brother Lee’s life, the Lord showed him that He had prepared a group of “blended brothers” to labor together in carrying out the ministry after his departure. Who are these “blended brothers”? One co-worker, when asked this question, answered, “The brothers who are blended.” There is much wisdom in this answer. There is no fixed membership in the “blended brothers.” No attempt has been made to make a list of those who are “blended brothers.” Since Brother Lee’s passing much attention has been given to broadening the blending to include more co-workers from all over the world. Some brothers have said they prefer the term “blending brothers” in acknowledgement that the Lord is still blending them together. Those who demand a formal list of the “blended brothers” are seeking a target to criticize so that they can transmute something organic into something organizational.

A recent attack claimed the use of both “blended” and “blending” to refer to the co-workers betrays a lack of understanding of the truth. Essentially, it accused the co-workers of being unclear

whether they were “blended” or “blending”. It further accused the co-workers of exalting themselves by implying that they “have attained a perfected state of being ‘blended.’” Both accusations are false. The co-workers’ use of “blended” and “blending” is in the same principle as the ministry’s use of “mingled” and “mingling”. On the one hand, as believers we have been mingled with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 11:17). On the other hand, there is a need to grow in the Lord’s life, allowing Him to mingle Himself more with us (Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 12:13). Thus, as believers we are both “mingled” and “mingling”. In the same principle, the co-workers are both “blended” and “blending”.

1 Cor. 6:17 – But he who is joined to the Lord is ²one spirit.

fn. 6:17² – This indicates the mingling of the Lord as the Spirit with our spirit. Our spirit has been regenerated by the Spirit of God (John 3:6), who is now in us (v. 19) and is one with our spirit (Rom. 8:16). This is the realization of the Lord, who became the life-giving Spirit through resurrection (15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17) and who is now with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). This mingled spirit is often referred to in Paul’s Epistles, e.g., in Rom. 8:4-6.

Rom. 11:17 – But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were ¹grafted in among them and became a fellow partaker of the root of fatness of the olive tree.

fn. 11:17¹ – Grafting produces an organic union (see note 5¹ in ch. 6). It is not the exchanging of a poor life for a better life. Rather, it is the uniting of two lives as one so that they may share one mingled life and one living. Such a mingling of life takes place when two similar yet different lives pass through death (cutting) and resurrection (growth). This depicts our union with Christ.

Eph. 3:17a – That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith...

1 Cor. 12:13 – For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to ⁵drink one Spirit.

fn. 12:13⁵ – To be baptized in the Spirit is to get into the Spirit and to be lost in Him; to drink the Spirit is to take the Spirit in and to have our being saturated with Him. By these two procedures we are mingled with the Spirit. To be baptized in the Spirit is the initiation of the mingling and is once for all. To drink the Spirit is the continuation and accomplishment of the mingling and is perpetual, forever. This requires us to call on the Lord continually and draw water with joy from Him as the fountain of living water (Isa. 12:3-4; John 4:10, 14).

How then should we understand and apply the term “blending brothers”? Very simply the blending brothers are those who are themselves pursuing being blended together and who are seeking to lead all of the local churches on the earth into the universal blending of the Body of Christ. They are those who apply the principle of the Body to their ministry and work, those whose ministry and work is open to others, allowing others to adjust and temper them. Finally, they are those who are faithfully collaborating according to the burden in Brother Lee’s ministry to bring the churches into the reality of the Body of Christ through the high peak of the divine revelation, through the God-man living, and through shepherding according to God.

This blending is not confined to a closed group of brothers. Rather it is the Lord’s desire that all of the believers in all of the local churches would enter into the reality of the Body of Christ through being blended together. As Brother Nee stated:

...In the past our co-workers did not like to work in coordination. Now they have to learn the lesson of coordination. They should take the lead in this matter, but this work does not belong to the co-workers alone; everyone has a part in it.... (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 61, p. 153)

Notice again how inclusive is Brother Lee’s description of the blending:

Among us we should have the blending of **all** the individual members of the Body of Christ, the blending of **all** the churches in certain districts, the blending of **all** the

co-workers, and the blending of **all** the elders.... (*The Divine and Mystical Realm*, p. 87)

This requires that we pursue prayer and fellowship with a proper spirit, willing to be mutually adjusted, harmonized, tempered, and mingled with others. If this is not our practice and if practicing the oneness of the Body and the one accord with all of the saints and the churches are not the goal of our church life, then we have surely deviated from the central lane of God's economy and from our calling as the Lord's recovery for the accomplishment of His divine economy. If we see that the building of the Body of Christ provides a base for the Lord's return, why would we pursue any private aims that are less than this?

Conclusion

In *The Divine and Mystical Realm* there is a very sweet passage that shows Brother Lee's feeling about blending, in which he equates learning to be blended among the saints with the Lord's answer to his prayer for wisdom years before:

When I was only about twenty-seven years old, a church was raised up in my hometown. I learned to do everything through the cross and by the Spirit to minister Christ for His Body. Because I was young, I prayed the prayer of Solomon: "Lord, give me the wisdom to go out and to come in among Your people" (2 Chron. 1:10), and the Lord answered me. Through the years, I have learned to be blended among the saints. (*The Divine and Mystical Realm*, p. 88)

May all the saints in the Lord's recovery also be preserved in the practice of blending that they may participate in the reality of the Body of Christ.

Key books regarding blending:

- *1993 Blending Conference Messages Concerning the Lord's Recovery and Our Present Need*, by 47 speakers
- *The Divine and Mystical Realm*
- *Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*
- *The Practical Points Concerning Blending*
- *The Governing and Controlling Vision in the Bible*

