
A Timely Trumpeting and the Present Need

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LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

A TIMELY TRUMPETING AND THE PRESENT NEED

by Witness Lee

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PREFACE

This book is a translation of messages given in Chinese by Brother Witness Lee in an elders' and co-workers' conference held in Taipei, Taiwan, on October 8 through 10, 1988.

CHAPTER ONE

THE APOSTLES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

WITH THE CHURCHES THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED

AND THE ELDERS THEY HAVE APPOINTED

Since October 1984 we have been studying the matter of the new way. It is now exactly four years since then. Through these last four years of study, and especially during the last two or three months, I have indeed gained something, and I have seen some new light: the new way is for the practice and fulfillment of Ephesians 4:11-16 and for the recovery of the meetings of mutuality in 1 Corinthians 14:26.

MEETINGS OF MUTUALITY NEEDED

FOR THE BUILDING UP OF AN ORGANISM

First Corinthians 14:26 occupies a crucial position in the Bible. But in the two thousand years that the church has existed on the earth, only in the beginning of the apostles' time do we see a little of the practice of this matter. Afterward, this verse was put aside, and few paid attention to it. Although some have ventured to study this matter since then, eventually all have given up for lack of a way to practice it. This verse, however, bears a vital relationship to God's New Testament economy. According to our study during the last four years, we can affirm with assurance that unless the meetings of mutuality of 1 Corinthians 14:26 are recovered, it will be impossible to practice the building up of the Body of Christ as recorded in Ephesians 4:11-16.

We have pointed out before that the building mentioned in the New Testament is often misunderstood by some to mean the building up of a congregation. They fail to realize that it is the building up of the Body of Christ. We all know that a congregation is an organization, but a body is an organism. There are many organized congregations in our society. They do not need any truth, nor do they need any life. But the Body of Christ is organic. It can be built up only upon the truth and by being full of life. Whether we are building up an organized congregation or an organism has much to do with

the way we meet. If we take the old way of Christianity and meet in its traditional way, we can build up only a congregation or an organization; we can never build up the organic Body of Christ. If we are to build up the organic Body of Christ, we must have the meetings of mutuality as recorded in 1 Corinthians 14:26. When the whole church comes together, “each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.” This kind of meeting is organic. It has nothing to do with an organization.

When we consider the building up of the Body of Christ, we find that it is related to one basic question: what is the relationship between the apostles and the churches and the relationship between the apostles and the elders? For this reason, in this training we will fellowship specifically concerning the relationship between the apostles and the churches that they establish and the relationship between the apostles and the elders whom they appoint. We will also cover the different kinds of apostles and the relationship between them. Furthermore, we will consider the administration by locality of a local church and the organic building up of the Body of Christ. We must be very clear about these few things; otherwise, in practicing the new way, we will get lost.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HEAD, THE APOSTLES, THE ELDERS, THE SAINTS, THE CHURCHES, AND THE BODY

At present, there are churches on six continents of the earth. Their number has exceeded a thousand and fifty. Since we began the practice of the new way in the Lord’s recovery, saints in different localities have paid much attention to the matter. Because of geographical separation and the differences in race and language, the reactions to this matter are varied. According to my observation, this is all due to an inadequacy in the basic understanding concerning the apostles. For this reason, in these messages we will start by considering the apostles. Then from the apostles we will go on to the elders, and from the elders to the saints. Finally, from the saints we will go on to the churches. The churches are composed of the saints. In a locality the church is led by the elders, and in turn the elders are appointed by the apostles. Here we can see a few levels of relationships. First, there is the ascended Head. Through death and resurrection He has overcome Satan and death. Ephesians 4:8 says, “Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive

and gave gifts to men.” *Those* here signifies the captive saints. Formerly, they were captured by Satan, but through His death and resurrection, Christ has captured these ones from the capturing hands of Satan. When He ascended to the height, He led these captives along with Him to the height. In this way they became a train of captives, celebrating Christ’s victory. Furthermore, by His resurrection life Christ has constituted them gifts and has given them as gifts to His Body for its building up. The first among these gifts is the apostles.

This shows that in the building work of the Body of Christ, the apostles occupy a very crucial and important position. The work of the apostles is to build up the churches in the various localities. For this, there is the need to appoint elders; then the elders lead the saints; then the saints follow the leading of the elders and become the local churches in the various localities. The building work in the various local churches not only makes them the church in their various localities, but it also constitutes them the universal Body of Christ. Here we have six levels: the Head, the apostles, the elders, the saints, the churches, and the Body of Christ. The Head gave the apostles; the apostles appoint the elders; the elders lead the saints; the saints constitute the local churches, which are for the building up of the Body of Christ.

THE BASIC QUALIFICATIONS OF AN APOSTLE

Having Received the Revelation concerning Christ and the Church

Throughout the ages many have studied the matter of the qualifications of an apostle. In this chapter we will give a simple conclusion based on the views held by various groups and according to the revelation in the Bible. Altogether there are four qualifications. The first of these is that an apostle must be one who has received the revelation of God’s New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church (Matt. 16:16-18; Gal. 1:11-12). The first qualification of an apostle is that he must have revelation. He must not only have read the Bible and learned the truth; he must also be one who has received revelation. In the Bible there are many kinds of revelation. There are revelations concerning prophecies and types. There are also revelations concerning the dispensations. But what is required of the apostles is not these kinds of revelation. All these are secondary. What an apostle needs is revelation concerning the central point of God’s New Testament economy, which is Christ and the church.

First, let us see how Peter received the revelation concerning Christ and the church from the Lord. One day while the Lord Jesus was on the earth, He took the disciples to the region of Caesarea Philippi. There He asked the disciples, “You, who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:15-16). Peter received the revelation concerning Christ from the Father; he saw that Jesus was the Christ. After this, the Lord gave him a further vision concerning the church. The Lord said, “Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (v. 18). This rock is not just Christ. It also signifies the revelation Peter received from the Father concerning Christ. The church is built upon Christ and the revelation concerning Him. When Peter saw this complete revelation, it qualified him to become an apostle.

Let us see how Paul received the revelation concerning Christ and the church from the Lord. Paul was originally one who opposed Christ and persecuted the church. One day on his way to Damascus, a great light suddenly flashed on him from heaven. He fell down and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:3-4). Paul thought that he was persecuting the followers of Jesus, who walked in the way of the heretics. He did not realize that to persecute these people was to persecute Christ. Saul could have never imagined that to persecute those ones on earth was to touch the Lord in heaven. To Saul this was the most unique revelation in the whole universe. By this he saw that the Lord Jesus was one with His disciples. This vision certainly gave him a deep impression. It affected his future ministry concerning the great mystery of God, Christ and the church, and it established a firm foundation for his unique ministry. Although Peter received the revelation concerning Christ and the church before Paul did, what Paul saw was richer and higher than what Peter saw. In Paul’s case we also see this one indispensable qualification of an apostle: he must receive the revelation concerning Christ and the church.

**Preaching the Gospel of Christ
and Leading to Him the Chosen
and Called Sinners**

Based on the revelation that he has received, an apostle goes out to preach the gospel of Christ. Today in Christianity there are thousands of preachers. What they preach is mostly a gospel for sinners. Under this kind of gospel

many of us were brought to confession, repentance, believing into Christ, and salvation. After a while, the Lord led us to see the gospel recorded in the Bible. It is not so shallow or limited; rather, it is the gospel of the all-inclusive Christ. This gospel is on a high standard; it is far-reaching and even unlimited. Through this gospel of Christ, the apostles led to Christ the sinners who were chosen from before the foundation of the earth and who are called in this age (Gal. 1:16a; Eph. 3:8). Second Corinthians 11:2 says, “I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” Hence, the gospel that the apostles preached is not merely a gospel for saving sinners but one that brings the saved sinners to Christ in order to satisfy Him.

**Being Able to Raise Up Local Churches
and to Appoint Elders to Lead,
Shepherd, Teach, and Oversee**

An apostle must not only be one who can preach the gospel and lead sinners unto Christ to be saved; he must also be one who can raise up local churches and appoint elders who will lead, shepherd, teach, and oversee (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:2). It is difficult enough to raise up a local church, but it is more difficult to select men from the church to be elders who can lead, shepherd, teach, and oversee the church. This is not a small matter.

**Being Able to Define Doctrines, Open Up the Truth,
Perfect the Saints, and Build Up the Body of Christ**

An apostle must be able to define doctrines and open up the truth (1 Tim. 2:7; Eph. 4:11-12). There are many crucial doctrines in the Bible such as those concerning the Triune God, the Father, the Son, the Spirit, the Spirit of God, our human spirit, etc. All these doctrines need to be defined by the apostles. The apostles also have to expound the truth. This does not mean merely to preach some messages but to expound the biblical truths in a systematic and exhaustive way. At the same time an apostle has to be one who can perfect the saints so as to build up the Body of Christ.

These four points seem simple, but if we study them, we will find that they are not so simple. To be an apostle, a person must first receive the revelation of God's New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church. Then, he must be able to preach the gospel of Christ and lead those sinners

predestinated and called by God to Christ to be saved. In addition, he must be able to raise up a local church and to raise up men among the saints and appoint them as elders for leading, shepherding, teaching, and overseeing. Of course, he himself must know how to lead, shepherd, teach, and oversee first before he can teach others to do the same. Furthermore, he must be able to define doctrines, expound the truth, and perfect the saints for the building up of the Body of Christ. All these then are the basic qualifications of an apostle.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE APOSTLES AND THE CHURCHES THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED

After the apostles raise up a church and appoint elders, does their relationship with that church end there? Is that church to be led then only by the elders, while the apostles keep their hands off and have nothing more to do with it? This has been a controversial point throughout the ages. It is also the cause of the different voices among us today. By thoroughly reading the various parts of the New Testament concerning this matter and by studying and searching Brother Watchman Nee's writings, we found out that the apostles, after raising up churches and appointing elders, continued unceasingly to care for the churches they had established and to lead and train the elders they had appointed.

Endeavoring to Visit and Strengthen the Churches Established

Of all that the apostles do, the first thing is that they endeavor to visit and strengthen the churches that they have established. According to Acts 14, on his first journey Paul went to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. There he preached the gospel and raised up churches. Not long after that, on their journey back Paul and Barnabas returned and appointed elders in those churches. Then they went back to Antioch. There they encountered a big disturbance, the question of circumcision. Because of it they went up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and the elders and try to solve the problem in a conference. After this they went back to Antioch. Some days later Paul suggested to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit the brothers in every city in which we announced the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing" (15:36). Because of a contention the two separated from each other, and Paul chose Silas and went out to strengthen the churches (vv. 40-41). In 1 Corinthians 4:17 we also see

that Paul sent Timothy to the church in Corinth to remind them of the apostle's ways in Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:34 he even said, "The rest I will set in order when I come." All these are solid proofs that testify convincingly to the fact that after the apostles appoint elders, they do not take their hands off either the churches or the elders. On the contrary, the apostles continue to visit, teach, charge, and exhort the churches. Not only do the apostles involve themselves with the affairs of the churches; they even take the lead among them and set things in order for them.

Frequently Writing Letters to the Churches Established

In the case of the apostle Paul, we see an apostle not only endeavoring to visit and strengthen the churches established by him but also frequently writing to teach, comfort, encourage, exhort, rebuke, charge, guide, and warn the churches he has established (1 Thes. 4:1, 9, 18; 5:27; 2 Thes. 2:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:10; 4:14; 5:9; 7:10; 11:17; 16:1; 2 Cor. 1:6; 9:1; 13:1-2). Paul continued to labor by writing to the churches he had established. In fact, to the churches of Thessalonica and Corinth, he wrote not only a first letter but also a second. This proves that after an apostle raises up a church and appoints some elders, he should still continue his labor by writing to them and by teaching, comforting, encouraging, and warning this church that he has established.

Perfecting the Saints in the Churches Established

Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us that the ascended Head gave gifts, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ. If the apostles are to take their hands off and stop being involved with the affairs of the church, how can they perfect the saints? We know that Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and six months (Acts 18:11); he also stayed in Ephesus for three years (20:31). Is it possible that while he stayed in each of these two places for such long periods of time he was not involved at all with the affairs of the church in Corinth or Ephesus? This is impossible.

Having Daily the Pressure of Anxiety for the Churches upon Himself

In 2 Corinthians 11:28 Paul himself says that he bore the pressure upon himself "daily, the anxious concern for all the churches." In addition to all the

tribulations, persecutions, and sufferings, Paul had anxious concern for all the churches daily pressing upon him. This word shows in a strong way that after the apostles appoint the elders and entrust the churches they have established to the care of the local elders, it is never the case that they then take their hands completely off and have nothing more to do with the churches. On the contrary, we see the anxious concern for the churches daily pressing upon the apostle. There was not a single day that the apostle gave up the churches.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE APOSTLES AND THE ELDERS THEY HAVE APPOINTED

The Need for the Elders to Still Receive the Instructions and Leading from the Apostles

After the apostles appoint the elders, the elders still have to receive the instructions and leading from the apostles (1 Tim. 3:14-15; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17-18a, 28-32, 35), although the responsibility for the care and leading of the church is entrusted to the elders. There is an inseparable relationship between the apostles and the churches they have established and between the apostles and the elders they have appointed. Paul left Titus in Crete to train and perfect the elders (Titus 1:5-9). In Acts 20 we see that while on his way to Jerusalem, Paul sent for the elders of the church in Ephesus in order to give them his final words of exhortation, instruction, and warning.

Let us look at a few portions from Watchman Nee's books *The Normal Christian Church Life* and *Church Affairs* concerning the matter. I believe that we will be more clear after we read them.

In chapter 3 of *The Normal Christian Church Life* we read,

The duty of apostles was to found churches. Once a church was established, all responsibility was handed over to the local elders, and from that day the apostles exercised no control whatever *in its affairs*. (emphasis added)

In another part of the same book (Chinese edition) Watchman Nee says,

This does not mean that the apostles will then no longer be involved with the matters of a local church. The apostles are there to help the elders of a local church so that the elders would know how to manage the affairs of the church. An example of such occurred when Paul sent from Miletus for the elders in the church in Ephesus in order to help them and let them know how to manage the church in Ephesus so that the church there would grow spiritually. The direct management of a church lies in the hands of its elders; the apostles manage the brothers only through the hands of the elders.

If an apostle sees something wrong with a local church, he can still write to it and exhort it.

Then in chapter 1 of the book *Church Affairs* we find the following passage under the heading “Giving Help to the Elders”:

...Paul lived in Ephesus for a period of time and...there were elders there (Acts 20). However, while Paul was living in Ephesus, he granted the elders much help. Therefore, when he left, he could say these words to the elders: “Take heed...among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers” (v. 28). Paul personally imparted spiritual help to the elders. He did not merely appoint them and hand things over to them and then stop there. Paul continued to help them and to teach them how to be elders.

Later, Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete and charged them to appoint elders. If you read the first Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus, you will see that it was not merely a matter of appointing elders and then stopping there but also of helping the elders to serve together along with them. Paul charged these two young apostles, Timothy and Titus, to appoint elders in the churches and to guide them in their serving. In the first Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus, there are several charges like this. If you have time to read these Epistles, you will see that Paul charged Timothy and Titus to work together with the elders in the church. “These things I write to you...But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God” (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

What is the significance here? If you appoint elders in a locality, you cannot assume that once you have appointed them, your job is done. You also cannot assume that you can let them go on by themselves since all the responsibilities are in their hands, that is, let them make mistakes by themselves. Rather, after you have appointed elders in a locality, you need to observe how they go on, and you need to help them. In many things you need to teach them and watch them. Only then can you again appoint, arrange, and teach elders in another place. Otherwise, a local church is at a standstill once it is set up. Here is a group of people who have never taken care of the affairs of the church. Although they have some spiritual experience, they do not know how to handle the affairs of the church. It would be strange to expect such inexperienced ones not to make mistakes.

Then in the same chapter we read,

Therefore, you should cause the elders of the local churches to be capable of bearing responsibility. Paul did not leave Titus in Crete and Timothy in Ephesus and tell them to return after they established elders. Rather, he told them to set up elders and to teach and train the elders how to be proper elders, helping them to an extent that they could bear responsibility before God. Then the way was opened.

Under the heading “Showing Them How to Do the Work” we read,

The regular meeting of the responsible brothers is a very important item of their training. In this meeting show them how to do the work.

Then in the same chapter we find,

Read 1 and 2 Timothy and the Epistle to Titus again. See how God charged them to lead. You should learn from these Epistles how to help the elders and cause them to realize that they should not replace the whole Body but that they should put themselves in the Body and let the whole Body do the work.

The Apostles Having the Duty and Authority to Remove the Elders

Not only do the apostles have the duty and authority to appoint the elders; they also have the duty and authority to remove them (1 Tim. 5:19-20). Paul said to Timothy, “Against an elder do not receive an accusation, except based upon two or three witnesses” (v. 19). This indicates that after an apostle has chosen and appointed men to be elders, he still has the authority to deal with them. In the book *Church Affairs*, we have a paragraph on “The Church Listening to the Elders and the Elders Learning to Listen to the Apostles” (ch. 9). In the next paragraph, under the heading “The Apostles Being the Ones to Remove the Elders,” we read,

After the meeting in Hangkow, some brothers misunderstood. They thought that though the elders are appointed by the apostles, they did not have to listen to the apostles. This is impossible. When there were brothers who did not respect the elders and problems occurred, the letter of accusation by two or three was sent to Timothy. In other words, the authority for the appointment of the elders is with the apostles, and the authority for the removal of the elders is also with the apostles. A local church cannot expel an elder; rather, the apostles need to bear the responsibility of removing elders. This is the reason why the letter of accusation by two or three was sent to Timothy.

**THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES
(INCLUDING ALL THE SAINTS)
ESTABLISHED BY THE APOSTLES
TOWARD THE APOSTLES**

**Having Fellowship
in the Work of the Ministry of the Apostles**

The church in Philippi participated in the fellowship of the work of the ministry of the apostle. Philippians 1:5 says, “Your fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now.” Through the gospel of Christ the apostles led the sinners to salvation and brought them in, thus raising up the church. For this reason, it is obvious that the church should respond to the work of the apostles and have fellowship in the work of the apostles. The work of the apostles is to build up the Body of Christ. All the saints in a locality should have a part, be responsive, and share in this work of the apostles.

Partaking of the Grace of Christ Experienced by the Apostles

When the saints in a local church share in the fellowship of the work of the ministry of the apostles, they partake of the grace of Christ experienced by the apostles. Philippians 1:6-7 shows us that when the saints in Philippi responded to the work of the ministry of the apostles in the furtherance of the gospel, they became partakers of grace with the apostles. In the New Testament we can see frequently that wherever the apostle Paul went, he went in the fullness of the blessing of Christ (Rom. 15:29). Christ, the grace in the fellowship, and the sharing in the fullness of the blessing of Christ, all follow the apostles everywhere they go. Hence, if a church breaks off its fellowship with the apostles, it will lose the grace and blessing of God. For this reason, we should have fellowship in the work of the ministry of the apostles and should further the work that is upon the shoulders of the apostles so that we may receive the grace and blessing that the apostles receive. If a local saint or a local church cuts off its relationship with the apostles, it will lose God's blessing and grace. But if the relationship is kept up continually on both sides, the church will receive for itself a channel of blessing and grace, and there will be the participation in God's blessing and grace.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF APOSTLES AND THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THEM

In both the previous chapter and in this chapter, we are covering a matter that is neglected by most Christians. Many of us have studied the Bible for years and yet have not paid attention to this point. The reason for this is that right after we were saved, we were brought into the traditions of Christianity. The only thing we know is that it is good to be a Christian. Although we live in the church, we never try to find out what the church is all about, nor do we try to find out what our responsibilities are in the church. What should our standing be? And how should we go on? These are some of the questions we never bother to ask or get clarification on. After a while we become accustomed to things as they are and are quite contented with everything. But this is not a proper attitude.

IN PRACTICING THE LORD'S RECOVERY, THERE BEING THE NEED TO SEE THE TRUTH CLEARLY AND TO REJECT THE OLD WAY

When we read church history, we find out that during the past four to five hundred years since the recovery of justification by faith by Martin Luther, the Lord's recovery has never stopped. It has always gone on. Over sixty years ago the Lord's recovery came to China. As a result, a group of us young people were gained by the Lord. We loved the Lord, and we loved His Word. Because I was exposed to English at an early age, I came into contact with Western Christianity immediately after I was saved. I read not only the Bible but also church history and the biographies of famous people as well as their important writings. We received the light and teachings from the Bible. We also took in the crucial truths and revelations released by God's servants throughout the ages. After we received all these, we put them into practice. Hence, at the very beginning we came out of degraded Christianity and entered into a new realm. Actually, this new realm is the ancient realm of the Bible. This ancient realm was buried and neglected by men for a long time.

But by the Lord's mercy, the truths and revelations of this ancient realm have been recovered point by point throughout the ages by those who love Him. They are preserved in writing and are now in our hands. To us they now seem new because what we have seen and inherited is in contradiction to the practices of traditional Christianity. In comparison, these matters have all become new. These new things are what we know as the Lord's recovery.

However, after the new things stay in our hands for a long time, they become old to us as well, and we do not treasure them anymore. This is why some brothers—who were born among us, met with us in Taiwan for many years, and eventually went to America—are still not clear concerning the truth. As a result, they have deviated from the right way. Their situation is like that of those who confuse the capital letters *G* and *C*; some may consider these letters to be more or less the same. Today there are more than a thousand churches spreading over all the nations of the world. Concerning the practice of the new way, some are like this; they cannot differentiate between *G* and *C*. To them the two are more or less the same. As a result, there are different voices, and this has caused some problems.

SIX LEVELS IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Lord's recovery has been in Taiwan for almost forty years. In the last four years we have been experimenting with the new way. Now we must take this biblical way that the Lord has shown us. In this training my responsibility is to make this matter clear to the brothers and sisters. In the last chapter we pointed out the six levels of relationships revealed in Ephesians 4:8-12 and in other portions of the New Testament. On the first level, the Head, Christ, in His ascension gave to His Body, the church, all kinds of gifts. On the second level, these gifts, which are the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the shepherds and teachers, function in the Body. On the third level, the apostles appoint men from among the saved ones to be the elders. On the fourth level, the elders take the lead to shepherd, teach, and oversee the church in a locality and prepare an environment and the proper persons for the gifted ones to train and perfect. On the fifth level, the saints are perfected and function in a living and organic way, having a proper and normal church life as well as the genuine service. On the sixth level, the churches are built up in

the localities, not merely for gathering in their respective places but for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Among these six levels, the crucial one is the perfecting of the saints. All the gifts, whether they are apostles, prophets, evangelists, or shepherds and teachers, are for this one thing, the enabling of all the saints to do the work of the ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ. When we are saved, we are all spiritual babes. We are ignorant about everything. There is the need for someone to come and feed us and to teach and perfect us. It is by this way that we arrive at a full-grown man and thus realize our function and participate in the work of the ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ. To this day, this matter has not been adequately practiced among us.

Today Taiwan is very prosperous. The main reason for its success lies in its system of education. Through it many able persons are perfected. Many of the saints' children, through the education they received from the government of Taiwan, have been perfected and have attained high achievements. But on the spiritual side we have not done as well. This is a serious matter. As far as our number is concerned, we have about forty to fifty thousand saints among us. Of those, about twenty thousand are active. But how many among these are perfected? On the secular side, because of the success in education through the government, by the time a child reaches twenty years of age, he has received a great amount of higher learning. On the spiritual side, the situation is poor. This is true not only among the denominations but even among us. For this reason, we must clearly see that the Lord's recovery must go on. It must be uplifted further; it must match Ephesians 4 in the matter of the perfecting of the saints. This is the reason we have been striving to experiment with the new way. This is not a new invention but a recovery of what has been lost and neglected. The goal is the perfecting of the saints so that everyone may have a part in the building work of the Body of Christ.

The Bible tells us clearly that every saved person is a priest. But the situation today is not like that. Many are saved and are in the church life, participating in some service of the church. But if you consider a little bit the kind of service that they are involved in, you will realize that most of it is just in practical affairs, such as cleaning, arranging, ushering, and so forth. A few might be involved in the preaching of the word. But after so many years, few have been perfected. This proves that our spiritual education is less than ideal. In the past we have had enough development in the truth. But there is not

enough perfecting of the elders, and there is even less perfecting of the saints. In both groups the perfecting is poor. With the Head there are the gifts. The gifts produce the elders. The elders in turn prepare an environment and gather various people for the gifted ones to train and perfect. Only when the saints are perfected can there be a practical, proper, and normal church life. The church is not only for the building up of the congregation in the place where it is but also for the sixth level of the work of the ministry, that is, for the building up of the Body of Christ. Although we are in the Lord's recovery, considering our work and the results we have produced, we are far from the building up of the Body of Christ. For this reason, we must see the new way clearly, and we must be desperate to pay any price to take this way. We have to take this step of perfecting the saints. We must climb up these stairs. May the Lord be merciful to us that we may see this.

Let us now come to the outline of this message.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF APOSTLES

Those Appointed Directly by the Lord and Those Constituted Directly through the Lord's Revelation

Those like Peter and John—

Luke 6:13; Acts 1:26; 2:14a; 4:1a, 33, 35

Peter and John were called by the Lord to be His disciples. Later, they were appointed as apostles directly by the Lord and were listed among the twelve apostles.

Those like Paul and Barnabas—

Acts 14:14; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1

Although Paul and Barnabas were not disciples of the Lord while He was on the earth, they were apostles constituted directly by the revelation of the Lord. This is especially clear in the case of Paul. His being an apostle was not something set up by men; rather, he was directly appointed by the Lord. The gospel and truth that he preached was not learned from men nor taught by men but came directly from the Lord's revelation. Before he was saved, he was

called Saul. He was born and raised in the city of Tarsus of Cilicia. He was trained according to the strictness of the law of the fathers at the feet of Gamaliel and was zealous for God. He persecuted the believers of the Lord unto death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women (Acts 22:3-4). One day, while on his way to Damascus to bind the disciples, a great light shined out of heaven around him, and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul,...I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you persecute...Rise up and go into Damascus, and there it will be told to you concerning all the things which have been appointed to you to do” (Acts 22:7-10). The Lord called him and appointed him to be an apostle to the Gentiles from that day on. Later, the Lord showed him directly various visions and revelations concerning God’s New Testament economy.

Those Perfected by Others

Those like Apollos—1 Cor. 4:9a, 6; Acts 18:24-26

We can find only one case of this kind of apostle in the Bible, Apollos. In 1 Corinthians 4:6 and 9 we see that Apollos was also an apostle. Paul first mentions “us,” which includes him and Apollos, as being among the brothers. Then he says that God had set forth “us the apostles” last of all. According to the context, Apollos was one of the apostles whom Paul refers to. Hence, Apollos was also an apostle. Although he was raised up by the Lord, his knowledge of the Bible was learned from others. When he expounded the Scriptures, he was powerful, but he was not clear concerning the way of the Lord. He needed the further perfecting of Aquila and Priscilla. For this reason, he was not an apostle constituted directly through the Lord’s revelation but was one perfected by others through learning.

Those Produced by the Lord’s Directly Appointed Apostles

Those like Timothy and Silas— 1 Thes. 2:6; 1:1a; Acts 15:40

Timothy and Silas were two apostles perfected by the apostle Paul. During his second journey, Paul chose Silas. Later, he also took Timothy along with him (Acts 16:1-3) for the Lord’s work. As a result, they became apostles under Paul’s leadership and worked together with Paul.

Those like Titus—Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7

If we compare the apostle Paul's word to Titus in Titus 1:5-9 with his word to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, we can see that Titus was probably an apostle produced by Paul.

In the New Testament we read of no other kind of apostle than these three kinds; there is no fourth kind. Although in 2 Corinthians 8:23 there is a reference to two apostles of the churches, these were men merely sent by the churches to conduct business for the churches; they cannot be considered under the three kinds of apostles listed above.

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF APOSTLES

Those apostles like Peter, John, and Paul, who are directly appointed by the Lord or who are constituted directly by the Lord's revelation, are on equal standing. Peter, John, and Paul did not learn from anyone else, and not one of them was under another's leadership; they were all on equal standing.

Those apostles produced by the Lord's directly appointed apostles are led and directed by those who produced them. They do the same work that those who produced them do. Timothy and Titus are cases like this (1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5; cf. the entire texts of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus). According to the record of the New Testament, Timothy and Titus were always under Paul's leadership and direction. They did not start another work; rather, they shared in the same work with Paul.

Those apostles who are perfected by men also work in the churches raised up by the first two kinds of apostles. They seem to be on equal standing with the apostles who are directly appointed by the Lord. As an example of this kind of apostle, we have Apollos (Acts 18:24a; 19:1).

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF APOSTLES AND THE SAINTS THEY HAVE PERFECTED BEING ONE IN THE MINISTRY'S WORK OF BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST

All apostles perfect the saints, whether they are appointed directly by the Lord or constituted by the Lord's direct revelation, are perfected by men, or

are produced by the Lord's directly appointed apostles. As a result, they and the saints whom they have perfected are completely one in the ministry's work of building up the Body of Christ. Although there is the difference in kind, the work is one. All are for the perfecting of the saints with the goal of the building up of the Body of Christ. Moreover, the saints whom they have perfected all do the same work. This can be clearly seen in Ephesians 4:11-12.

As for the condition among us, most of the brothers and sisters are not perfected enough to participate in the ministry's work of building up the Body of Christ. The first step in the work of the ministry is the preaching of the gospel for the saving of sinners. This is not something that only the particular gifted ones should do; rather, the evangelists should perfect the saints so that all the saints can do the same thing they do. Since we are building up the Body of Christ, this Body needs new members to be added all the time. Hence, the first item in the service of the church is the preaching of the gospel and the saving of sinners by every member.

Following this, we have the care for the home meetings. The preaching of the gospel is the begetting; the care for the home meetings is the rearing. As soon as a person is saved, there should be someone to meet with him, care for him, and nourish him in his home. This does not require the arrangement of the church. All that is needed is someone who will pick up the burden to do it, not in an organized way but in an organic way. Then there is still the need to teach this new one the truth. At that point he will need the small group meetings. When three to five homes gather together, we have a group meeting. Last, we bring this new one to the larger meetings of the church where he can function to build up the Body of Christ. Hence, begetting, rearing, teaching, and building are the real service of the saints in the church. The preaching of the gospel is the begetting; the home meetings are the rearing; the group meetings are the teaching; and the larger meetings are the building. This is what all the saints should do as the work of the ministry after they are perfected.

According to my observation, the church in Taipei is on the right track and is taking the new way, yet much is still not organic. There is still a strong emphasis on organization. Most of the door-knocking, home meetings, and group meetings still depend on arrangement. Strictly speaking, all these things should be taken up spontaneously and organically by the brothers and

sisters. These things should originate from the inward feeling and burden of the Spirit. Hence, our urgent need today is to perfect the saints one by one.

There should be not only face-to-face feeding but also face-to-face teaching. We must be recovered to such an extent that the number of serving ones equals the number of brothers and sisters. All the saints need to serve. They are all priests to God, and they all function as members of the Body of Christ, working together with the gifted ones to do the work of the ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ.

These matters show us clearly that, first, all the different kinds of apostles share in the unique work of the New Testament ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ and that, second, all the saints perfected by these different kinds of apostles also share in this unique work of the New Testament ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ. From the Head, Christ, through the gifted members and then through the elders to the perfected saints, we arrive at the local churches. When the saints in the local churches work together with the different kinds of gifts to do the work of the ministry, there is the building up of the Body of Christ.

CHAPTER THREE
THE ADMINISTRATION
OF A LOCAL CHURCH BY LOCALITY
AND THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP
OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

In this chapter we will cover the administration of a local church by locality and the organic building up of the Body of Christ. These matters are deep, profound, far-reaching, and all-inclusive. They are the central burden of our training this time. Administration by locality is related to the local church, and the organic building up is related to the Body of Christ. In these two matters lies the secret of our practice.

THE ADMINISTRATION
OF A LOCAL CHURCH BY LOCALITY
Being for Maintaining the Expression
of the Body of Christ in Various Localities
and Being Different from the Isolation
and Autonomy Practiced in the Political Sphere

The local churches are for the expression of the Body of Christ. They are the manifestation of the Body of Christ in various localities. They are not an organization but an organism manifested in various localities. They are the expression of one same thing in the various localities. This is like the moon, which appears over Taipei, New York, and London: there is only one moon, but its manifestation is manifold and is local. In the same way there is only one Body of Christ, but its expression appears in many localities. Each appearance in a locality is an expression of the Body of Christ. This is absolutely different from the isolation and autonomy practiced in the political sphere.

I would like to fellowship with you a little about history. During the 1820s, the Lord raised up a group of brothers in England. Among them were many

great teachers. They saw much light in the Bible. The leading one among these brothers was J. N. Darby. By examining the revelation of the whole Bible, he saw that all the churches should be identical. As a result, he suggested that all the churches be unified. This term *unified* is not very sound doctrinally. The churches should be identical, but the churches cannot be unified. To be identical is one thing; it means that everything is the same. But to be unified has a political sense. When one speaks of unification, there is the sense of a federation like that of the United States of America. This, of course, is wrong for the church. Although to be identical and to be unified are similar terms, in meaning they are totally different.

All the churches should be identical, like the seven golden lampstands in Revelation. The lampstands there are all identical. In certain respects all human beings are identical. But everyone's face is different. Hence, we can say that we are identical only in a general way. But the identity of the seven lampstands is absolute. If you put the seven golden lampstands together, you can never differentiate them one from the other unless you number them. This is because they are identical. But this kind of identity is not a unification. Once the term *unification* is used, the matter becomes political. The local churches are the manifestations of the Body of Christ in various localities. They do not have a political nature.

For this reason, when we use the term *administration*, we have to be very careful. We have carefully studied the whole Bible. We have also spent time to study the meaning of these words. We cannot find one word related to the administration of the church that has the sense of political administration. Church administration is different from political administration, just as family administration is different from governmental administration. A family emphasizes life, whereas a government emphasizes organization. Between the different departments of a government, the relationship is altogether organizational; there is no organic relationship between them. But a family administration has a blood relationship of life. Between the father and the mother, the children, the brothers, and the sisters, there is a full blood relationship, which is of life.

The Brethren were later divided into two groups. One was called the Closed Brethren; the other, the Open Brethren. Among the Open Brethren there was one teacher by the name of G. H. Lang. He wrote many books, one of which is called *The Churches of God*. In that book he claims that every local church

should be an autonomy. This would be like the autonomy of every one of the fifty states in the United States. Each is governed by itself. These fifty states then are fifty autonomies. This stirred up a great controversy in truth. Lang condemned Darby's unification, calling it a federation. In Lang's book both terms, *autonomy* and *federation*, are used. In this respect, neither of the two brothers were clear about the ground of the church. Darby felt that all the assemblies meeting in the city of London should be unified. But Lang argued that such a unification would be a federation. Because of this, Lang proposed that every local church (assembly) should be an isolated autonomy. Each local church (assembly) should be clearly separated from the others. Because of this teaching, great damage was brought in among the Brethren. Today they are divided into pieces.

The last time I went back to the United States, I heard that some have brought in the teaching of autonomy. Immediately, I strongly reproved this error. This kind of speaking and practice cannot be brought into the Lord's recovery. Everyone likes this practice because everyone likes to be independent and equal. No one likes to be under anyone else. But we have to realize that the church of Christ is not a political institution. The church of Christ is an organism just like our body. The Bible says, "The church, which is His Body" (Eph. 1:22-23). This is not an illustration but a statement of a fact. In Ephesians 1:19-22 we are shown that all of Christ's attainments in His resurrection and ascension are for the church. Verse 23 continues to say that this church is "His Body." Christ is the Head (5:23), and the church is His Body. This is a definite fact.

Take our human body as an example. It is impossible for an arm to form an autonomy. If the arm is an autonomy, and the palm is another autonomy, while the nose, the eyes, and the legs are all different autonomies, the body is completely separated and dismembered, and there will not be a body anymore. For this reason, we must see that the church is not a political institution. The church is absolutely an organism. Since the church is an organic body, there is no way for it to be separated or autonomous. The Bible uses our organic body to describe the church, the Body of Christ. This is a most thorough description, and by it many problems can be avoided. If the state-federated government of the United States is used as an illustration of the churches, it puts the church in a political realm. This is completely wrong and will kill the church.

Actually, today's Christianity is altogether a big political institution. This is especially true of the Catholic Church. The formation of the Catholic Church began in the second century with an erroneous concept brought in by an early church father named Ignatius. He made the mistake of thinking that the bishops in the New Testament are higher than the elders. But Acts 20 shows us that Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When the elders came, Paul told them that the Holy Spirit had placed them as bishops, or overseers, of the flock (v. 28). This proves that *bishop* and *elder* are synonymous terms; they denote the same group of people. The word *elder* refers to the person, and the word *bishop*, or *overseer*, refers to the ministry, the work. The wrong teaching of Ignatius became the basis of a religious hierarchy. It brought in the religious system of bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and the pope. The pope is the highest overseeing bishop. This becomes a huge political system. For the Protestants, similar practices evolved. This is especially true with the Episcopalians. The word *episcopalian* itself includes the sense of an overseeing bishop. The Episcopalian Church was also built upon the system of organization with an overseeing bishop. In principle, no denomination has freed itself of this system. If we are not careful, we will also fall into this trap. For this reason, we must see clearly that the church is an organism. It is the Body of Christ and cannot be degraded into a political system. Once it is degraded into a political system, it has departed from life and become completely an organization.

Being Organic and Not Organizational

The local churches should be organic; they should not be organizational. Although these two words are simple, they are not easily explained. Our minds are, by natural constitution, bent on being organizational. After we are saved and begin to love the Lord, and even after we have become elders, within we are still full of organizational thoughts. We always think in terms of control and organization. First Peter 5:1-3 says, "The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly; nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock." Shepherding is organic, but lording it over is organizational. For the elders to shepherd is an organic matter, but for them to lord it over others is an organizational matter. After

the last four years of labor the church in Taipei has been put on the right track of the new way, yet I am still worried that the element of organization is stronger than the element of organism. For example, when a meeting hall decides to preach the gospel, it gathers a few dozen brothers and sisters together, divides them into teams of three, and sends them out by teams to knock on doors and visit people. This way is rather organizational and is a hindrance to the proper organic functioning.

In the new way of the Lord's recovery there should not be this kind of organization; rather, every brother and sister should be led of the Lord and should be perfected. Every day they should live a revived and overcoming life. Every day they should have a touch with the Lord and should fellowship with Him. In this way the Holy Spirit will have the circulation of life within us. A few of us will then spontaneously be burdened to go to visit people and preach the gospel. These few do not have to wait for the arrangement and organization of the elders; instead, they can just go out to preach the gospel. This will be organic and not organizational. It will be the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit within. Not only does the preaching of the gospel have to be organic, but even the home meetings, the group meetings, and the district meetings have to be organic. These should not be carried out through organization. We should try our best to avoid any arrangement that resembles organization.

Why do we fall into organization? The reason for this is that we are not perfected enough organically. It is like a mother raising her child. Provided she gives the child enough nourishment and protects him from sickness, all of the child's activities, no matter what they are, will be organic. But if one day the child has a stroke, and his arms or legs become paralyzed, he will lose their organic function. When that happens, he will need artificial arms or legs in order to perform the same functions. But then the functioning will no longer be organic; it will be organizational.

Because the co-workers and elders among us have not rendered enough perfecting and nourishment to the saints, the saints have not attained to the proper measure of life. None of the saints are burdened enough for the home meetings, the group meetings, and the district meetings. There is not even the adequate burden for the preaching of the gospel. Because there is the lack of burden, everything is done by instruction, promotion, and arrangement. This is proof that there is very little organic functioning by the saints. As a result,

what is manifested is mostly human labor and is very close to being an organization. Today all of Christianity is greatly lacking in the life supply and life growth, and the result is that everything is maintained by organization. Although we have received mercy and light from the Lord to be a little different from them, in practice we are still very weak in the perfecting in life.

Let me give another obvious example. When there is the need to clean the meeting hall, the elders will announce the need, with the hope that the brothers and sisters will pick up the burden. Initially, when the announcement is made, many come to serve. But after a while, the zeal cools down, and as more friction comes in among the saints who serve, the number drops. This proves that the whole work is organizational rather than organic. The elders should help the brothers and sisters to pray more and to abide in a life of loving the Lord and having much fellowship with the Lord. In this way the Holy Spirit will move in the saints, like blood circulating, to give them a feeling within that they should come to the meeting hall to clean. What others are reluctant to do, they will gladly take up. When they come to serve in this way, their service will be organic and not organizational.

First Peter 5:2 says, “Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing...according to God.” Shepherding the flock of God must not be according to methods, ordinances, or one’s own will; rather, it should be according to God, according to His life and nature. This is to be organic. “Not under compulsion but willingly...not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly” (v. 2). All these are comparisons of the organic way with the organizational way. They show us that the elders’ shepherding should not be organizational but organic.

**Ultimately Being for the Organic Building Up
of the Body of Christ in the Universe,
Rather Than for the Perfecting of a Congregation
as an Organization Locally**

Ephesians 4:11-12 mentions different gifted members perfecting the saints unto the work of the ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ. The work of the gifts is the perfecting of the saints for the work of the building up of the Body of Christ. This kind of practice and building is done locally rather than universally. Yet the local building is not for the building up of a

congregation in a locality but for the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ, though manifested locally, is not for locality. The Body of Christ is universal, with its practical building up being carried out in the various local churches. Without the practical, local building, the building up of the Body will be a term only; it will not be a reality. But the building up of the local churches in the various localities should not be for the realization of a congregation in the various localities but for the Body of Christ in the universe.

**All the Churches Being Administrated Locally,
and Except for Some Affairs, Practices, and Customs,
Being Identical in the Nature and Testimony
of the Spiritual Life**

All the churches can be different in the way they handle affairs. For example, when baptizing people after preaching the gospel, some places use bathtubs. Other places that are near the sea, and particularly during summer, baptize people in the sea. These are cases of differences in affairs.

All the churches can also be different in practices. For example, a certain church may have its bread-breaking meeting on the Lord's Day evening, and another church would have it on the Lord's Day morning. The various churches decide on their time of the bread-breaking meeting based on the local situation and the condition of the brothers and sisters. This is a difference in practice.

All the churches can also be different in customs. For example, some come to the meetings in large buses; others come in private cars; still others come on motorcycles. All these are differences in customs. In these matters we cannot unify.

***All the Churches Being like Golden Lampstands—
the Same in Nature and Form,
with No Difference Whatsoever***

Other than these differences in affairs, practices, and customs, the churches should be fully the same in the nature and testimony of their spiritual life. One cannot say that a certain church is golden in life and nature, and another church is brass in life and nature, while a third is silver in life and nature. This

would make some churches silver, brass, or even iron lampstands. Of course, this is not right. All the churches should be golden lampstands. In nature and form they are exactly the same. Actually, the word *same* is not adequate to describe them. In nature and testimony all the churches are not just the same but are identical. The differences between all the churches are in the wrong or negative aspects. In the positive aspects, in their nature, they are all golden. Moreover, in form they are all lampstands. The seven golden lampstands are absolutely identical.

***The Lord's Word to Every Local Church
to Be Received by All the Local Churches***

In Revelation the Lord sent seven epistles to seven local churches. Although the negative words of rebuke were different for every church, at the end of every epistle He always said, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). What the Lord wrote to one church was to be heard by the seven local churches. Hence, the seven churches had to listen to all seven epistles. For this reason, the seven churches were the same in their positive aspects. The seven lampstands were separate, yet they were identical.

***The Letters Written by the Apostle
to the Church in Colossae and
to the Church in Laodicea Respectively
to Be Read and Received Interchangeably***

At the end of the book of Colossians, Paul says, "When this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea" (4:16). Although these were two separate churches in different localities, the teaching they received was the same.

***The Apostles Teaching the Same Thing
in All the Churches***

When the apostles taught in the various local churches, their teachings were all the same (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33-34). There is no such thing as having one kind of teaching in one place and another kind of teaching in

another place. The apostles taught the same thing in every church. As a result, the churches that were produced, though different in affairs and practices, were the same in nature and form.

THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

For the Growth of the Body of Christ Universally and Having No Element of Political Organization

In our body there is no element of political organization. If there were, we would be robots. Our organic body knows nothing about politics; it only knows how to grow. The same is true with the Body of Christ. For this reason, the elders must drop all political or bureaucratic concepts. If a problem arises, they should not merely consider ways of discussion or moderation. That is merely the way of politics and should not be adopted. The way that supplies the church is like the way a mother nurses her baby. First, she has to be well-fed herself. Then she needs to digest the food into milk and feed her baby with it. In the same way, the elders have to be well-fed themselves. After they have digested the food, they will be able to produce milk for supplying and nourishing the flock under their care. In this way the Body of Christ will grow universally. This is not a bureaucracy; it does not have any element of organization or politics.

Fully a Matter of the Growth of the Saints in the Divine Life, Rather Than the Membership Relationship of a Human Organization

The organic building up of the Body of Christ is fully a matter of the growth of the saints in the divine life. There is no membership relationship of a human organization. In all human societies and communities there is the need for discussion and liaison. Even with the pastors in Christianity, there is the need for social skill and affability. If they do not have these qualities, they will not be successful. Today in the Lord's church we do not need these kinds of things. Since the church is the Body of Christ, everything must be of life. Foremost in importance among all the Lord's people are the co-workers, those directly under the Head. Next are the elders. These two groups of people are two crucial links. If the co-workers who are gifted are not up to

standard, it is difficult for the elders to be up to standard. And if the elders are not up to standard, it is difficult to expect the saints to be up to standard, nor will it be easy for the church to be up to standard. As a result, it will be difficult to realize the building up of the Body of Christ. For this reason, the elders and co-workers have to take the lead to grow in the divine life so that the Body of Christ may be built up.

**Ultimately for the Growth and Maturity
of the New Man,
unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ**

The ultimate goal of the building up of the Body of Christ is the growth and maturity of the new man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. *Fullness* in Ephesians 4:13 means expression. To be filled with the fullness of Christ is to be filled with the Body as the expression of Christ. This Body has a stature, and when the stature attains a measure, there is a full-grown man.

THE PRESENT NEED

**Recovering the Meetings of Mutuality
of 1 Corinthians 14:26**

***Developing the Spiritual,
Organic Function of the Saints,
Supplying Christ for the Growth
of the Saints in the Divine Life,
and Building Up the Body of Christ
in the Growth of the Saints in the Divine Life***

We have been laboring for four years, and we all understand that it is not easy to have a district meeting, that is, to have a big meeting of the church. The reason for this is that in the big meetings everyone remains quiet. Even when some do speak, they ramble on aimlessly; there is not much rich content. The difficulty with all of us is that we have not been perfected. We are comparable to a company of untrained soldiers. When battle comes, we are

shown to be a loose company. Even with rifles in our hands, we cannot shoot, for none of us have been trained.

Hence, the present need of the church is the perfecting of the brothers and sisters. The word *perfecting* in Ephesians 4:12 is very rich in meaning. It includes equipping, supplying, and preparing. Therefore, today we have to perfect the brothers and sisters. Not only do we have to perfect them, we also have to continually supply them so that they would not only be able to fight but would also have both the weapons and the supply to fight the proper battle.

Today the perfecting is still greatly lacking among us. This is the reason that the responsible brothers in all the places are held back by difficulties. They dare not demand too much of the brothers and sisters. It is as if the new way cannot be taken, for if they take it, the saints will not follow. As a result, they can only go back to the old way. But if we all return to the old way, when will the Lord's word in 1 Corinthians 14:26 be fulfilled? If the way of meeting described in this verse, the way in which "each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation," cannot be realized, then how can the Body of Christ be built up? In a big meeting over a hundred people can gather, but only one speaks. There seems to be some edification of the believers, but in reality there is not much building up of the Body of Christ.

In order to build up the Body of Christ, there must be the perfecting of the saints. And to perfect the saints, there must be the hard labor. The new way that we speak of today is nothing but a way of labor. It will not work if we do not labor. Our preaching of the gospel must bring God into man so that the spirit in man may touch the Spirit of God. When a person's spirit organically touches the Spirit, that person gets saved. He becomes alive. Following this, we baptize him and meet in his home. In the home meetings there must be the nourishing. This is not to merely read through *Life Lessons* with him but to nourish him and care for him according to his actual needs. In the same way, when he comes to the group meeting, we should not merely teach him with *Truth Lessons*; instead, while contacting him, we should render him the proper teaching according to his needs, such as his marriage, his relationship with his parents, his job, or his personal attire. Hence, teaching people with *Truth Lessons* is not a mechanical way but an organic way. We supply them with life. Only when they are enlightened and motivated do we bring them to the larger meetings. In this way everyone who comes to the meetings

will be living and organic. Spontaneously, they will be motivated to rise up to speak, to supply, and to build up others. In order to have this kind of meeting of mutuality, there must be much perfecting.

For the urgent need today, not only the elders and the co-workers but also all the brothers and sisters in the Lord's recovery should press on faithfully to recover the meetings of mutuality of 1 Corinthians 14:26. The purpose of this kind of meeting is to develop the spiritual, organic function of the saints. The big meetings with only one person speaking and all the rest listening will never develop the organic function of the saints. Only the meetings with mutuality will develop the function of the saints. This kind of meeting is also for ministering Christ that the saints may grow in the divine life. Ultimately, the saints will build up the Body of Christ by growing in the divine life. This growth is the organic building.

In order to recover the meetings of mutuality of 1 Corinthians 14, all the brothers and sisters need a revival. Furthermore, our revival has to be renewed daily, just as the sun rises anew every morning. It is a law in God's creation that every twenty-four hours the sun rises anew, bringing with it a new beginning. Every morning is a new beginning for us. We need an initial revival, and thereafter, every morning we need a renewed revival. There needs to be revival after revival. During the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year we need three hundred and sixty-five revivals. Then during the day, we have to live an overcoming life. If we do not have a daily revival and would not live an overcoming life, we cannot hope to have the meetings of 1 Corinthians 14:26. As long as there is a group of people who will be revived and who will live in an overcoming way, there will be the outflow of riches spontaneously when they come together. For this revived and overcoming life, the co-workers and elders have to take the lead by having a breakthrough in being revived before the Lord. I can testify that this is my own practice. Every morning I seek a revival. After the morning revival, I pursue living an overcoming life all day long. Sometimes we may fail. But even when we do, there should still be the desire to live in an overcoming way. As soon as we make a mistake, we confess, ask for the Lord's forgiveness, and are restored to the overcoming life. In this way we can experience Christ, enjoy Him, and know Him richly and thoroughly. When all the brothers and sisters come together, there is no need to say other things. All they need to speak about is what they have enjoyed and experienced. This kind of testimony is a sharing that contains both a message as well as a great and rich supply. In this way 1

Corinthians 14:26 will spontaneously be realized among us. Otherwise, even if we have all the light, all the revelation, and all the teaching in truth, without revival and an overcoming living, everything is but vain talk.

Practicing Ephesians 4:11-16

To practice 1 Corinthians 14:26, there is the need of revival and an overcoming living; to practice Ephesians 4:11-16, there is the need of total consecration. In everything seek the growth in life, and in all things grow up into the Head, which is Christ. The more consecrated we are, the more we will receive. Today the elders bear a particularly heavy burden. Although they feel inadequate for meeting the needs of the saints, they are reluctant to resign. Constrained between the two, they have to give either their all or none at all. In this case they have to give themselves thoroughly and absolutely. In everything, whether great or small, they must seek the growth in life, and they must seek to grow up into the Head, Christ. By doing so, the elders will find themselves able to do their job. Hence, first there is the need for revival and an overcoming living. Then there is the need for a total consecration. It is not a matter of the availability of time; rather, it is a matter of consecration. When you are consecrated, you will have the time. When we grow up into the Head, Christ, in everything, all our problems will be solved.

The Gifts Given by the Head

Perfecting the Saints as the Members of His Body

Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints.” The perfecting here is an equipping and a supplying. The ascended Head gave the gifted ones for the perfecting, equipping, and supplying of the saints to be the members of the Body of Christ that all may fully realize their function.

The Perfected Saints and the Perfecting Gifts

Working Together for the New Testament Work

of the Ministry in the Building Up of the Body of Christ

We see two groups of people: one is the gifted ones, and the other is the perfected saints. They all work together for the New Testament work of the

ministry in the building up of the Body of Christ. All the members of the Body of Christ live Christ, experience Him, and supply Him to others. In this way, everyone builds up the Body of Christ. Not only will the apostles build, but even the least saint will be able to build. The gifted ones will have perfected everyone. They are like college professors who perfect all their students. Eventually, after the students graduate, they can do what the professors can do. The gifted ones among us, with the coordination of the elders, should perfect all the saints. As a result, everyone will be able to do the same work of the New Testament ministry, which is the building up of the Body of Christ.

***Until All the Members,
Who Constitute the Body of Christ, Arrive***

*At the Oneness of the Faith
and of the Full Knowledge of the Son of God*

The gifted ones continue to perfect the saints until all the members, who constitute the Body of Christ, arrive at three things. First, we arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God. Although we all have the oneness of the Spirit within us already (v. 3), we must go on to arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God. The oneness of the Spirit is the oneness of the divine life in reality; the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God is the oneness of our living in practicality. We already have the oneness of the divine life in reality. This is what we have obtained. We only need to keep it. But we need to go on until we arrive at, attain to, the oneness of our living in practicality.

This oneness is of two things: the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God. The faith does not refer to the act of our believing but to the things we believe in, such as the divine person and redemptive work of Christ for our salvation. The full knowledge of the Son of God is the realization of the revelation concerning the Son of God for our experience. The more we grow in life, the more we will cleave to the faith and to the realization of Christ and will drop all the minor and meaner doctrinal concepts that cause divisions. We will instead take Christ as our center. Then we will arrive at, or attain to, the practical oneness.

At a Full-grown Man

Second, we arrive at the maturity of the new man. Through His death on the cross, Christ has created of the Jews and Gentiles one new man in Himself (2:15-16). Although the new man has been created, he needs to grow unto maturity. When all the saints grow in life, the new man gradually matures.

At the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ

Third, we arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The fullness of Christ is the Body of Christ (1:23). This Body has a stature with a measure. The goal of all the saints being perfected and progressing continuously in life is that we would arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

***Holding to Truth That We May Grow Up
into the Head, Christ, in Everything***

Ephesians 4:15 says, "Holding to truth in love." According to the whole book of Ephesians, the truth here should refer to Christ and His Body, the church. In the whole universe only Christ and the church are real. All other things are unreal and will pass away. For this reason we need to hold to such a reality in love. We need to love Christ and the members of His Body, not for our own interest, inclination, or goal but in the love of Christ, who is in us, that we may grow up into the Head, Christ, in everything.

***Out from the Head All the Body,
Being Joined Together and Being Knit Together
through Every Joint of the Rich Supply and
through the Operation in the Measure
of Each One Part,
Causing the Growth of the Body
unto the Building Up of Itself in Love***

Our growth in life is a growth into the Head, Christ, but our function in the Body of Christ comes out from Him. First, we grow into the Head. Then we have something out from the Head for the building up of His Body. Ephesians 4:16 shows us that in the Body there are the joints of the rich supply as well as "each one part." *Every joint of the rich supply* denotes the gifted ones,

and *each one part* denotes the different members of the Body. With the joints of supply there is the rich supply of Christ, and with each one part there is the measure that comes from the growth in life and from the development of the gifts for the functioning unto the growth of the Body of Christ. Through these two groups of people, the whole Body is joined together and knit together. Being joined together is like the frame of a house being joined together, and being knit together is like the gaps in the frame being filled up with connected stones. Among us, some are the frame; their specific task is to be joined together. Others are the stones; their specific task is to be knit together. When all the gifts and all the members are joined and knit together in this way, the Body will grow unto the building up of itself in love.

Building of this kind can never be realized by having big meetings. Rather, it begins with preaching the gospel by visiting people in their homes. When people receive the Lord and are enlivened in their spirit, they begin to function organically. Following this, there are the home meetings in which they are fed with spiritual milk. In this way they will grow in life. Next, we bring them to the small group meetings where they are enlightened, taught, and led by the light of the truth. Finally, we bring them to the larger meetings of the church so that they may receive the supply from others and may also be able to supply others. When each member of the Body of Christ is perfected one by one in this way, and they all grow in life and function organically, the Body of Christ will be built up.

Once you are perfected, you should turn around to perfect other brothers and sisters in the same way by speaking to them on a one-to-one basis. If every one of our co-workers and elders faithfully fulfills their function in this way, each can help at least five to six others. As you lead these along month after month and year after year, an atmosphere will be developed among us in which every brother and sister will be perfected and will in turn perfect others. In this way the Body of Christ will be built up through the members' growth in life, and Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 14 will be realized among us. Only by this way can the bride be adorned and prepared to hasten and receive the Lord's coming. This is the Lord's eternal purpose. Surely He will accomplish this. May every one of us receive this serious commission from the Lord to labor diligently and to strive in oneness that the will of the Lord may be accomplished.

CHAPTER FOUR

A WORD OF FELLOWSHIP AND EXHORTATION

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16; John 21:15-17

In this chapter I hope to give a word of fellowship and exhortation. After much prayer and seeking before the Lord, I feel that the Lord's recovery both in the East as well as in the West has arrived at a stage where we need to look for a fresh revival. Particularly here in Taiwan, the elders of the churches and the co-workers should pick up the burden to seek a fresh revival.

A REVIVAL OF THE INNER LIFE

The revival that I am talking about is not the kind of revival commonly known in Christianity. It is not something sudden, brought about by days of prayer and fasting and accompanied by extraordinary events, resulting in a general excitement. The revival that I am talking about is the renewing described in the New Testament. Second Corinthians 4:16 says, "But though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." The renewal here is a revival. Every day we need a renewal, and this renewal has to be refreshed day by day. What we need today is this kind of renewal in the inner life as opposed to a renewal in outward actions or expression. God has set up a natural law that the rising of the sun affords a new beginning and a fresh renewal every day for everything, whether plant, animal, or human being. The same is true with our Christian life. Every morning we should allow the Lord Jesus, our Sun, to rise up in us so that we can be renewed. This is the revival that I am talking about.

I have covered this matter in an elders' and co-workers' meeting already, but I feel that I have not yet awakened the attention of the saints in all the localities. Although the words of this message will be short, I hope that the elders taking the lead in all the churches, together with all the helping co-workers, will practice this new revival so that the Lord Jesus may have a fresh rising within us every day.

EARLY TO BED AND EARLY TO RISE

In order to achieve this, all of you should rise up early in the morning. But to rise up early, one must go to bed early. If you cannot go to bed early, it will be hard for you to rise up early. Early rising affords tremendous benefits for a Christian. Every morning when the sun rises up, it is time for us to rise up to fellowship with the Lord. We should pray to the Lord, “Thank You, Lord, for a new beginning. May this day be a memorable day in my life.” On the one hand, we have such a fresh consecration and waiting before the Lord; on the other hand, we receive from Him fresh bestowals and enlightenings. With all this freshness, we will naturally have a revival. This is what we call a morning-by-morning revival. It is also what Paul described as the renewing day by day. This renewal happens early every morning. I hope that this matter would be practiced properly among us. All the co-workers with the elders should trumpet this call in all the places, awakening all the saints to go to bed early and rise up early. As soon as we get up, we should have a good touch with the Lord. No matter how busy we are or how important other things are, we must put them aside until we have a touch with the Lord.

CONTACTING THE LORD DIRECTLY BY PRAY-READING IN ORDER TO ENJOY HIM

This touch with the Lord should preferably be for half an hour. At the very least, it should be for fifteen minutes. This should be something very easy for us to do. Leviticus 6:12 tells us that “the priest shall burn wood on it [the altar] every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it.” This indicates that every morning we should offer up Christ as our burnt offering based upon His being our sin offering so that we may have a new beginning. Not only must we do this every day; we must also do it with sweetness and depth. The fifteen minutes in the morning is not mainly for prayer or supplication; rather, it is for a direct touch with the Lord by which we speak to Him and He speaks to us. For this reason, the best way is to spend this time on a few verses so that we may be filled by the Lord through pray-reading His Word in an enjoyable way. In this way we will have a new beginning and a fresh revival.

If we are daily revived spiritually, there will be no need for a big revival. Actually, none of the so-called big revivals are long lasting. For example, the great Welsh revival at the beginning of this century was over by 1933. All the

revivals brought in by various spiritual movements in the past were transient. After a while they all cooled down. This kind of sporadic revival is not reliable. The reliable revival is the kind that comes from a daily renewal.

REVIVAL BRINGING IN TRANSFORMATION

This daily revival brings transformation with it. Romans 12:2 says, “Be transformed by the renewing of the mind.” Second Corinthians 3:18 says, “We all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.” This shows us that transformation comes from beholding the Lord. We are like mirrors beholding the Lord with an unveiled face. The more we behold Him, the more we reflect the glory of the Lord, and we are transformed into the image of the Lord from one stage of glory to another. This transformation is from the Lord Spirit. There is not just a revival but a transformation as well. Hence, to have a revival that is renewed daily is to have a transformation that is fresh daily. If we remain in this transformation our whole life, we will grow in the life of the Lord until we are matured. This kind of revival, renewal, and transformation is what we all need today.

LIVING THE OVERCOMING LIFE BY CONSECRATING EVERYTHING WE HAVE

After such a revival we should live a life of consecration daily. In such a living we fellowship with the Lord, walk with Him, and abide in Him and thus become one spirit with Him and live Him out. This is an overcoming living. By this, we will be able to consecrate everything for the Lord. Our whole being will be for the Lord. Our time, energy, family, and business will all be for the Lord. We all have to consecrate ourselves in such a reckless way, not giving up until we reach our goal. We must be like a mother nursing her baby. Whether she is healthy or not does not matter. Whether she has problems or not, she has to consecrate everything for the care of her child. The same is true for athletes in the field; they forget everything and are desperate for the goal. All our co-workers must have such a desperate spirit to assist the elders in the different places. They must perfect the saints in the same way that a mother who nurses her baby casts aside all her needs to take care of the results of her work. The elders should also be like this. First Peter 5:1-2 says, “The elders...shepherd the flock of God.” This shows us that the church is the flock

of God. It is entrusted to the shepherding of the elders. An elder is a shepherd. He cannot care for the sheep according to his mood, enthusiastic today, negligent tomorrow. The care for the flock is a daily matter. We have to care for the flock daily and unceasingly until the Chief Shepherd is manifested (v. 4). This means that there is no end to the care for the saints. We do not know on what day the Lord will come. We only know to labor in care for the flock. If we do not have this spirit, it will be impossible for any of us to be a co-worker or an elder.

In order to take care of the church properly, the elders have to receive this charge from the Lord. They must shepherd the saints conscientiously. The Lord asked Peter in John 21, “Do you love Me more than these?” Peter answered the Lord, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Then Jesus said to him, “Feed My lambs” (v. 15). To feed is to nourish others with the riches of the inner life. This is a mouth-to-mouth feeding. The second time, the Lord said to Peter, “Shepherd My sheep” (v. 16). To shepherd the sheep is to take care of all the needs of the sheep. The third time, the Lord said to him, “Feed My sheep” (v. 17). At the time that the Lord said this to Peter, Peter had been following the Lord for over three years. After His resurrection the Lord charged him especially with this matter of shepherding the sheep. This shows how important it is to shepherd the sheep. Later, when Peter wrote his first Epistle, he entreated the elders to shepherd the flock of God (5:1-2).

Shepherding refers to caring for all of the needs of the sheep, whether the need is grass, water, or shelter. All the sheep are to be well provided for and well tended to. Of all the needs, the most important one is the feeding, that is, the mouth-to-mouth feeding. This is the duty of the elders. If all the elders in the various localities would do this, the saints would receive the suitable care. In the past we baptized many but brought in few. The reason for this was the lack of feeding and care. Our messages were high and deep, but after the messages there was not much care. In the end the flock was without shepherds. There was preaching without shepherding and teaching without feeding. This was our shortcoming in the past. Among us there is the begetting and the teaching, but there is a lack of feeding. As soon as a baby is born, what he needs most is feeding. A baby will not grow just by teaching him.

PERFECTING THE SAINTS

In Ephesians 4:12 “the perfecting of the saints” is primarily a matter of feeding. Only with the proper feeding can there be the proper perfecting, and only then can the saints be equipped and perfected. After the saints have grown to a certain measure, there is the need of teaching. A good part of the perfecting at that point will be the teaching. The saints are then like the child who has reached school age. Such a child should go to school to receive his education, but that does not mean that the parents no longer supervise the child. When a child is sent to school to receive a proper education, he must still have a good family to match his training at school. Only then will he be properly perfected. Our problem today is that we talk too much yet feed too little. The feeding and the education are not well coordinated. I hope that from now on the co-workers in the various places would talk less and feed more. They should do their best to shepherd and care for the saints. As soon as we hear of anyone sick or of anyone encountering problems, we must be concerned for him, pray for him, and go to visit him. The impact that this little bit of concern, prayer, and visiting affords is far more powerful than ten messages. Although the long messages are nice to listen to, they are far inferior to the care we can give to others in their daily lives. Care can touch people’s feeling in a far deeper way than messages can. All parents spend their all for their children. In the end the children spontaneously love their parents and are full of gratitude. I hope that all the elders would be such people, who give up everything for the saints. Although the brothers and sisters are not your children in the flesh, they are the flock entrusted to you by God as far as their spiritual life is concerned. The elders must have the compassion of a caring mother. They must be desperate to care for the Lord’s lambs.

If the co-workers and elders are such people, and every one of them would feed and perfect others in this way, the ones perfected by them will eventually do the same work. Because the saints are under their care and because they enjoy and experience this work of grace, they will spontaneously give themselves to join in this work of grace that they enjoy. At the same time the expression of love that flows out from the serving ones will become the example for the ones served. When a mother loves her child, the love expresses itself spontaneously in her living and becomes an example to the child. If the elders and co-workers would love the saints like a mother who loves her child and would render a loving, willing service to them, feeding them mouth-to-mouth and teaching them face-to-face, then when the saints

are perfected, they will be just like the co-workers and elders; every one of them will be able to do the work that the co-workers and elders do.

The meetings with only one speaking and all the rest listening do not have the mouth-to-mouth feeding or the face-to-face teaching. This is why these meetings cannot perfect people and do not produce spiritual descendants. Now the new way has replaced the old way. The purpose for this change is that all the saints may be perfected and that they all may become useful persons. At present, in the church in Taipei there are four thousand people attending the weekly bread-breaking meetings. If all these ones were perfected and everyone could do the work of the co-workers and elders, the situation would be marvelous.

STRIVING TO CONTACT THE SAINTS

Actually, the work of perfecting is not very difficult. It all depends on whether or not we have the heart to do it. In the past the help we rendered to people came mostly by delivering messages in the meetings. Although there is some use in this, it can never perfect others. To this day our greatest lack is in the shepherding. Once we develop a gap in this work, it is difficult to retain people. And even if people are retained, it is difficult to perfect them. We know that no university can train professionals by merely inviting famous speakers to give lectures. The lectures can at most enlarge the vision of the students. The help actually rendered to students depends on the scheduled classes and the teaching by the professors. The elders among us have mostly been involved with the arrangement of affairs, such as the setting of meeting times. There is a lack of feeding and teaching. It is impossible to perfect others this way.

Most of you have been in the Lord's service for many years. I believe that you understand what I am saying by just this little word. If you have a heart for the Lord, from now on you should have a revival every day to live the overcoming life, to consecrate everything for the Lord, and to strive to redeem every bit of time to contact people. Care for the saints one by one. Do not hope to contact too many people all at once. The most effective way is the slow and sure way. During the three years that I worked in Chefoo, from 1940 to 1942, I purposely set aside a small room in the meeting hall and converted it into a kitchen. I asked a brother to stay there as the cook and do nothing except prepare meals. Every weekday evening on which there was no meeting, I

invited ten or twenty brothers and sisters to come and eat. During that time, I talked with them one by one. In this way I made contact with every one of the few hundred brothers and sisters. By sitting down with them, chatting with them, and getting acquainted with them, I began to have a clear impression about them. This kind of concern touches people the deepest and affects them the most. If we only have preaching and do not have this care and concern, the words preached will have only a limited effect upon people. But after we care for people in this way, when they come to listen to us, the words they hear will have twice as much effect on them. Another important thing to do is to contact people before and after the meetings. If we would go and talk to the people after a message, the results would be twice as great as our present results. But if we merely preach without contacting people, the results will be half as great, and our words are liable to be empty and impractical. Only when we contact others do we know where they are. A doctor cannot prescribe medicine just by listening to some reports about a patient. He must have personal contact with the patient and talk to him before he can write out a prescription.

I hope that all the co-workers and elders would learn to do their best to contact people. Even if they are very busy, they should still contact people. If you contact one person a day, in a year you will have contacted three hundred and sixty-five persons. If a church has three elders and each contacts people every day, in a year's time they will be able to contact all the saints many times. The effect of this is much higher than giving many messages. Today there are many brothers and sisters who need help. Hence, we have to do our best to contact them, to be concerned and care for them in love, and to strive to help and shepherd them.

In all the churches the greatest need today is not the management of affairs nor the preaching of messages but the feeding and teaching of the saints one by one. When we go to the saints to feed them and to teach them the truth, we should not be too legal. Perhaps on one occasion I would use chapter 1 of *Truth Lessons*, but the next time I may not necessarily use chapter 2. Before we go out to shepherd the saints, we must first have a reserve supply. We should familiarize ourselves with the content of the *Truth Lessons* and should study them in detail. Then when we contact the brothers and sisters, we should ascertain their needs and should present the *Truth Lessons* to them according to their practical needs. We should read a passage together and then explain a little of what we read. This way of teaching has the element of

feeding with it. It is not just teaching but feeding as well. Teaching of this kind is much more effective than preaching a sermon. For this reason you must learn how to care for people, how to contact people, how to visit and shepherd people, and even how to teach people face to face. This will produce great and lasting effects. Outwardly, we will not have the façade of a big meeting to show off, but actually, hundreds and thousands will be cared for.

I hope that the elders and co-workers would take this word of fellowship and exhortation to give their all and their time to contact and shepherd people. This was our shortage in the past. Now we must recover this matter. Only by this will the organic building up of the Body of Christ in Ephesians 4:12-16 and the meetings of mutuality in 1 Corinthians 14:26 be realized and practiced among us. For this we need a daily revival and a daily overcoming as the base. We also need a life and a work that flow out from the love of the Lord in order to maintain our victory. If we do not have a revived living or a labor in shepherding, we will not be overcoming for long; there will be no way for us to maintain our victory. What maintains us in the victory is a life and work of love toward the Lord. We need both these aspects.