

《The Ministers & the Open Door》

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUMES 55 AND 56

After Watchman Nee resumed his ministry in 1948, he worked with his co-workers to publish several magazines. Some of these magazines have been gathered together in Volumes 55 and 56 of The Collected Works. Several of these magazines, The Testimony, The Way, and The Gospel, under the general supervision and editorship of other co-workers, are not included in The Collected Works.

Three magazines published during this period are included in Volumes 55 and 56: The Ministers, The Open Door (1950-1951), and The Present Testimony (1951).

The Ministers follows the same line as an earlier magazine, The Open Door, published in the 1930s. The Ministers is a collection of newsletters and correspondence between churches and individuals. It deals with issues raised in the Lord's service, provides guidance to the serving ones and the churches in general, and addresses problems encountered in the ministry. Through this correspondence the reader can gain much insight into the movement of the churches under Watchman Nee's ministry during this period. Four issues were published, beginning in July 1948 and ending in June 1950. Thereafter, this

magazine was merged into The Open Door (1950-1951). These four issues are included in Volume 55.

The Open Door was first published in 1937. The magazine was discontinued with Issue No. 19 in September 1939. The Open Door (1950-1951) is a continuation of this magazine. It began with Issue No. 20 in June 1950 and ended with Issue No. 24 in April 1951, when Watchman Nee was imprisoned by the Chinese Communist government. Volume 55 of The Collected Works contains Issue Nos. 20 through 22, while Volume 56 contains Issue Nos. 23 and 24. Part of this magazine contains crucial messages by Watchman Nee on ministry and service. The section concerning news of the churches in this magazine follows the same format as The Ministers.

The Present Testimony was first published between 1922 and 1925. In 1928 it was resumed for the first time under the same name, and ran for thirty-six issues until August 1934. In 1948 this line of ministry was continued with another magazine, The Testimony. In January 1951 The Present Testimony, as it was originally constituted, was officially resumed with Issue No. 37. Three issues were published before it was interrupted again with the imprisonment of Watchman Nee. The Collected Works only includes articles and hymns from this magazine that were written by Watchman Nee during this period. They are slightly different in nature than those published in The Open Door. The articles in The Present Testimony (1951) primarily deal with the experience of life, with revelations and lessons learned in the course of spiritual pursuit, and with practical issues of Christian growth, while articles in The Open Door (1950-1951) are more focused on the ways and principles of service and ministry.

THE MINISTERS

ISSUE NO. 1

July 1, 1948

A FEW WORDS CONCERNING

THE PUBLISHING OF THE MINISTERS

For years there have been many rumors but little news from various localities. Many localities have been out of touch with other localities. There is a real need for fellowship among the ministers. For this reason we are publishing The Ministers with the hope that the brothers will understand what we, as ministers, really are. We also hope to help each other solve problems encountered by the ministers. Finally, we hope that through this publication the brothers will at least

know what is happening among the ministers. In these end times everything is solemn. These are more urgent days than we think. May the Lord have mercy upon us.

Your brother,

Watchman Nee

May 21, 1948

GOD'S LEADING IN MERCY

After World War II, the Lord gathered a small number of co-workers together in Shanghai. We saw that the work in China was scattered and somewhat confused. We felt that we should come together in one central locality to lay a proper foundation before spreading out. Many localities continued to invite us, and we were eager to visit the brothers and sisters whom we had not been able to see for many years; nevertheless, we felt that the Lord was not doing this, and we did not accept invitations from any locality.

In spite of this constraint, by the end of last year, we felt that we should accept the invitations of the brothers in a few localities in Fukien and Kwangtung provinces. Consequently, we visited them. During that time, our inward burden was not to start any work but to seek fellowship in the Lord with our brothers and sisters in the hope that the grace in the Body could flow in these places. We went first to Hong Kong and met with Brother Weigh Kwang-hsi. Brother Weigh accompanied us in our visit to Canton and Swatow. We stayed for some time in each place and shared the Lord's grace together. Brother Weigh then returned to Hong Kong, and we went to Amoy where we met Brother Chen Ke-san and others. Brother Ke-san accompanied us to Foochow. Foochow, like the other localities, arranged for six large meetings. (Brothers and sisters from the neighboring localities came to these meetings. However, our greater desire was to talk and fellowship with a small number of brothers and sisters.) First, we had a few days of gospel meetings; then some days of edification meetings followed. We also had some private fellowship with a small number of brothers and sisters. We had hoped to use the opportunity of our visit in Foochow to go up to Kuling Mountain, where we would stay with Brother Nee for a few days to ask him some questions about our service to the Lord. However, when the co-workers from all the localities heard that we were going to have a meeting with Brother Nee (actually, we were not going to have any meeting, but to have some private talks only), they refused to leave because they deeply desired to attend these meetings. When we realized this, we discussed it with Brother Nee, and he

agreed to allow these co-workers to come and listen to our talks. As a result, more than twenty co-workers attended these talks.

The talks began on February 26. We had a morning and an afternoon session every day. At the beginning of the morning session on the third day, Brother Nee asked me, "What should we talk about today?" I felt that I should ask him concerning a certain matter, so I said, "We have visited a few localities in the Fukien and Kwangtung provinces, and we feel that the work in every locality is scattered and somewhat in disarray. How should the work in these two provinces be carried out in the future?" He did not say much in his answer. I asked him further, "According to the Bible, are there regional distinctions in the work?" He said, "There are." I followed up with another question: "Since there are regions to the work, are there also centers to the work?" He said, "There are." Following this, he opened up the principle of Jerusalem to us. The gist of what he said is as follows: "God's way was to concentrate His workers in Jerusalem to save people and establish the church. Then men were sent out from Jerusalem to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. When we read the command, 'Be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and..Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1:8), we thought that the twelve apostles were to preach the word in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, and then in the uttermost part of the earth. However, what the Holy Spirit actually worked out was for the twelve apostles to preach in Jerusalem, and the people they gained to go out and preach in Samaria. After churches were raised up in Samaria, the apostles would go out to strengthen them, but it was the many believers who spread the preaching to the uttermost part of the earth.

"We know that the principle of Antioch which we saw in 1937 is correct. However, it is insufficient to have the principle of Antioch before we have the principle of Jerusalem. Our failures in the past years lay in our neglect of the principle of Jerusalem in our work. We should have concentrated the co-workers within a region in one place first and worked until the church in that place was completely established. Then we could migrate from there to other localities (or be scattered to various places through the Lord's arranged persecutions). Churches should be established in this way. Peter should work in Jerusalem, while Philip should work in Samaria. After these places were established, there could be a beginning in Antioch."

The co-workers who were present at that talk became clear about this principle. They were willing to lay aside their own work and have a fresh start in Foochow.

They took Foochow as their Jerusalem and were willing to begin from there. As a result of this fellowship, the entire body of co-workers "handed over" themselves. A few responsible brothers from Foochow were present in that meeting. They expressed their willingness to "hand over" the church there and allow the co-workers to take charge for the going on. Later a meeting for all the brothers and sisters was called on March 3, in which the responsible brothers formally "handed over" the meeting and our co-workers formally accepted it. In this way the work and the church in Foochow had a new beginning.

Before we went to Brother Nee for our talk, we had already invited him to come to Shanghai in March and April to render some help to the brothers and sisters who had come to Shanghai from other localities. (Some brothers and sisters had earlier informed us by letters that they would be in Shanghai during that time to receive help.) After our stay with Brother Nee, he accepted our invitation. Therefore, in April we had meetings in Shanghai. In those meetings the brothers and sisters also saw the same light, and they gave themselves and all they had for the coordination in the service of the Body. We really thank the Lord for His mercy on us! May all these matters be found pleasing to Him!

Witness Lee

June 14, 1948

In Shanghai

SOME SERVICE IN NAN-PING

I came to Nan-Ping two weeks ago to clear up some matters and to lead the brothers and sisters to know God in the way of inward life and outward service. Thank God for His co-working. I saw God's presence, and the brothers and sisters were all moved to rise up to learn to serve.

We have now divided the services into gospel visitation, ushering, and cleaning. In the area of cleaning, many sisters are beginning to come to the meeting hall to scrub floors and benches and to wash windows. They are all living and joyful, and they clean the floors and benches well. I truly thank God for His mercy.

Your brother,

Huang Guo-bin

May 6, 1948

A REPORT OF A FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Scripture Reading: Heb. 10:25; 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5-6; 1 Cor. 15:58

Our fellowship meeting tonight is a special gathering because there have recently been some new arrangements and decisions made regarding the work and business affairs of the church. We want to explain these matters to the brothers and sisters.

The New Arrangement of the District Meetings

The first thing we want to talk about is the new arrangement of the district meetings. We began the district meetings in May of last year, but now we have made some new arrangements. We have given each brother and sister a letter telling which district meeting to attend. You cannot freely choose. If you are truly inconvenienced geographically, you can ask the business office to change your assignment, but please do not make any change yourself.

The reasons for this restriction are as follows: 1) The size of each district meeting place is different, so we must arrange the number of people according to the number of seats that are available. Nevertheless, some places have been over-assigned. Of course, there will always be some who cannot attend some meetings for personal reasons. We believe that these places generally will be able to handle everyone. 2) There are 1,500 to 1,600 people in Shanghai divided into fifteen district meetings. If we do not designate who meets where, we will not know who has attended the meetings and who has not. 3) We want to render the brothers and sisters practical help. We want them to receive practical fellowship and visitation. If we do not designate their meeting place, it will be difficult to achieve these goals. We have considered this matter very much.

Combined Meetings and District Meetings

The second point is the combined meetings. We can say there are two kinds of meetings now: combined meetings and district meetings. There will be two combined meetings a week. One will be at ten o'clock on the Lord's Day morning. The first Lord's Day of every month will be a gospel meeting. The rest of the times will be for edification. Another meeting will be the fellowship meeting every Saturday night. These two meetings will be in the first district at Wen-teh Lane. There will be three district meetings a week: the table meeting on the Lord's Day evening, the Tuesday night prayer meeting, and the Friday night meeting for new believers. These will be held in the fifteen different districts. There will also be a Wednesday night gospel meeting which will be held in four districts.

The gospel meeting is the meeting in which all the brothers and sisters must work. It is a meeting to work on others. The edification meeting is one in which a

person is edified himself. In the fellowship meeting, one is either helped or is helping others. The table meeting is directed towards the Lord. The prayer meeting is where we come before God to work. It is the responsibility of every brother and sister to bring others to hear the gospel. We hope that every brother and sister can bring at least two people to the Lord in a year. It would be best if each one can lead five to the Lord. We hope that the brothers and sisters will bring their friends to hear the gospel at the Wednesday night gospel meeting in the district that is closest to them. The gospel meeting in the first district is especially important; it is a combined meeting of eight districts together. All the brothers and sisters have to bring their friends to fill up this place.

The meeting for the new believers will be a message meeting for those who have just believed in the Lord. The word to the new believers is very basic in nature. There are about fifty topics. We hope we can cover them all within a year. We invite all the brothers and sisters to come because, even if you have heard these messages before, you have not completely apprehended them. We hope that every brother and sister would receive this basic edification. Our requirements for this meeting are stricter. Please attend it in the district to which you have been assigned. If you fail to attend these meetings, you will bring trouble on yourself because somebody will come to visit you and make the lesson up for you. No meeting will be more closely monitored than this one. Therefore, if you want to avoid trouble, it would be best if you attended every one of these meetings.

The Assignment of the Main Roles of Responsibility

The third matter is the assignment of the main roles of responsibility. Last year we made some arrangements concerning the responsibility for each kind of business affair. A few days ago, we made some new arrangements for each area of work in the church. We now feel that another arrangement of responsibility must be made in order for every aspect of the work to be carried out successfully.

The more people there are in a local church, the harder it is to shepherd, fellowship, and visit the saints. The elders must bear the responsibility for shepherding, caring, and leading. But in a place with as many brothers and sisters as Shanghai, how can the elders cover things thoroughly? We have considered how we should take care of the need, and the result is the following arrangements: We have now divided the church into fifteen districts. Each district

has a few responsible ones. These ones are not elders; they are merely learners learning to be deacons. Every district has its own leading brothers and leading sisters. There are also some helpers. Whoever is responsible for a district will make the arrangements for visitation and leadership in that district. Some districts, however, have two hundred people. Even the smallest district has a few dozen people. The responsible ones will not have time to care for everybody. Therefore, we have looked at the number of people in each district and subdivided the districts into groups. Each group has at least thirteen people and no more than eighteen people. Each group has two responsible ones. Each of these two will be responsible for visiting and leading an average of seven or eight people. In this way we will know if a person attends the meetings and what his spiritual condition is. We will not be cut off like we were in the past.

I call this assignment the "main roles of responsibility." The elders take the main role in the local churches. The deacons take the main role in the districts. The responsible ones take the main role in the groups. The elders bear the responsibility of overseeing the church. They oversee the progress of each of the responsible ones in the districts. The responsible ones in the districts are like parents. They must know every situation and care for every need. We must have those who can preach the gospel, visit for the gospel, edify the new ones, visit the new ones, make up lessons with the new ones, help the poor, visit in emergencies, and visit when people come from other places. We must ask the right person to supply and fill up whatever need arises.

Therefore, even if we have a thousand or two thousand people, the responsibility of everyone is fixed. May we go on in this way, and may the Lord bless those who are taking main roles in the responsibility.

For the sake of our own benefit and for the successful moving on of the church, we have the following request:

**Paying Special Attention to
These Arrangements**

Do not look on this as an organization. If it is an organization, may God have mercy on us. We are one hundred percent not an organization. These are arrangements. We do not depend on these means, but we use them as a tool. If we want to satisfy someone's thirst, we must use a cup for the water. We must have these arrangements before we can dispense the spiritual goods.

Some of you may be more educated or experienced in life. You may have been saved for many years and have much spiritual experience. Although we have not

made you responsible for a district, we ask you to pay special attention to these arrangements. We have made these arrangements according to various considerations: Some people do not have time, some live too far away, and others have various reasons. The responsible ones for your district may not have the education or experience that you have. On the surface, it seems that you are following them, but before God, you should help them. If one with experience before God submits to a younger, less experienced person, I cannot tell you how much help the younger person receives. Conversely, if one with experience does not submit to a younger person, I cannot tell you how much damage the younger one suffers. We confess that our arrangements may not be altogether accurate, but if we learn to submit, they will always turn out to be for our profit. Learning to submit to someone inferior requires a particular measure of the Lord's mercy! Brothers and sisters, do not question whether or not the church's arrangement is right or wrong or whether or not the responsible one for the district is experienced. If we are willing to submit, we will gain the benefit in the discipline of the Holy Spirit, and we will release life through such discipline. Finally, we hope that the brothers and sisters would consider one another as brothers and sisters and as members one of another. All of us should have the proper function and proper service.

All Should Obey before Doing

We ask every person in the church to practice obedience. We should ask before doing anything. There is order and authority here. The church is a place of firm discipline. We must see that after man's fall, he became very loose. May God have mercy on us that none would forsake his service or act in disobedience. (Witness Lee)

In April of last year we felt that we should build a meeting hall. At that time a budget of three hundred million yuan appeared to be a large sum to us. Some of the brothers and sisters gave their all out of their love for the Lord. We announced last September that we would not work according to the so-called way of faith but would ask the brothers and sisters to take the way of responsibility. The amount of responsibility the brothers and sisters would bear would determine the extent of our efforts. At the time there were three pieces of land. We classified them into three categories. If the offerings from the brothers and sisters were sufficient to buy the first piece of land, we would buy it. If they were sufficient only to buy the second, we would buy the second. If they were not

sufficient for the second piece of land, we would buy the third piece of land. We wanted to see which piece of land God wanted us to buy. We continued this way for six months. Many times it appeared that we would succeed, but then we found that we fell short again. Today what God has given us truly surpasses what we could ask or think. He has given us the first choice.

A First-class Piece of Land

Although we went through a period of darkness, God has given to us according to His good will. We have truly learned something in this. The land now is at 145 Tung-ren Street (formerly Hardoon Road), Nan-yang Road. We have recently closed the transaction on it. The land is slightly more than 4.7 Chinese acres. There is a western-style house on the property already. We are preparing to build a meeting hall with the capacity for five thousand people.

All Those with a Burden for the New Meeting Hall

Brothers and sisters, if you did not give anything before, you can still give something now if you want to. (Zu)

I would like to add a few words concerning the building of the meeting hall. This piece of land cost approximately 130 million. We plan to start building in August. Presently, we are working on the design. We still need about ninety or one hundred million more. We must look to the Lord for this need.

There is another matter. Some consecration pledges, listing items of consecration which the brothers and sisters have handed in, have not yet been liquidated. It would be best if these brothers and sisters would dispose of these items by themselves.

Killing, Skinning, and Cutting the Offerings by Themselves

I just thought of one passage in the Old Testament where the people brought their offerings for sacrifices. They had to kill, skin, and cut the offerings themselves. Your giving something is your bringing the sacrifice to the Lord as a burnt offering. If it needs to be sold for cash, you need to sell it yourself. Aside from the money we need for the meeting hall, we also need one or two automobiles. They will cost several billion. The printing work also needs two billion. These needs are desperate. Therefore, now is the time for the brothers and sisters to begin skinning the burnt offerings which they have brought.

No Centralization of Finance

As a final point, we will not have any centralization of finance in the future. All the brothers and sisters should be living for the Lord. Their money and property should also be used for the Lord. Except for what is needed for living and business, the rest of our money and property should be offered according to the Lord's leading.

There are four areas for which you can offer your money: the local church, individual saints, the work, and the workers. You can follow the Lord's leading to give to any of these four areas. Perhaps you will be led to make an offering for the local need, an offering for another local church, an offering for the work (in your own region or in another region), or an offering to support the workers (in your own region or in another region). You might also be led to give to some needy brothers and sisters, or you might be led to give alms to the poor. You are not the only ones who should practice such offerings; the local church, the co-workers, and even the work can all be led to give to any of these areas. This is something done in life, something that requires the Lord's leading. God likes this. However, the money which the brothers and sisters have given this time has mainly been used for the purchase and construction of the new meeting hall in Shanghai. May God have mercy on us in this matter. May God also bless us in His mercy. (Witness Lee)

Recorded by Tao

May 29, 1948

WAITING FOR CONFIRMATION

The brothers and sisters here are very burning. There have been three baptism meetings since January with a total of forty-eight people. They all miss you since you left, even though they do not know you because they are new believers. They have heard so much about you that they feel they know you. May you not forget the seeds you sowed with tears for three years.

When I came from Tai-Yuan to Tien-Shui, the call I received was for six months. Now there are just a few more days left. My time will be fulfilled on the twenty-third. I am still not clear if the Lord will lead me to leave Tien-Shui or to stay here. Although I have called you an old prophet and insulted you before, my original going from Tien-Shui to Tai-Yuan and then from Tai-Yuan to Tien-Shui was through your confirmation. You have always been the one who gave me confirmation. This time cannot be any exception. Please confirm again.

I will not be useful at all if I continue staying here. First, I am immature in life; second, I do not have light; and third, I stutter. The brothers and sisters all need feeding. They are starving, and I cannot serve anything to them.

I beg you to tell me briefly the important points of the messages released by the senior ones (especially concerning the practical matter of life and the foundational lessons). I am really like someone walking in a black cave. I cannot see or feel my way.

Liu Shao-wu

April 15, 1948

Mailing Address: 1 Cheng-Yuan Alley, Tien-Shui, Kansu

THINGS LEARNED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

In the past few years, I have felt the need to step back because of the things that happened in the churches in Manchuria. I have not dared to touch the things which the Lord commissioned to me. As a result, I have not had much fellowship with the brothers. Thank the Lord! He tears down, and He builds up. He skins and wounds, but He also nourishes and bandages. He led me into the valley of death, and He also caused me to begin again in resurrection. I know God and the sweetness of living in His presence in the spirit of revelation. I used to suffer by having His presence and then losing it. I have recently gained some experience in continuous fellowship and in continuously turning inward. Sometimes I am not faithful, but I immediately confess my sin. Through the blood I can still peacefully lift my heart back to God. The work, the environment, and my position cannot really affect me inwardly. I do not allow them to entangle me or rob me of my central service. For the past two years I have struggled to keep myself out of any kind of entangled condition. Presently, I can rest a little. However, I do not want to lose my zeal for the work and my impetus for resisting the enemy. Sometimes when I am pulled away from the center, I return to the Lord as soon as I feel empty inside. I really feel that that day is drawing near, yet my experience of life is still so shallow. I really am short of His glory!

I recently learned that you had returned to Shanghai and had had some fellowship with the co-workers. I desperately want to join you and receive teaching and correction from all the leading brothers, but the time and environment do not allow me. It is really impossible. The Lord's way is higher than my way. Perhaps the Lord is removing my spiritual laziness through this, that I might draw closer to Him and learn to be led into the hidden places of God. I can only yield to Him obediently. The only problem is that I am foolish and

shallow. I am afraid to miss the teaching from the leading brothers and fall into darkness and be shut out of the Lord's central work. It is a small thing for me to lose the blessing, but I must pay attention to the Lord's heart's desire. I have recently written a letter to the brothers and sisters in Shen-Yang. I am enclosing a copy of that letter. I am begging for your comment and corrections.

I bear much of the blame for all that has happened in the churches in Manchuria. Before God and before the church, I feel that there is only one reason for this: I do not have enough growth. If I prostrate myself humbly before the Lord and give myself to be thoroughly dealt with by Him, nothing is beyond hope of recovery. We are immature in Manchuria and lack spiritual knowledge. There is a great possibility we will be cheated and fall into darkness. Therefore, I want to lay my condition and the content of that letter before you, brother. I hope you can give me some advice and tell me which way I should go from now on. If you feel to show the letter to some other mature brothers and sisters, I am very willing to receive their teaching and care in the Lord.

The Lord's children in Ch'ang-ch'un have been blessed by the Lord. He has kept us and watched over us. At the same time, He has built us up. I hope you will remember us in your prayers. We are lambs between Satan's teeth. I greet you with peace in the Lord. Greet the brothers and sisters in the Lord in Shanghai for me.

Your brother in the Lord,

Hwa Tien-min

April 5, 1949

Mailing Address: 101 West 4th Street, Ch'ang-ch'un

IN WU-YUAN

Peace in the Lord to dear Brother Witness:

I have not corresponded with you for several years. I really miss you! How are you? How are the brothers and sisters? I miss them all. After leaving Cheefoo, I went first to Bao-Tou, then to Feng-Zhen, and now I have come to Wu-Yuan. I have seen the Lord's leading and grace in all matters. I am working for the Wu-Yuan county government, and it is going well. There are nine brothers and sisters here. We have meetings on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and the Lord's Day, and we really have the Lord's presence. Please remember us much in prayer. We hope you will write us often and teach us.

Your brother,

Wang Chu Hsin

February 2, 1948

Mailing Address: Wu-Yuan County Government Office, Sui-Yuan

ALL CARE

It was really God's grace that I went to Shanghai and had the opportunity to fellowship with the leading brothers and sisters. The assembly in Tientsin has been really blessed by the Lord. There may be a baptism meeting soon. The brothers and sisters all feel that there is not enough room in the hall. They all care about this and feel that we should rent or buy a bigger house. We are now in the process of getting one. May the Lord give us grace. We hope you would remember this when you pray.

Did Brother Yu and Sister Wang go to Tsingtao? Have the brothers going to Foochow left yet?

Your brother in the Lord,

Sia Xi-ling

May 17, 1948

Mailing Address: 116 Yau-Hwa Lane, Shansi Road, District 10, Tientsin

THE FUTURE OF THE HEBRON ORPHANAGE

Greetings in the Lord to Brother Watchman and Brother Witness:

I left Shanghai on the eleventh and arrived safely in Hankow on the fifteenth. The problems in the school have all been resolved. The only matter left is personnel; I am desperately waiting for the coordinating brothers and sisters to come. We desperately need to resolve the future of the orphanage, both with respect to location and to method of administration.

Since my return, it seems as if I have committed a great sin, as if I have been struck with a great illness. My head is heavy, and my body is weak. I cannot pray or read the Bible. I cannot speak or even think. If the church does not make some arrangements for the future of the orphanage, I really feel that I will not be able to carry out my responsibilities. I would like to be able to drop this burden and look for a small place in a locality where I could learn to serve God with all the members in that locality. I am afraid of ending up in the wrong place, doing the wrong thing, and shaming the Lord's name.

It has been rainy for the last few days, and the river is rising quickly. It is two feet higher than it was in 1932. All the inhabitants of Wuhan are worried.

I have been working on the debts and doing the books since my return. I really ask for guidance with respect to the future. I am awaiting your prompt response. I respectfully greet you with peace in the Lord.

Your brother in the Lord,

Lan Tsi-yi

May 20, 1948

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 99, Hankow

A DILEMMA

Letter One

I went to my office the day after arriving in Nanking and handed in my letter of resignation on Saturday. Because I did not want my superiors to misunderstand, I asked a friend to explain for me. I was surprised when my superior's secretary returned my letter of resignation the same day that I handed it in. Today is Monday, and I went in to personally ask to resign. My superior refused to accept my resignation again. I asked him to find a replacement for me as a department head as soon as possible. I told him that I could wait for a short period of time. He agreed to consider it for a few days and said that I was not old enough to retire, nor was I physically disqualified for work. I have been very frustrated. It appears that I will have to insist on my retirement. My desire is to leave my job, and I have quit twice in four days. I am in a dilemma; I cannot resolve it. I hope you could give me some direction as to how to plan the next step.

Brother Lee Shi-chun also studied chemistry. He used to make soap and now wants to start his own business. Every time there is a meeting I must travel more than twenty miles. It is really difficult and time consuming. If we had one billion, we could be partners in a small soap factory. We would sell our products in the brothers' stores or market stalls.

Peace to you in the Lord.

Your brother,

Chang Yu-lan

April 26, 1948

Mailing Address: 30 Tse Tang Alley, Chung Shan East Road, Nanking

Letter Two

I wrote a second letter of resignation and received the following answer: "Please be constrained to remain. Wait until I return from America to discuss this." My supervisor will go to America for three months on the nineteenth. I think it will be

hard to resign. I plan to wait for three months before doing anything else. When are you coming to Nanking? The church here has no way to care for the saved ones. We cannot nourish the children we beget. We plan to have a baptism meeting on the twenty-first. I can do nothing. I am not good at nourishing. I hope you will come to make some arrangements.

Peace to you in the Lord.

Your brother,

Chang Yu-lan

May 10, 1948

THE SIGNS OF KNOWING ONESELF

When my mother returned during summer vacation last year and passed through Shanghai, you asked how I was doing. You asked because I had sent you a letter. I have been bothered about this because I should have sent a letter long ago telling you of my current situation, lest you worry.

I confess that much of the time I am in the valley of the shadow of death with darkness on all sides. It seems that I am in a hopeless situation. There is no human hope left, and God is hidden from me. Despite this, I have passed through all these circumstances. They only prove the words: "My grace is sufficient for you." If I recounted God's leading over the past few years, I am afraid that you would not have the patience to listen. I can only briefly give an outline. In general, all that I have passed through has caused me to know myself. I have also gradually learned that apart from dying to all things, man cannot gain God Himself; he can only gain gifts. Whether in the church, in my family, or in my personal life, God is constantly dealing with me so that I do not have any desire apart from Him. I know that if a man can really deny himself, he will enter true rest and peace. A man does not have peace, rest, or happiness because he loves himself. I do not know if I am right in saying this or not.

Thank you for your concern. I am very well. I have many difficulties, but I believe God can resolve them.

Respectfully,

XX

March 31, 1948

LEARNING TO SERVE IN ZHAN-JIANG

Newly Arrived in Zhan-Jiang

Almost six months have gone by since the church in Shanghai sent me here to Zhan-Jiang. The fruits which I have gained, however, are pitifully few, and the Lord is really dissatisfied. Whenever I consider how I have failed in my responsibility, I have no peace in my heart. Yes, if I could thoroughly drop the "earth," the Lord could bring the "heavens" out through me. I have wanted to write you many times, but I was afraid in my heart. However, by His grace I must report the situation of this locality and of myself for His sake and for the sake of His church.

Thank the Lord that His will is never wrong. God sent me here to give me more opportunities to learn my lessons. Although I am not faithful enough, God still gives me the grace to be willing to treasure my time here. I cannot forget your word that these few years will determine my usefulness before God for the rest of my life. I feel more and more that I do not have enough time to do what I should do. If I do not have enough exercise before Him, I am afraid He will not increase His commission to me.

Sometimes I am very afraid because most of the people I contact are a generation older than I. Most of them are my superiors. They are also more educated. I am afraid to open my mouth to exhort them from a human point of view. I can only have the boldness to visit them when I rely on the Lord because there is no one else to do this work.

When I first arrived, I really wanted to meet some Christians. During the first week, I often went to the chapels in this place to talk to the leaders and to attend their meetings. I was hasty and did the most foolish thing: I "dug into the garbage can" by pointing out errors and unscriptural points to them. (May the Lord's blood cover me, and may He give me grace that I would not do the same again.) Since the Lord wanted me to do the work of recovery, not the work of correction, I did not go to their meetings much after that. I did not even attend any Lord's Day meetings for several months, preferring to remain alone in my dwelling reading God's Word.

God gradually showed me that I must have a new start in the way of "recovery." There must be a meeting in Siying with a pure standing. The few young brothers that I knew, however, did not know much about the church. Therefore, with much caution I suggested that we meet together. They were very happy. Since then we have had two meetings every week. At first I only knew a few brothers, and other people did not know about the meetings. Those who attended the meetings also thought that these were just home meetings. However, my goal was not limited to

this. Although there were not many people in the meetings, I knew that this was truly a meeting with a pure standing in Zhan-Jiang. I looked to the Lord to increase the number of those coming to the meetings and to allow all His children in Siying to have the opportunity to attend such meetings. Unfortunately, some of the brothers who had a seeking heart moved to other localities because they had problems making a living. There were only two or three people left. At the same time, I was afraid that others would misunderstand me. I had to be patient and move slowly. I did not dare to carelessly invite any brother or sister that I knew to the meetings, lest people say that I was another denomination.

Moreover, I ran into difficulties with the meeting place. Several times I could not find a place, so we had to meet outdoors. (I preferred doing that rather than borrowing a chapel.) Because our meeting place was not fixed, I did not dare invite brothers and sisters that I had just met. Recently, we have begun meeting in my office building, taking the opportunity when my colleagues are out walking after dinner.

Thank the Lord, my surveying work in the countryside will be temporarily finished in August, and I will visit the brothers and sisters in this place after office hours. I have met more than twenty Christians. The difficulties I have encountered here were not found in Shanghai. When I was in Shanghai, I was not afraid when I met people because I could invite them to the meetings of the church, or I could ask older brothers and sisters to talk to them. It is not so convenient in Zhan-Jiang. Everything must be done by two or three twenty-year-old brothers who have just joined the work. Furthermore, there are no church meetings to bring others to, so the only way is to talk to them individually. If I can only have two families migrating to Zhan-Jiang, one to Siying and one to Chekan, the needs will be covered adequately. (The city of Zhan-Jiang is divided into the two districts of Siying and Chekan that are about twenty kilometers apart. It is a twenty-minute bus ride between the two, but because the people here are poor, not many can afford to take the bus.) If two families would come, many difficulties could be solved. We could meet in the brothers' houses and have a meeting to remember the Lord on the Lord's Day.

The city of Zhan-Jiang is in a very important location. It is in the southern part of Kwangtung province. As the most important town east of Kwangsi, Zhan-Jiang is the gateway to that province. In recent years public safety has improved, and the new railroad is finished. (According to the head of our department, it will be connected to the railroads in Kwangsi in one year at the latest. Then the rails will

run all the way to Kuei-yang and Hengyang.) After the port is opened, the population could easily increase to more than one million. It has the possibility to become more important than Hong Kong or Canton. At present, Siying is a business center. There are offices for railway engineering, city government, customs, and salt works, as well as elementary and secondary schools, hospitals, and courts. My own engineering office has about four hundred employees (including more than one hundred engineers). Many hard-working Western missionaries live in Zhan-Jiang. One lived here for more than twenty years and died here. His daughter has continued her father's work and remains here. However, no other worker has come from among us!

In addition to the Cantonese, there are some people here from other provinces. Most of the employees in my office were transferred here from the Bao-Tien Railway (in the region of Bao-Ji and Lun-Si). Although more than half are Cantonese, they are able to understand Mandarin quite well. My purpose in mentioning this fact is that brothers and sisters from other provinces should not turn away because of a language barrier.

Zhan-Jiang has only two public hospitals, and there is a pitiful shortage of doctors. One hospital has only one doctor, who also serves as the director of the hospital. In addition to these hospitals, there are six or seven private Western doctors in Siying. There are five or six secondary schools. There are the Customs Office, the Office of Shipping Ministry, the post office, banks, and the Salt Ministry Office. The brothers and sisters in Shanghai who are employed in these positions could request to be transferred, or they could come here to look for work. I deeply believe that sooner or later some brothers and sisters from among us must migrate here. If they come sooner, it would be more helpful to the expansion of the Lord's work.

In my reading of the Bible, I found that the four Gospels have a few places that are different in the order of the events. Why is this? Sometimes one chapter speaks of several seemingly unrelated things, and it is difficult to remember them. What is the best way to read and remember the Bible?

I really hope that the Lord would give me the opportunity to learn to serve Him by following you. There are no older brothers and sisters to teach me here apart from God Himself. If I make a mistake, there is no one to correct me. I often feel that this is a suffering. I will tell you about the rest later.

Yu Pao-sheng

October 8, 1947

Please Migrate to Zhan-Jiang

It has been almost half a year since I came to Zhan-Jiang! God indeed has had mercy on me and entrusted me with the responsibility for His "recovery." Some of the brothers and sisters in Siying were cold and backslidden, but they have received mercy from God and have gradually returned to the Lord. Other friends have also accepted the Lord one by one and received life! Last Wednesday we held the first church meeting in a sister's house. There were more than twenty people present including children. However, difficulties increase as we grow in size because we must establish the Lord's table sooner or later, and we must baptize the people who are saved. However, no more than one or two people understand the truth of the church (even I myself do not fully understand it). I cannot bear such a heavy responsibility alone. Furthermore, I work for the Railroad Ministry and may be transferred to another place at any time. If the testimony of the church in this locality is to be maintained, one or two believing households should stay here permanently. For this reason, I ask God to send His children to migrate to Zhan-Jiang. This matter cannot be delayed and cannot wait any longer. I do not ask for much, just two households, one to stay in Siying and one in Chekan. Please remember that I was sent by you; reinforcements must continue coming, or the beachhead here will disappear sooner or later! May the brothers and sisters follow the Lord's leading and migrate here. Blessings from the Lord to you.

Your brother in the Lord,

Yu Pao-sheng

October 27, 1947

The Beginning of the Meetings in Siying

Since the pathway to the chapels was blocked, God having entrusted us with the responsibility for the "recovery," we decided to have a new beginning. Soon after we made this decision, God opened a sister's house (Mrs. Duan Fu-shen) for our meeting place. In the beginning we held believers' meetings there, but in addition to the brothers and sisters, many unbelieving friends came, as well as children. We tried to divide the meetings into three: a Wednesday gospel meeting, a Friday children's meeting at 6:30, and a Friday meeting for the brothers and sisters at 7:30. In order to allow the brothers and sisters to participate in the church service, we divided up the different areas of responsibility, such as setting up chairs, ushering, teaching children, leading the hymns, accounting, and

clerical duties. If God does not abandon us, there perhaps will come a time when we will have the need to rent a house.

I really feel the need to remain in Siying for the sake of the church in Siying (because I cannot let it go yet). May God open a way for me to transfer to the Project Affairs Department so that I may stay in Siying and may meet more colleagues.

Because transportation is still inconvenient, no brothers and sisters have come here yet from Hong Kong or Canton. Will any brothers or sisters from the church in Shanghai come south in the near future?

The Lord's presence be with you all.

Your brother,

Yu Pao-sheng

November 18, 1947

Lessons Learned in Siying

In observing the children of God in Siying, I became conscious of the need to submit to the divine life and the importance of position and authority. If this matter is not upheld, the church will be in confusion, and nothing will be proper or orderly. When I was in Shanghai, often I was unwilling to submit to the older saints, and I was full of my own opinions. This greatly damaged the house of God. May God and you forgive me.

When I first came here, I was too "democratic"; I allowed the brothers to touch the affairs of the church too loosely. Thank God that my error has been exposed through practical lessons. Because some brothers knew too much about the matters in God's house, they became proud and had a bad attitude about receiving teaching. This confirms the word in 1 Timothy 3:6. You did not tell me much about church affairs when I was about to leave Shanghai; I realize now that this was really wise.

Some brothers and sisters do not have a heart for God because they have received too little grace. When I meet this kind of person, my heart aches to the extent that I cannot say anything. I dare not speak, and my attitude appears cold and hard. When others see me, they think that I am proud or that I do not want to speak with them. I am really in a dilemma and do not know what to do.

The senior Brother Chao once said to me that when Brother Witness gives a message, his words are strong and severe, but once he steps down from the platform, he is very open to receive the saints. I also remember that Brother

Witness once told me that when one stands on the platform, he must be faithful to speak God's word. He should not be indecisive just because his brothers are sitting in the audience. But in his daily life, he must treat the brothers in a way they can bear. Sister Peace Wang also said in her letter that we should not be hasty in dealing with the brothers. The warm sun can cause dead branches to fall away. When I stood on the platform, I spoke a heavy word. Many brothers could not take it. Some were even repulsed. I fear that they did not have enough grace, even though they understood what was spoken. Consequently, they could not stand it. On the platform I rebuked the brothers for loving the world, and they felt that my standard was too high. They were unwilling to receive the word. Yet I did not have the peace unless I released this word, and I had nothing else to speak other than this.

This past Lord's Day, we had a baptism at the beach. (Six people were baptized—three brothers, two wives, and an elementary school student. A month before Brother Yen came, two brothers were baptized.) That evening we had the first Lord's table meeting with ten people in attendance. (All were brothers and sisters who had been baptized among us.) Those who had asked to be baptized spoke with us, the responsible brothers. They were accepted only after we consented. There were a few friends we felt that we could not accept, and we refused to baptize them.

We prefer to be very strict in order to preserve the holiness of the house of God. We do not baptize or accept people into the Lord's table meeting loosely.

The following week, we had four days of gospel meetings. Because there were a limited number of brothers, we could only do what our strength permitted. I dared not be too hopeful that many brothers would come into the church. I only hoped to make one payment on my debt of the gospel. As a result of this gospel preaching, I hoped our living before our colleagues would be dealt with more and that we would not be so loose.

I always feel that our immediate colleagues are the best candidates for the gospel. If this barrier is not broken down, we cannot hope to save friends outside of our office. (Oh, this is difficult because we must fight with all our strength and give up our rights.)

There are a few brothers here who are willing to be in one accord with me and to die to mammon. They are willing to give up all the money that passes into their hands for the house of God. Apart from their individual need for food, they give their entire salaries to the church. The church has all kinds of needs. Some of my

colleagues have seen this and think that I am drawing two salaries! (One from the church!) We can all live in the dormitories provided by the company, but for the sake of having a place to meet, we would rather rent a house and cook for ourselves after work. (One brother is physically weak and is temporarily convalescing in this house of God. He cooks meals so that a meal is ready when we come home.) Brother Yen also lived in this house of God while he was in Zhan-Jiang, and he ate with us. He was very touched to see the brothers giving their all to maintain this house of God.

Presently, the coordination is still not perfect. Several of the brothers are still single, and some of the wives who believe in the Lord still have unbelieving husbands. If an entire family of believers in the Lord could migrate here, the church of God could increase more quickly.

In the beginning we met in the home of a married sister, and her eighth-grade daughter's heart was for the Lord. She often brought many of her female classmates to the meetings. As a result, several of these classmates believed in the Lord. Because we are too young, we are wary of being stumbled on account of the opposite sex, and we stopped our work among the girls after a while. I hope that a married sister can migrate to Siying in the future to continue this work.

I have gradually come to feel that the hardest kind of people to work with are those who have been in Christianity for many years. This work invites many false accusations. It is better and easier to speak to friends who have never heard the gospel.

I have not yet purchased the concordance written by Cruden, but I am still reading the Bible according to Brother Witness's "rote memorization" method. I hope to memorize every chapter in the New Testament and read the Old Testament through one or two times first. It is very difficult to memorize the Bible. I often read a chapter more than ten times without being able to find its central thought. It is also difficult to find the connection between chapters. The order of events recorded in the four Gospels is mixed up. I really do not know what is the best way to study. I will be finished with my internship at the end of this month. I hope to be able to spend more time studying the Bible and only a small amount of time reviewing homework connected with the Railway Department.

I have noted the things in a letter sent to me by Sister Peace Wang. She said that we should strike a balance between work and study. In the past I worked too much and did not study enough. A young brother should spend more time on

studying. Therefore, we would rather curtail our work and spend more time on studying the Bible. I do not know if I am right in doing this.

The customs officers here (Leichow Customs Office) are transferred often. Would the brothers who are customs officers in the Shanghai Office be willing to apply for a transfer to the south? The brothers and sisters in the churches in Hong Kong and Canton are too busy taking care of their own affairs. I do not expect any of them to migrate to Siying and can only wait for the brothers and sisters from Shanghai.

Your brother,

Pao-sheng

April 9, 1948

The Present Condition of the Meetings

Presently, the meetings are much purer than before. Although the number is smaller, all have come for the Lord. All who attend the Lord's table meeting are brothers and sisters who were baptized among us. I feel that I will allow the brothers to touch the affairs of the church only after they have been brought through the narrow gate of purging the leaven, and consecration to the Lord.

Our expenses for March were thirteen million yuan (the principal expense being payment on three months' rent for a brother). Although this is not a great amount, several brothers have given their all. (My salary for March was only 2,800,000 yuan.)

Last Lord's Day (April 18), four brothers and sisters were baptized. May the Lord bless you and be with you.

Respectfully,

Pao-sheng

April 22, 1948

Mailing Address: 20 Jie-Shih Road, Siying, Zhan-Jiang, Kwangtung province

A BEGINNING IN KULING MOUNTAIN

According to the most recent letters from Foochow, more than twenty brothers and sisters have arrived there. P'ing-Yang sent the most brothers and sisters, Swatow was second.

The brothers and sisters began going up the mountain in different groups on June 4. After they arrived on the mountain, they met every morning from 8:00 to 10:00. After a break, they continued meeting until 12:00. In the afternoon there

was rest until 3:00 and then work by assignments. There were also meetings in the evenings.

Editor

WAITING IN LAN-CHOU

..I have not written since coming to the Northwest. I have recently felt led by the Lord to simply discuss my past, present, and future with you brothers. I hope you will pray for me.

When I was in Tsingtao, it seemed that I received a calling for the remote regions. In the seven years that I waited before leaving Tsingtao, I became more and more aware of my spiritual poverty and weakness. I felt that I may not have had a calling, and so my purpose in going west was to do business and serve a little in the matter of hospitality.

I came to Lan-chou and used up almost all of my capital. The Lord made provision for me to come to Kansu College as an accountant. In that year God seemed to remind me of His calling through 1 Timothy 6:11-12 and 2 Timothy 1:6-8. However, when I considered the problem of my lack of gift, knowledge, and eloquence, I was held back by an invisible force.

On the morning of January 14, 1945, the Lord seemed to give me a clear revelation. It seemed as if a voice spoke to me, "Your name is not Shi-xin, which translated means 'new,' nor is it 'decrease'; it should be 'John,' who said, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'" After I changed my name, I had a deep realization that the work before me did not require my gift or knowledge for the building of the church. Instead, I should rely on the Lord's grace to pioneer and prepare His way.

Since I received the brothers' confirmation and sending, I boldly ignored my own feelings and took my family on the road to Yungchang for two years. Then I went to Wuwei. Brother Lee Yin-xin arrived in Lan-chou in winter and sent us an invitation to come to him for fellowship.

Thank God! He brought me into His light in one of the meetings. Little by little I saw that my previous work was like the situation in Judges, where everyone did what was right in his own eyes. If one has not been connected with the source, how can one speak of work and service!

Therefore, I had to put those activities aside, despite calls from Yungchang and Wuwei and their attempts to persuade me to return quickly. I am peaceful remaining in Lan-chou to learn to serve God with the brothers here. I can only wait for His clearer revelation and leading with regard to my future.

I really hope the brothers will take time to teach me about God's up-to-date desire and the way He wants to take. May the Lord be with you.

Your brother,

John Lee

April 12, 1948

LESSONS LEARNED IN LAN-CHOU

The church in Lan-chou has been especially blessed by the Lord recently. The brothers and sisters are pursuing and growing in life. They have also been preserved by the Lord. Some have been brought inward by their environments. Others are going through trials, discipline, and even chastisements. Overall, the brothers and sisters among us have touched the real and living God and are in the process of coming out of Christianity and into Christ. Satan, however, has been attacking us very strongly; please pray for us much.

After the brothers left, we had two days of special gospel meetings on the first and fifteenth days of the first month of the lunar calendar. Although we were under fierce attack by the enemy, we saw the Lord's victory in the end. The brothers and sisters all learned something. Praise the Lord!

We are in the process of leasing land and building a new meeting hall, and we have also seen the beginning of some monetary offerings from the brothers and sisters. Please pray for us much.

Your brothers,

Si Lu-Chen, John Lee

April 12, 1948

Mailing Address: 5 Park Road, Lan-chou, Kansu province

HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DISAPPOINTMENTS

..With regard to going to Shanghai, I have desperately sought the Lord for these past few days, and I hope that the Lord would give me an open door to get there in a timely manner, but my environment has not released me. (The dean of my department has taken three weeks off, and he will not return to Tsingtao until around April 21.)

I have just come back from taking Brother Zi-jie to the dock, and my heart is filled with boundless disappointment! I deeply hope that by the Lord's mercy I will not be rejected, and I ask the brothers to remember me in the Lord.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Qu Xun-min

March 31, 1948

Mailing Address: Nei 4, 1 Zi-Chuan Road, Tsingtao

THE NEED TO NOURISH OTHERS

Dear Brothers:

The Lord led us to begin preaching the gospel in November of last year. Thank the Lord for being with us. Many people confessed His name. We were not able to baptize them into the Lord's name because we are weak and immature and because of other hindrances. On the eighteenth of this month, the Lord gave us special strength, and we were finally able to baptize them into the Lord's name. Thirteen brothers and one sister were baptized. Many other people are also seeking this way. The Lord willing, we may have another baptism meeting. We are still praying concerning the time. May the Lord decide it for us.

O brothers! We feel there is a great problem here. God has borne so much fruit for us that we have no way to nourish them all even though our hearts are full of joy. We are still milk-drinkers; how can milk-drinking infants help newborn babes grow? May the brothers often remember us young, weak brothers before God, and may we not hinder God's will and grace. Please send us letters to help us so that we could go on in the heavenly way of true light and so that we would have the strength to bring the brothers and sisters on. May the Lord's grace be with you. Greet all the saints in Shanghai.

Representing the brothers who meet in the Lord's name
in Xu-Zhou,

Abel Wang, Liu Zhi-cheng

April 22, 1948

Mailing Address: Dawning Light Pharmacy, 211 Peng Cheng Road, Xu-Zhou

PRESENTING OUR BODIES

Greetings in the Lord to the most respectful Mr. Nee:

Please read this letter to the end and do not set it aside.

I fully admit that I am most poor and pitiful before God. I have nothing, know nothing, and am worth less than a dead fly because I can only commit sin and come short of His glory.

Honorable Mr. Nee! I hope you will remember me, the most pitiful among the pitiful ones, before God often! May He completely gain this lowly, worthless person and strip off all that is not from God Himself.

Early this morning, my elder brother told me a little about the brothers and sisters in Shanghai and how they had handed over themselves and all they had to the church for God's use. Oh! I am so happy for them! Because I feel that this is such a great blessing, an indescribable desire, need, and hope swelled up in me to participate in this blessing.

Honorable Mr. Nee! I now present my body completely to the church and offer it to God. Could you please answer me and tell me if the church accepts it? I really want to be completely gained by God! I want so very much to be His slave for my entire life! May God have more mercy on me!

Everything of the past has passed away. I can only ask God for forgiveness. May He give me a new, good beginning! Peace to you in the Lord!

Your very young brother in the Lord,

XX

April 20, 1948

(First-year medical student at Central University, Nanking)

**IS IT POSSIBLE TO LEARN TO SERVE GOD
BY ENTERING ANOTHER PROFESSION?**

Peace in the Lord to the honorable Brother Witness:

With respect to the situation here, I believe that Brother Caleb and Brother Yin-xin have already spoken to you, so I do not need to mention it again. Five years ago I spoke with you, when we were about to depart from Brother Wang Jing-bo's house, concerning whether or not I could enter another profession and still maintain my present standing to learn to serve God. I was put into an environment several times in which I wanted to try, but the Lord never allowed me to do it. He always turned me back with His powerful hand. I have not dared to do any business; I am only waiting for the Lord's time and looking to His leading and arrangement. Please give me a little confirmation, and I hope you will pray for me. May the Lord's grace be with you.

Your brother,

Wang Yi-xien

April 24, 1948

Mailing Address: 5 Xiang-Shui Street, East Blvd., Baotou, Suiyuan

LESSONS LEARNED BY A YOUNG BROTHER IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL

First Letter

By the Lord's marvelous leading we were able to have two gospel meetings on campus. One meeting was in Professor Guo's home (more than thirty people came), and the second meeting was in his laboratory (more than one hundred came). I preached both times. The condition of the first meeting was very good, but some of my inward burden could not be released at the second meeting because there were too many people, and the word was not rich enough. The Lord has already led us to gradually build up a beachhead among the female students. There are, however, many difficulties: 1) We will be on vacation in two months, and everybody is very busy. 2) There are many activities and clubs on campus which take up much time. Many people like to attend them and are not willing to listen to the gospel.

The Lord's presence and arrangement are too obvious; however, the devil is not happy either. I hope you will pray much. Please tell me if you have any suggestions. Soon we will have a gospel discussion meeting for people to ask questions.

The situation at the Frontier School is becoming more and more difficult, but we are thankful because those whom we have recently baptized really have a heart. Tomorrow we will have a meeting and give everyone a chance to ask questions. What suggestions do you have? I have much homework, but I have put it aside. May the Lord bless you!

May 6, 1948

Second Letter

The situation at the Frontier School is extremely difficult for many reasons. It is too far from the meeting place, and transportation is a problem because the Number 7 Bus has stopped running. There are only two school buses which shuttle back and forth to the police academy. Walking takes two hours round-trip, and on rainy days only those who really have a heart would walk. They are lazy and indifferent. In another month, I will go on vacation. Then semester exams will follow, and I must care for the brothers and sisters in my school. Time is too short; there is nothing I can do. I do not know if God wants me to change my direction and stop going to the Frontier School to preach the gospel, and instead bring the more than thirty students who are willing to receive the Lord to a clear knowledge of salvation so that we will have a good foundation before continuing

with the spread. I am afraid that everybody is a little tired of always preaching the gospel. What do you think? The condition of the gospel at Central University is very good. The brothers and sisters have had a new beginning, and the numbers have increased by fifty percent. Many male and female students as well as janitors are willing to accept the Lord. May the Lord continue His leading and presence. I hope that during this summer vacation a few stable brothers and sisters will come to Central University to take the entrance exams so that the gospel will have a way to spread further. I deeply believe that the Lord will give you a burden to pray for this. I hope you can come soon to point out the way ahead of us in the Lord's light. May the Lord be magnified!

May 10, 1948

Third Letter

The condition of the Frontier School has not changed much. I do not think we are without a way. If we only had a bus to pick up students and take them back, the difficulty could be resolved. The original Number 7 Bus stopped running, so unless a person's heart is really drawn by the Lord's love, it is hard to walk for one hour to the meetings, especially on rainy days. The brothers who are weak physically feel that their heart is willing, but they do not have enough strength. I am looking to the Lord to resolve this difficulty for us.

If the Lord has mercy on us, there may be a beginning at Jin-Ling (Nanking) University; however, because of the heavy religious background, one can expect that road to be tortuous. I will report to you when something has started.

The meetings at Central University have started. The Lord has also added saved ones to us. Presently, we have almost forty people meeting together with us. Professor Guo's house is already too small, and we have moved to his laboratory.

My heart feels that it is getting harder and harder for me to go on. There are so many things happening outwardly, yet I am so dark inwardly. I lack real revelation and light. I am still my old self; I have not learned anything new, nor do I have a stronger heart. Without the Lord's mercy, I will stumble and fall. I really hope the Lord will give you the burden to pray for me. May the Lord draw me again so that I may rise up to seek and know Him. Oh! Only the Lord knows my pitiful, desolate condition!

I know that you are pressed for time, but I hope you will say a few words to me from the heart and answer the questions I have asked.

Respectfully,

Chong-en

May 24, 1948

(A first-year medical student at Central University, Nanking)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THREE KINDS OF PLANNED PUBLICATIONS

In recent years we have had an acute sense of the neglect of the publication work! We have waited on the Lord time and again and have made some decisions. We will put out four kinds of publications beginning in July of this year: 1) The Ministers, 2) The Gospel, 3) The Way, and 4) The Testimony. We have temporarily decided to make them all bimonthly publications. Thank the Lord, the first issue of The Ministers has been published. We hope the other three publications will be ready on schedule. This burden, however, is very heavy. It requires that each reader pray much for us.

Editor

CONCERNING THE MINISTERS

NATURE: To show the way to serve, to help the serving ones and the churches in the different localities go on, and to solve the problems related to the ministry.

TIME OF PUBLICATION: Temporarily set at bimonthly.

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1. Table of the Condition of Brothers Migrating from Cheefoo to Suiyan Province
2. Table of the Condition of All the Localities in the Northwest

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our bookroom is in the process of reorganization. For the sake of the testimony and for the convenience of management, we would ask the following of each locality and of all those who are closely related to our bookroom:

- 1) Please do not freely use the name "Gospel Book Room" for any of your organizations. (We dare request this because we are all one in the Lord.)
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The Shanghai Gospel Book Room
July 1, 1948

ISSUE NO. 2

September 1, 1948

A TALK CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF GOD'S WORK IN CHINA

God's Work in China

God's work in China formally began with the coming of Protestantism, when it brought the gospel to China. It has been one hundred years since that time. As far as the advance of God's work is concerned, these one hundred years can be divided into three periods.

The Gospel Period

The first period covers the ninety years from Robert Morrison's coming to China until 1900. This can be called the gospel period. During this period, the main work of God in China was to preach the gospel to sinners and to lead men to faith in the Lord Jesus as Savior. During this period, except for a small number of people who witnessed God's deeper work, the majority only heard the gospel through God's grace and came to know the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

The Revival Period

The second period, which began in 1900 and lasted for around thirty years until 1937, can be called the period of revival. During this period, God not only caused His gospel in China to be more clearly preached, and not only brought more people to a clear understanding of salvation, but also revived many people all over northern and southern China. These ones were stirred up to consecrate themselves to the Lord and to live and work for the Lord. These revived ones

loved the Lord in their hearts, desired the truth, studied the Bible, zealously preached the gospel, and brought in a revival to the Lord's work everywhere. The Lord's work in China during this period was much improved over the previous period! However, there were only a small number of people who, like firstfruits, received God's deeper grace on top of the grace of revival to advance to a further knowledge in life. The majority were satisfied with God's work of revival. Although these ones were more advanced than those in the first period, they needed more advancement! Therefore, God began another period.

The Period of Life

The third period began around 1937 and can be called the period of life. Although many people in China have been saved and revived, they still do not feel satisfied. They are still hungry and thirsty. They have been revived to love the Lord with a burning heart and to live for the Lord, and they have felt satisfied, but now these things cannot satisfy them any longer. Although they have all these things, they still feel they have an inward lack. Inwardly, they have a deeper need which the experience of revival cannot satisfy. Their need cannot be satisfied by a mere burning love for the Lord or a practice of living for the Lord. At this time God has done a deeper work within them to give them a deeper inward hunger and thirst. This deeper hunger and thirst can only be satisfied by God's life, and this deeper need can only be met by God Himself.

During this period of life, God is not working merely in a general way to save and revive men in China; He also is doing a deeper work in some to make them pursue the knowledge of life. All those who witness and cooperate with the operation of God's grace in them feel that it is not enough to just live for the Lord; they need deeper experience. This deeper experience is the knowledge of the Lord as their life. They have already experienced not living to themselves (2 Cor. 5:15), but now the Lord is leading them into the experience of "no longer I who live" (Gal. 2:20). Before they were living for the Lord; now God is leading them to learn to let the Lord live for them. Before they felt satisfied if everything was for the Lord. Now they must rely on His life; they must allow Him to live out of them before they feel the anointing.

During this period, the so-called revival meetings and revival sermons cannot satisfy the inner need of seeking Christians. Seeking saints everywhere are hungry and thirsty; they need something deeper to meet their needs. Even though they may not know what their inner need is or be able to explain exactly what they hunger for, when they hear messages about the Lord as their life and

how He wants to live out of man, there is a response within them. They yearn for the kind of experience described in these kinds of messages.

This kind of hunger and thirst among the seeking saints everywhere is a sign that God's work in China has gone on. Presently, however, this is still the beginning of the period of life. From this point onward, God's children must have a deeper pursuit, knowledge, and experience of His life.

Our Work in China Today

If we want to keep up with God's work, we must pay attention to three matters concurrently.

Preaching the Gospel

Preaching the gospel is the beginning of God's work. If there is no gospel preaching in a place, there is surely no start to the work of God. Preaching the gospel is also the spread of God's work. If we want God's work to spread and the kingdom of God to increase in any place, we must preach His gospel. Furthermore, preaching the gospel is also the continuation of God's work. If no one on earth preached the gospel for twenty to forty years, I am afraid God's work on earth would stop completely.

The wider we spread the gospel, and the more thoroughly and fiercely we preach it, the better it is. It would be wonderful if we could become crazy for the gospel's sake. We are not afraid that the brothers and sisters would become too zealous in preaching the gospel. In every church we should encourage the brothers and sisters to "spend and be utterly spent on behalf of...souls" (2 Cor. 12:15). Every church should have burning gospel meetings. The brothers and sisters should all be burning in bringing relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and classmates to hear the gospel. We should saturate the homes, schools, businesses, factories, prisons, restaurants, boats, trains, airplanes, buses, trams, ferries, piers, stations, parks, public places, large streets, little alleys, and any other places with the voices and footsteps of brothers and sisters who are preaching the gospel every day. We should pass out gospel tracts, pictures, books, and other publications in large quantities and in every place. It would also be wonderful if many brothers could be raised up to put up gospel banners in every place or gospels ads and neon lights in every town and city, along the railroads and highways, at the piers and stations, and in ships and buses. We are not afraid that the brothers and sisters would become too much in the matter of preaching the gospel. We only fear that they would not do enough!

Bringing in Revival

In every local church there should be genuine revivals. The brothers and sisters should all zealously love the Lord and consecrate themselves absolutely to live for Him. They should all drop the world and have the reality of "giving up" and "selling all," as recorded in the four Gospels and Acts.

If a local church has only the gospel without any revival, it is definitely short. If there is no revival, the gospel has no power. The power for preaching comes from one's sacrifice of the world. The more we give up the world, the greater our power in the gospel will be. If we are willing to give up everything and sell all, the gospel will be a gospel of authority in our mouths. If we are like Lot, living in today's Sodom, it should be no surprise that our relatives consider our gospel as a mockery, just like Lot's sons-in-law (Gen. 19:14).

Furthermore, without revival, it is inevitable that we will have problems with spiritual pursuit and knowledge of life. We cannot be lazy in our pursuit of spirituality and our knowledge of life. We must realize that the knowledge of life depicted in the Epistles comes after "giving up" and "selling all" in the four Gospels and Acts. The knowledge of life has to do with resurrection; "giving up" and "selling all" have to do with the cross. If we do not pass through the cross, we cannot experience any resurrection. If there is no "giving up" and "selling all," it is difficult to have the knowledge of life. If we do not have the reality of "giving up" and "selling all," not only is our gospel void of power and a mockery to others, but our spiritual pursuit and interest in life, to a considerable extent, become a kind of recreation and high-class entertainment. Therefore, we must have genuine revivals before our gospel can be powerful and our experience of life real.

Pursuing the Knowledge of Life

In a local church there should be the zeal for the gospel, the reality of revival, and the knowledge of life. We should not stop at the gospel; nor should we stop with revival. Revival, like the gospel, is not God's goal; it is merely God's means to bring us to life. We should advance from the stage of the gospel to the stage of revival, and from the stage of revival to life. Only life is God's goal. The gospel gives us life, revival removes the hindrances to the knowledge and growth of life, and life brings us to God's goal.

The knowledge of life means the knowledge of God as life within us through the working of His grace (Col. 3:4). It means the knowledge of living by His life (Gal.

2:20), the knowledge of abiding in this life, and the knowledge of living out this life (Phil. 1:20-21).

The goal of God's salvation is to make us His vessels (Rom. 9:23-24). He put Himself as the "treasure" within us, the vessels (2 Cor. 4:7). From the time we were saved, God has been working on us continually to put more of Himself deeply into us so that we might gradually become lost in Him. This results in a deeper union in life with Him, which ultimately reaches perfection.

The goal of life is to bring God into man so that man may become lost in God. In this way, God and man, man and God become perfectly one.

We should pay equal attention to the three preceding matters. We should not emphasize one at the expense of another. If we emphasize these three matters equally, our work will go on in a stable and solid way. These three matters together make up a three-strand rope. If the strands are all of the same thickness, the rope will be very strong.

Three Matters That Should Also Be Emphasized

In addition to the above, we should also pay attention to some other matters. We must know the sphere of our work, the object of our work, and the move of our work. We need to pay attention to these three others matters.

The Service of the Church

Whether we are preaching the gospel, bringing in a revival, or pursuing the knowledge of life, all three should be for the building up of the church, and all of them should be done in the church. We should be deeply impressed and should recognize clearly that the service God wants is the church service, that is, a corporate service. He does not want personal service, that is, an individual service. Furthermore, the result of all service should cause the church—the Body of Christ—to be built up.

We should also know that the church is expressed practically in a locality. The universal church is what most people call the invisible church. This is not practical enough. The church must be practical and local to us. Therefore, our service and work must be conducted in the local church and must build up the local church. We should encourage and lead the brothers and sisters in each locality to rise up to serve and work together in their respective locality. The gospel should not be preached just by the so-called workers. It should be furthered by all the saints striving together in one accord and in one soul for its advancement (Phil. 1:5, 27). The service should not be limited to a small number

of so-called servants of God. Instead, all the saints should serve together as priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). In every locality, the whole church should preach the gospel, the whole church should rise up to serve, and the whole church should work.

In our service and work, our individual element should be reduced to nothing, and our personal work should disappear in the face of corporate church service.

Our work and service must be done in coordination, and our coordination must be carried out in the church. No matter how great or small we are, we are all members. No matter how small we are, we cannot be less than a member. We should have a deep feeling that we cannot be independent in any way. We must feel that we need the coordination of the other members.

Helping the Young Believers

We should pay particular attention to the young people in our work in each locality. Today Satan's organizations and philosophies pay particular attention to young people. Can we not infer that God is paying attention to young people as well? This does not mean that the souls of older people are not precious in God's eyes, but it does mean that for the sake of God's work and for the future of the gospel, there is more hope with the young people. Our gospel work should place special emphasis on high school and college students. We should spend and pour out our all to save, cultivate, edify, and lead these young ones.

In leading the young people, there are three things we should pay attention to.

The Knowledge of Life

Once a young person is saved, we should help him take care of the sense of life. We should teach him how to fellowship in life, how to deal with his conscience, how to deal with his personal matters, how to have a thorough consecration, and how to practice absolute obedience. The more earnestly and strictly they practice these things, the better it is.

The Knowledge of the Bible

If it is right for a person to receive worldly education when he is young, it is more right for him to receive spiritual education when he is young. We must help and lead the young believers to study the Bible. We want them to receive a strong education in the truth of the Bible while they are still young. This has much to do with their future service to the Lord; it is something they can draw on for the rest of their lives. We should encourage them to set aside definite, adequate, and prime hours for the systematic reading of the Bible. In particular, they should devote many of their vacation days to reading the Bible extensively. They do not

need to get into the profound meaning of the Word at the beginning. They only need to read it. The more familiar they are with the Word, the better it is for them.

Attitude toward the Gospel

We should lead the young believers to be zealous for the gospel and to have a proper attitude toward it. They must be on fire for the gospel. The gospel must be a consuming obsession to them. They must forget their positions and their faces. They should not care if others laugh at them or oppose them. They must open their mouths to preach the gospel and kneel and pray in any place at any time. Every time they go out of their house, they need to pass out some gospel tracts. In their spare time they must look for people to preach the gospel to. They must commit themselves to preaching the gospel to a certain number of people every day. They must also commit themselves to saving one soul within a set period of time. This seems artificial, even giving the appearance of an activity of the flesh, but the young believers need this kind of exercise.

We must lead the young believers to pay equal attention to these matters. The knowledge of life causes them to grow in life, the knowledge of the Bible causes them to be edified in knowledge, and their attitude toward the gospel causes them to be exercised in the work. These three matters are all interrelated, and they build one upon each other.

Migration for Christians

After the brothers and sisters in a local church have received a certain amount of edification, the church should encourage them to receive the Lord's leading to migrate to other localities and far away places for the sake of the gospel.

When the gospel went out from Jerusalem in the beginning, there were two lines. The first line consisted of the believers scattering abroad and preaching the gospel. The second line consisted of apostles doing the same thing. The gospel preaching in the first half of Acts (before chapter thirteen) was done almost entirely along the first line, while the gospel preaching in the second half of Acts (beginning in chapter thirteen) was done almost entirely along the second line. In God's eyes the believers' preaching is as significant as that of the apostles' preaching. God's desire is to have His gospel preached to the entire creation through these two lines. Unfortunately, today nearly all of the preaching of the gospel is along the line of the apostles; almost no one preaches along the line of the believers. Consequently, the gospel cannot go out as fast as in the

beginning. For the sake of the spread of the gospel in these last days, we should allow God to recover the line of the believers' preaching.

According to the Bible, Christians should be moving, not standing. We are the true descendants of Abraham (Gal. 3:7). We should be pilgrims on the earth, moving and pitching our tents as he did (Heb. 11:9, 13; 1 Pet. 2:11). We should walk on the earth but not "dwell on the earth." We have a "commonwealth...in the heavens" (Phil. 3:20). On earth we should "wander without a home" (1 Cor. 4:11). If we have an established dwelling place on earth and cannot migrate, we are not up to the Christian standard; we have a problem. We are rooted on the earth. We must be like nomads and always be moving. When we move, the gospel moves with us. We carry the germs of the gospel with us. Wherever we go, the gospel spreads like a contagion. The gospel should spread to all lands this way.

The gospel came to China from the West one hundred years ago. However, up to the present time, the footsteps of the gospel have only reached the coastal provinces. The interior of China and the remote areas have seen little of the gospel. The gospel has been preached so slowly in China because of two main reasons:

1)The Chinese Christians have been immature in the growth in life. The gospel does not spread through excitement, ideas, or even organization. The gospel spreads through planting Christ's life into men like a seed. Suppose a kind of botanical seed is brought to China from a foreign country and planted in the coastal areas of China. We must wait until the seed grows up, matures, and produces other seeds before we can plant these seeds in other regions. This is the way the gospel spreads. Christians in the coastal regions must be very mature in life before they can go out and plant the gospel in remote areas.

2)In the past almost no Christians from the coastal regions migrated to the remote provinces, so it has been difficult for the gospel to move from the coast to the interior. The preaching of the gospel is like a relay race in a stadium. The brothers from the West brought the gospel to the coastal regions of China and passed it on to us. We brothers in the coastal regions should receive the gospel and carry it to the interior and remote regions. We should not expect the brothers from the West to pass us up and go there before us. If we would migrate with the gospel to all these places, the gospel would spread very quickly over the whole country.

Although many Christians from the coastal regions have migrated to the interior in the past ten years because of Japan's attack on China, most of them went with

the motive of escaping the war, finding a job, finding a school, or finding their families; very few went for the gospel. After the war was over, most returned to the coastal regions. Very few seeds of the gospel remained in the interior. This is a pity.

Today every locality along the coast should help the brothers and sisters in every occupation prepare themselves for the Lord's leading to take up their occupation, families, and even more, the gospel to migrate to the remote provinces. In this way the gospel will not stop with us.

THREE THINGS TO GUARD AGAINST

Finally, there are a few things we should guard against. In every age and every place, there are always things that damage God's work. Today at least three things are before our eyes.

Being Welcomed by Political Authorities on Earth

Today the Chinese government welcomes Christianity. This affords us all kinds of conveniences in our gospel work. We readily acknowledge God's hand in this. However, whenever any political authority on earth welcomes Christianity, the church on earth is challenged with greater temptation! Pergamos failed in this area, and Thyatira also fell on account of this (Rev. 2:12-29).

Just as the Lord and His kingdom do not belong to this world, the church does not belong to this world (John 18:36; 17:14, 16). The church was chosen by the Lord out of the world (15:19) and sanctified from the world (17:19). The church is sanctified because it is separated from the world. Whoever belongs to the church has received a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). His commonwealth is not earthly, but heavenly (Phil. 3:20).

When a political authority rejects Christianity, such a problem may affect the move of the church, but this persecution is in accordance with the church's heavenly nature. However, if a political authority welcomes Christianity, it may make the move of the church easier, but the result is that she may lose her heavenly condition. Whenever any earthly political power embraces Christianity, the church loses her heavenly purity. Whenever Christianity and earthly authorities hold hands, the church unites with the earth and commits fornication with the world. Political authority is altogether earthly, while the church is altogether heavenly. The church and state should be absolutely separated one from the other! The Roman Church with its many dark, corrupt, evil, and erroneous practices came about because Christianity was joined to earthly

political authorities. On the one hand, we should take advantage of the welcome from the government and use every convenient opportunity to spread the gospel. On the other hand, we should always be warned that earthly welcome can erode our heavenly position. We should always maintain our heavenly status with fear and trepidation.

Foreign Money

We thank the Lord for His grace among the Western brothers and sisters, who brought His gospel to China. However, we cannot deny the fact that wherever the gospel from the West goes, the power of money from the West also follows. It is of God that the gospel came, but it is a real problem when money comes along with it. There is nothing wrong with money being given in the way of spiritual fellowship to meet the needs of the Chinese churches. But it is absolutely wrong for money to become a kind of financial power! The fact remains that much of the money from the West came as a kind of financial backing to Christianity in China. Due to the changes in the Chinese government between 1926 and 1927 (this change was certainly allowed by God), the power of so-called Western Christianity in China was reduced considerably. But after China won the last war, a kind of trend crept in. International cooperation has resulted in the so-called Western powers moving into Chinese Christianity again. We should guard against this!

Even if the money from the West is not an issue, one who is learning to serve God in purity should guard himself against it. Perhaps the money does not influence us, but it may become a crutch to us. The only thing a servant of God should rely on is God, not foreign currency. The source of his supply should be the heavens, not the West. His eyes should be on the heavens, not on Westerners. The money from the West may not become an influence, but it may cause one to lose his faith in God!

The Chinese saints and the brothers and sisters from the West should have fellowship one with another in the Lord. They should confine their relationship strictly to this fellowship in the Lord. If the relationship is normal, both spiritual supply and material supply will be mutual. If this is not the case, the relationship is abnormal and should not exist.

The Imitation of Outward Ritual

The New Testament service is spiritual rather than formal (Rom. 7:6). It is of life, not of letter (Heb. 7:16; 2 Cor. 3:6). Although there are outward activities to our services and outward arrangements to our work, these activities and

arrangements, in themselves, have no significance. They are merely expressions of the inward reality of life, expressions which match an inward spiritual need. If there is no reality of life inwardly and no spiritual need, any ritualistic activity or business arrangement has no bearing upon God's New Testament service. It is possible for a local church to have a certain outward expression that appears to be ceremonial in some way. Yet it is there to take care of the inward reality of life. It may have some outward arrangements in its service. But this is done to take care of some inward spiritual need. When other localities see these practices, they should not imitate. Outward things are done to express inward reality; they are done to match inward needs. If there is nothing inward, there should be nothing outward. Outward things should grow out of inward things; they should overflow from inward things. If there is nothing growing and overflowing from within, anything outward is vain imitation. It is worthless and is actually harmful. (Witness)

SUPPLY RECEIVED THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

For the sake of His testimony in Tangshan, the Lord has chosen some brothers and sisters here to meet to worship and serve Him. In order to preserve and lead us, He has led us to fellowship often with His servants and all the churches. This enables us to live in the supply of life in the Body, as well as preserves us in His will and grace. In our last letter, we reported the condition of the assembly in Tangshan. Have you read it? During the past two months, Brother Sia came from Tientsin to fellowship with the brothers and sisters and to confirm that we are going on here in a proper condition. Because of His love for us, the Lord has given each of the brothers and sisters trials of sickness and accidents. This has brought us to an awareness of our smallness and weakness. We can only prostrate ourselves before the Lord. We beg the Lord to deliver us and have mercy on us so that by His grace we would not become those who slip away in this age! Because the newly saved ones have grown so much in life, we could not delay baptizing them. After fellowshiping with Brother Sia and receiving confirmation, we baptized them peacefully and successfully with the Lord's support on August 1 (the Lord's Day). There were thirteen brothers and eight sisters. Tangshan now has a total of thirty-eight brothers and sisters who are baptized and who have been received into the Body. However, we have not yet established the table to remember the Lord. We are still looking for the Lord's arrangement concerning this matter. We want to fellowship this matter with you

and ask you to pray for us. If you have the burden, please give us some advice concerning when and how we should establish the table. We hope you brothers will remember us for the sake of the commission of the Lord's glorious testimony. This is our report to you. May the grace of the Lord be with you!

The brothers in Tangshan,

Lee Ze-zhe, Wang Yu-zhai, Wang Gui-wu, Enoch Hsiao,

Dai Ju-yu, Chui Yu-lin

August 4, 1948

Mailing Address: 7 Zuang-Yuan Third Strip, Tangshan City, Hopeh province

NO LONGER TAKING THE WAY OF INDIVIDUALISM

Two months ago, I received a letter from Brother Jin-zhien, saying that many brothers had "handed over themselves," but he did not tell me the details and the extent of their consecration. I thought that it was a general consecration in principle. It was not until two days ago, when I received and read Brother Sang-gang's own notes from the April conference in Shanghai that I realized that the extent of "handing over oneself" was not just an empty consecration in principle. It was so concrete that even one's choice of career and dwelling should be in accordance with the church and the gospel. My heart rejoiced because the Lord had mercy on me, a small brother in the remote locality of Siying, and allowed me to know His ordained way in this age. I am now willing to fully hand over myself, my job, and my dwelling. I do not want to "go my own way" any longer. I want to be restricted, and I want to submit to authority. I beg you brothers not to leave me behind.

A few years ago, as I was preparing to go inland to take the college entrance exam for an engineering degree, I was clear that my goal of being an engineer after graduation was only a temporary measure. When the time came, I would give up this earthly occupation and singleheartedly serve the Lord by preaching the word. When I was about to graduate last year, I felt to shorten this time of temporary commitment. Presently, I am forced to take up a little of my earthly occupation because I am still immature in the matter of serving Him. I am ready to give it up whenever He wants me to. I earnestly desire to receive more training during these days!

With regard to a job for me in Shanghai, it does not have to be with the Railroad Company. Any job will do, as long as I am capable of doing it, and as long as it does not take away from my time of learning with the church. Any job will do,

even if it is not with the Railroad Company (private contractor, high school mathematics or physics teacher, or anything).

Your little brother in the Lord,

Yu Pao-sheng

June 15, 1948

Mailing Address: c/o 38 Alley 240 Tung-Ren Road (23) Shanghai

PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO QUALITY THAN TO QUANTITY

Greetings in the Lord to my elder brother, Cheng-hua:

I have read your letter and deeply feel that your word concerning the importance of quality over quantity is very important. When I was preaching the gospel in Tsingtao, I felt that there was no need to pull in so many. A great outward appearance with no inward reality harms the church. I am before the Lord in prayer! It would be a great blessing indeed for the brothers and sisters in Tsingtao to be graced by the Lord and be brought into the way of life. I feel that it is right for outward activities to cease. If they abound instead, they will only become hindrances. I have paid much attention to the cross in the past and feel that the cross has not worked deeply enough among us (in Tsingtao)! The separation of the soul and the spirit and our knowledge of the Lord are too insufficient! Thank the Lord! He has sent you here to Tsingtao. Many of the co-workers rejoiced at this. Emmanuel!

Your little brother,

Chang Tze-jieh

July 9, 1948

GOD OPENING A DOOR FOR THE GOSPEL IN CHI MOUNTAIN

I am preaching the gospel here in the Lord's name. Apart from individually preaching in homes on the Lord's Day on Hulu Island, there are already two home meetings. (Twenty to thirty people attend each meeting.) In addition to these meetings, there are also three or four meetings on the Lord's Day. God has recently opened a door for us in the Battlefield Hospital and the Railroad Hospital in Chi Mountain (between Hulu Island and Jinxi, twenty Chinese miles from Jinxi). May the Lord grant us mercy and grace.

If any brother or sister is coming to the Northeast, please send me a letter of introduction so that I can serve him or her before the Lord with hospitality and fellowship to fulfill my function as a member of the Body.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Lo Shi-ren

July 31, 1948

Mailing Address: Chinese Farmers' Bank, Jinxi, Liaoning

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

Thank God for working in a small number of young brothers in the church in Shanghai. Through their zeal for the gospel, many brothers and sisters have been stirred up. These brothers felt that being lukewarm, half-living and half-dead Christians was unacceptable. If they were going to be Christians, they had to give their all and consecrate everything for the Lord. They felt that they should follow the Gospels and drop everything to follow the Lord. If not, they could not be good Christians today in this age. They also felt that young people did not need to study so many spiritual theories or deep doctrines; neither did they need to sit around hoping to become a Brother Lawrence or a Madame Guyon. They felt that the easiest, most basic, and most practical thing to do was to preach the gospel and not be ashamed of it. They took a strong stand for the gospel. They reckoned that if they did not learn to preach the gospel and were not exercised in this matter, it would be useless to talk about other matters because they would have no spiritual future.

There is one heart-rending fact: The gospel has been in China for over a hundred years. Yet the gospel is still confined to the coastal regions. Many who serve mammon are not afraid of anything; they do not care about sacrifice but move to inland remote regions for the sake of money, business, or career. But few of God's children are willing to go inland for the sake of the gospel. We must confess that many souls are perishing because of our lack of zeal and burden for the gospel.

We all know that the gospel is the Lord's commission. With regard to geography, we should preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. With regard to the audience, we should preach the gospel to all the creation (Mark 16:15). Preaching is the special privilege of every saved sinner. An angel could only say to Cornelius that his prayers and alms were remembered by God. When Cornelius wanted to hear the gospel, he sent for Peter (Acts 10:4-6). The angel

did not have the privilege of preaching the gospel. Someone once said that if God allowed the angels to preach the gospel, the heavens would immediately be emptied. Furthermore, preaching the gospel clears one's debt. Paul said that he owed everyone a debt, whether Greek, barbarian, wise, or foolish (Rom. 1:14). Here we must emphasize one point: Preaching the gospel is the responsibility of every Christian. Whether we like it or not, the debt must be paid. No Christian can say that he does not have a share in the matter of the gospel. Perhaps we are not lacking in other things. But who dares to say that he has paid off the debt of the gospel? We are debtors to every sinner. We should pay our debt to every sinner.

For this reason, the brothers all felt they must at least pay back their debt of the gospel to the five million inhabitants of Shanghai. We have already made more than twenty vests with gospel slogans written on the back and front. Some vests have "Vanity of vanities" on the front and "All is vanity" on the back. Others have "Turn back, do turn back," on the front and "Why should you perish?" on the back. Still others have "Christ came into the world" on the front and "to save sinners" on the back. We wear the vests. Some carry gospel tracts, some carry "gospel" flags, and some play the accordion. We go out in groups to the busy streets in the middle of the city and walk down the sidewalks on both sides of the road. As we march, we pass out tracts. When we reach a park or an empty public place, we preach the gospel. We have also prepared a large truck with an amplifier and a speaker to go to places farther away.

We have only gone out a few times, and there is no obvious fruit. However, one fact remains—a small gospel bomb has been dropped in Shanghai. As we marched, thousands and tens of thousands of people watched us. People came out of the alleys and buildings to watch us. Every time we returned, we were inwardly filled with joy and zeal. We feel that our inward fellowship with the Lord is now more intimate. We seem to be more separated from the world. Indeed the gospel shoes are the only thing that can separate us from the earth and keep us in the Lord's way. If the Lord has mercy on us, we hope to continue this work. One day we hope that "there will be no place left to preach" in Shanghai.

We ask the brothers and sisters in each locality to take advantage of this unique opportunity to preach the gospel. We should do what we can for the gospel, as Brother Paul said, "I do all things for the sake of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:23). We should live, die, teach, study, do business, run factories, labor, have families, and

do everything for the gospel. Paul said that everything he did was for the sake of the gospel.

I hope we would have this attitude toward the gospel: No matter where we are or what we do, we are special agents for the gospel. If we live this way, our walk will match our gospel. What is the gospel? The gospel is God's love for the world. The gospel is the expression of God's grace; it is God's sacrifice. To us it is the gospel, but to God it is the sacrifice of His Son. If we want to preach the gospel but do not exercise love or grace in our living, or if we are not willing to sacrifice or suffer, turning "the other cheek," letting others "take our cloak," or going the "extra mile," we are not worthy of the gospel. The gospel is not just a work; it is a battle. If we do not strive in one accord, it is very difficult for the gospel to spread. May this small fire of the gospel in Shanghai burn the cold hearts of many of God's children. May this small bomb wake up many sleeping Christians so that they would not miss this opportunity and would not be ashamed of the gospel, but instead would preach the Lord's gospel well. We can say this: If we neglect this opportunity to preach the gospel with our mouth today, perhaps one day we will have to preach it with our blood. (Chang Yu-zhi)

ONLY WORKING, NOT RETROSPECTING

All things work together for good. The orphanage has been back in Hankow for seventeen months now. In these seventeen months, I have learned many things. When my will was shaken to the point of falling and I was almost disappointed, the Lord said to me, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when reproved by Him." From that time on, I dared not give up on myself or consider myself too poor to be useful. I went on, one step at a time, according to the light I had received. I did not look back on the past. I am learning to have Brother Lawrence's attitude: "Only working, not retrospecting." I do not care if things are bad or good.

Your brother in the Lord,

Lan Tsi-yi

August 10, 1948

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 99, Hankow

LESSONS IN THE VALLEY OF SHADOW

My heart is completely filled with happiness and rest because God is stirring within His children in His church in these days. Oh! I give worship, blessing, and thanks to our heavenly Father, the everlasting God. He always hears man's

prayers and accepts man's cries. He forever supports those in weakness and comforts those in afflictions. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not quench. I will now tell you a little of God's work, grace, and mercy on me in recent months. I hope you will be able to teach and correct me in many areas so that I will not become proud or dejected.

In September of last year, God brought me into the valley of shadow. In the beginning of October, I fell into trials. I felt exceedingly heavy and depressed both inwardly and outwardly. However, in the deepest part of my heart, I still believed that time would bring me through. Though I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, I feared not, because the Lord was with me. (Of course, at that time I did not feel this way.)

While I remained in the valley of shadow, I was drawn to read the books of poetry, especially the book of Job. In reading it, however, I discovered that I was short and had sinned. Job, who had fallen into such a serious trial, never sinned with his mouth or offended God. What about me? I often blamed God and murmured against Him. Sometimes I judged myself. If I had continued like that for a long time, I would have been like the Israelites who died in the wilderness; they could not enter Canaan because of their murmuring. Later, God gradually led the brothers to pray that I would come out of the valley of shadow. O dear brother, "Weeping may linger in the evening,/But a ringing shout goes up in the morning." Hallelujah! In May of this year, I finally came out of the valley of shadow. Oh! It was like the bamboo shoots in spring that come out after the rain, and the honey that drips from the bees' nest. How fresh it was! How joyful! How sweet!

I felt that "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." At the same time, I had a great inward thirst. So I began to pursue. I felt that I could not be a Christian in the way that I had been before. I felt that being a Christian is not a matter of degree; it is a matter of the whole being becoming involved. It was not a matter of being good or bad but a matter of being a model or living up to standard. It is not a matter of curing a headache or a sore foot but of having a thorough examination and rooting out the source of the illness. I felt that a Christian cannot be loose in following the Lord; he must first sit down and consider the cost. I finally felt that the first basic thing a Christian must do is consecrate his life and not be ashamed of the gospel, just as Paul did not hold on to his own life in proving the gospel. The second matter was to stand absolutely on God's side and not to discount any of God's word at all. Was not the first sin in the universe

a twisting and discrediting of God's word? We should not just submit to God's word in principle; we should obey the clear writings too. What do you think?

After this, I had a time like I never have had before of reading the Bible, praying, fasting, and dealing with the Lord. I thought of how desolate my many years as a Christian had been! How poor! I have really been uselessly taking up space! I also discovered that I had not learned any lesson during this time. I did not have a good attitude toward the gospel. I had to ask God's forgiveness for this.

When I read the first chapter of Matthew on May 26, it dawned on me that the first person mentioned was Abraham. I felt that I should learn to give up things and be willing to consecrate myself like Abraham. When I came to chapter two about Jesus' birth, I found how Herod's heart and even the hearts of everyone in Jerusalem were unsettled. I said to myself, "Now I realize that wherever the gospel goes, it should unsettle men!" May God give me a way to unsettle people when the gospel goes out from me. I set my mind to make a gospel signboard to carry on my back. After talking to some brothers in the university, we proceeded with it. We made vests of white cloth, with many kinds of gospel slogans written on the front and back; we wore them in class, near the school, on the bus, and on the road back and forth between the meeting hall and the school. When we first began to wear them, we felt very embarrassed, but by the Lord's grace we told ourselves that we should not be ashamed of the gospel. This was the motivation and the beginning of our wearing the gospel vests. Later, we marched on all the streets once or twice a week, wearing the vests and preaching the gospel. We did not just let the world hear it; we also let them see it.

I believe if we have three hundred people who are absolute for God and who do not care for their own lives, they will shake Shanghai. If there are three thousand people, they will shake the entire country. If there are thirty thousand people, they will shake the whole earth. In this way the gospel will be quickly preached to the ends of the earth; it will hasten the coming of the kingdom of God. May God give us more people! Have not the leading brothers said that the outward appearance of the church has been in desolation for two thousand years? May God give us mercy, that we would stop the desolation in this generation. May God quickly recover us to the original condition of the church.

My hand is sore from writing this much, but my heart is burning and excited. The preceding account is my small experience. I do not hope to do anything great. I just want to take my stand and advance the gospel "in one accord" with all the saints.

If there are any errors in my letter, I hope you will feel free to correct and teach me. Amen.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Hsu Er-jian

August 11, 1948

Jiao-Tong University

BROTHERS AND SISTERS GOING THROUGH TRIAL OF FAMINE IN CH'ANG-CH'UN

The famine in Ch'ang-ch'un is very serious. One catty (about a pound) of red rice costs fifty million yen. A sack of flour costs more than four billion. We want to escape but cannot get free. The brothers have enough food to last for about another month (on the average). No one can afford to buy anything to eat. If there is no other way to relieve the urgent need, it is possible that we will all starve to death. More than forty brothers escaped at the beginning of June. The sisters went to the border twenty miles away, but were not allowed entry, nor were they allowed to go back. They had to sleep under the stars. They ate all the food they had brought with them and were forced to eat grass and even leaves of trees. I am afraid that Hua Tien-min's old mother and Kuo Sheng-mo's mother have already starved to death. The horses have all been killed and eaten, but there is still no deliverance. The denominational churches in the city have tried to find some ways to give out a little food, but they cannot help much. Only one sister who fled has safely made it to Peking. She walked and crawled for more than a month to get there...

Your little brother,

Ai-guang

August 14, 1948

Temporary Mailing Address: c/o 10 Interior Alley, Fukien

SPIRIT AND SOUL BEING REFRESHED

Peace to my two dear and respected brothers in the Lord, Watchman and Witness:

Thank and praise the Lord who loves us that you have not forgotten your little brother living far away. I have received both The Ministers and The Glad Tidings. These two publications are really like the Lord's anointing, and they refreshed my spirit and soul. They are also like drops of dew on the grass. I felt watered by them. I can only loudly sing hallelujah to praise our Father God. I have not been

able to write to you until now because of the weakness of my flesh and the bondage of worldly affairs. I hope you will pray much for me, your weak younger brother. May the Lord bless your work so that it will not only water and feed the weak brothers but will cause many people to leave darkness and turn to light. Glory be to the Lord's name. Amen.

Lee Jin-kui

August 2, 1948

Mailing Address: Mao-Sin Soap Factory, Shaoyang, Hunan

LESSONS LEARNED ON A NAVAL SHIP

I lost my job last year, and the Lord arranged for me to come to Subic Bay in the Philippines to care for the medical needs of fifty to sixty people on a naval ship. I am the only believer on the ship. I have been here for six months already. Praise the Lord for putting me in this lonely place. I have maintained my daily Bible reading in a normal way. He is teaching me lessons that I have not yet learned. I am quietly enduring this boring life, looking to Him, and meeting with Him. The sailors on the ship all feel that life is bothersome and boring, but inwardly I am filled with His joy and rest. It is really like Brother Lawrence pulling up a weed from the earth and being happy because he loved God. Thank God, I also have His presence. He has also led me to do some things pleasing to Him aboard this ship. I am lowly and weak, possessing nothing, but the God of mercy wants His grace to be perfected in a person as lowly as me. It is extremely marvelous that two people from Sian in the North have been clearly saved. They have recently learned to have fresh fellowship with God inwardly. I often receive a supply of life from their prayers. Truly, the gospel is not of the letter, but it is the out-flowing of life and the result of God's mercy. I echo the words of Madame Guyon which you wrote to me long ago: "Just as air fills a vacuum, so also does God fill those who empty themselves." I have nothing to say but, "Praise the Lord for His great love!" He "will have mercy on whomever [He] will have mercy, and [He] will have compassion on whomever [He] will have compassion" (Rom. 9:15). Dear elder brother in the Lord, I often feel that I will obey His voice when the time comes. I am still immature and need to be concerned with practical things and with learning the basics. May the Lord have compassion on me. Amen.

I also hope you will remember me in spirit! Last month the Lord gave me enough time to make a trip to Manila. I did not have any outward curiosity. My heart's desire was to visit the brothers and sisters in the Lord in that city. I was able to fellowship with them during this visit. I stayed in Manila for a week in the home of

Sister Huang Chi-ai. I feel that the Lord has especially laid hold of a group of brothers there who are somewhat clear regarding the inward leading of life. Recently, the church has been greatly touched by the news that some brothers and sisters in Shanghai made absolute consecrations and that the work is spreading everywhere. The saints here really hope that God would send an elderly servant here to edify them. They all treasure the news from Shanghai. We believe that God has begun His work and will complete it. May God bless the church. Amen.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Yen Chang-tao

July 18, 1948

Mailing Address: Mr. C. T. Ien L.S.T. 982 c/o post office, Olongapo Zambales, P. I.

HEARING NEWS AND PRAYING

Respectful greetings:

I heard that God has blessed the local church in Shanghai in these days with a development never seen before. More than four hundred brothers and sisters have completely consecrated themselves. Thank the Lord, He has also begun the work of raising up prayer here. We still need God to raise up leaders or we will have no way to go on. Brother Miao sent a letter saying that the earliest he could come would be the end of the year. May His will be done. Amen.

If the Lord wills and leads, I will take a trip to Shanghai. I hope to wait for the Lord's leading there. I hope you will pray for me. I know that you are very busy with the work, but if you could take some time from your busy schedule to briefly tell me the latest messages from God, I would be very grateful. Praise God for His abounding grace!

A weak member in the Lord,

So Lin-tiok

Mailing Address: Mr. So Lin-tiok, Dr. H. S. Huang, 882 Reina Regente St., Manila, P. I.

MEETING EVEN WITHOUT A FIXED PLACE

Peace to the responsible brothers:

Brother Yu Dao-sheng boarded a boat on July 22 to pass through Canton on his way to Shanghai. Has he arrived?

We do not have a fixed place for our meetings. We no longer meet at the old address on Jie-Shi Road. Our temporary mailing address is as follows: Chen Ming-zhi, Lai-Zhan Section, Canton Regional Engineering Office, Siying, Zhanjiang.

I believe the church in Shanghai is remembering the church here. Finally, we hope you will pray for us much.

Your brother in the Lord,

Chen Qi-shou

July 30, 1948

Brother Yu Dao-sheng arrived safely in Shanghai on August 9. He constantly thinks of you brothers and sisters in Zhanjiang. What he is learning will be beneficial to you. We should thank God together.—Editor

August 17, 1948

Shanghai

AN ANSWER CONCERNING TAKING A JOB TO SERVE GOD

Brother Yu-xian:

With regard to your question in your letter of April 24 (see Issue No. 1 of this publication), the answer is as follows:

A saved person should be a serving one. Furthermore, his service should be in coordination with the local church. If he receives grace to serve in a way which occupies his time and strength, of course he cannot, and should not, take a job. If he receives grace to serve, but all his time and energy are not completely consumed, he should use the rest of his time and energy to do a job. (But this job is just a second job; his true profession is serving God.)

A person should not idly wait on God and look for His arrangement. He should always serve God in the church in the place where he is. If he has extra time and energy, he should take a job. May you have peace in the Lord!

Your brother,

Witness Lee

August 16, 1948

THE MACEDONIAN CALL

Respectful greetings:

The church in Dongsha has had very little growth in life in recent years. We lack the experience of reality in our living, and we do not have enough light. Furthermore, because we lack fellowship with your locality, you are not able to

feed us, and there is a general spreading of spiritual famine. I trust you are willing to supply us because of our immature spiritual condition. (We have not had any special conference recently, apart from the prayer and fellowship meetings, visitations, and baptisms.) We are writing this letter as a Macedonian call: "Come over...and help us!" In the future, if you have conferences, please notify us that we might attend. We pray we would be able to receive the truth.

This letter was written that you might know the condition of the churches in Dongsha. We are sending you a table listing the condition of the churches. Please grant our request and give us an answer. (There were too many signatures for this letter, so we have not published them here. Please see pages 72 and 73 for the table of the condition of the Christian assemblies in Dongsha.)

July 8, 1948

INWARD TENDENCY

I am a recently saved sinner! God in His mercy has placed me among the members to learn to serve Him. Thanks and praise be to Him.

After Brother Lan Tsi-yi returned from Shanghai (where he attended the conference), he told us that the brothers and sisters in Shanghai (and its surrounding areas) had received great grace and are avidly consecrating themselves. Brother Lan hoped I would have the opportunity to go there and participate, and I also felt a tremendous inward desire to go. In addition, I have read Brother Yu Dao-sheng's letter from Zhanjiang to a brother here, written after the Young People's Edifying Meetings in the fall, telling him about the saints' hunger and thirst in pursuing the Lord. I felt as if oil had been added to my inward fire. My inward condition has become very desperate. (I intend to apply to the post office to transfer me to Shanghai for training.) I have sought God's will concerning this matter continually with the brothers and am still in the process of seeking His desire. I am afraid of falling into my personal likes due to my own zeal. I do not want to frustrate God's plan. I am also afraid of hesitation ahead because of too much analysis and thus neglecting God's arrangement. I am writing to tell you leading brothers my inward condition. I hope you will not ignore me, but will instead give me an answer. I will do what you counsel. May God bless you with abundant grace!

Your little brother,

Chang Guang-zhao

August 4, 1948

Mailing Address: Gospel Court, Xiao-Dong Jia Alley, Hankow

1. Table of the Condition of the Churches in Shaoshing
2. Map of the Churches in Shaoshing
3. Table of the Condition of the Christian Assemblies in Dongsha
4. Map of the Churches in Nansha, Chekiang

THE LORD'S GRADUAL ARRANGEMENT

I have not written for a long time, but I often remember you in the fellowship of prayer. Thank the Lord that He has done some work in Shanba. It is a work that is not from man. The meeting hall has already been purchased for a total of more than two hundred million yen. There are two courts with a total of fourteen rooms. We use six of the large rooms for meetings. The Lord has done a wonderful work. In the beginning we borrowed, then rented, and now we are able to buy the meeting hall. We never expected the owner to sell us the hall, because he is very rich. After we rented it, the brothers and sisters prayed continually for this hall and asked the Lord to give it to us. Thank the Lord, He heard the prayers of His children. The owner suddenly announced he was going to sell the house. The Lord did this. We saw the Lord's clear presence in everything. Among the brothers and sisters, more than two hundred have been saved for less than two years, and there are not many wealthy ones among us. But within two weeks, we collected enough offerings for everything except a small balance. Glory be to Him.

Brother, is the Lord leading you to have a conference in Shanghai? Please remember us when you pray. May the Lord preserve you and be with you.

Your brother in the Lord,

Chao Xu-dong

May 15, 1948

Mailing Address: 28 Chung Cheng Road, Hsiapa City, West Suiyuan

THE REMOTE VILLAGE OF JIXINCHUN

Peace to the brothers and sisters meeting in the Lord's name in Shanghai:

In the past, we were very lonely in this remote mountainous region because communication was cut off during the war. Thank the Lord that we heard of the revival and new light in your locality. Our hearts are filled with unspeakable joy. This is the Lord's marvelous doing!

We received the Lord's leading to come here in the winter of 1941 to open up the barren lands (farming). We began meeting at that time and have continued until

now. Although we have passed through the attack of storms and winds, thank the Lord, the number of saved ones has increased.

There is now one woman who truly believes in the Lord. (She was possessed by demons but turned to the faith.) We were unable to preach the gospel when we first came here because we could not speak the local dialect. Thank the Lord, a small number of brothers are now able to speak it. Because the brothers' harvests are not large, all are forced by the cares of this life to work very hard, and the Lord's work has been put aside. We feel shameful in our hearts and can only ask the Lord to open a door for the gospel. We also ask you brothers to pray for us!

We feel very weak because we are all infants in the Lord and very immature in the Lord's work. We only learn through petition. We deeply hope that some brothers from your locality could come here to lead and strengthen us. We would be happy to give them hospitality.

We are sending a table of our condition for your perusal. In the future, we ask you to instruct us much. Please send us a response. May the Lord bless you.

Your brothers,

Hsu Xiu-gen, Chou Yuan-lung, He Chai-gen

August 11, 1948

Mailing Address: c/o Jixin Cooperative Farm, Yangshuchiao,

Yiyang, Kiangsi

(See map on page 78.)

THE CONDITION OF THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY IN JIXINCHUN

(Compiled in August 1948)

History: In the fall of 1941, Fan Chi-hung of Nansha, Xiaoshan, Chekiang, came to this area to purchase undeveloped land. In the winter of the same year, some of the brothers and pioneers came to develop the area. They built straw shelters on the land they purchased and established a new village—Ji (Christ) xin (Faith) Chun (village). The meetings began at that time. In the winter of the next year, they built a straw building for the meetings and established the meeting hall.

Name: The Christian Assembly in Jixin Village

Address: Jixin Farm, Yangshuchiao, Yiyang, Kiangsi

Began meeting: November 1941

Began remembering the Lord: April 1947 (We still have not formally established the Lord's table.)

Native origin: Shaoshing and Xiaoshan, Chekiang

Occupation: Farmers

Present number: Males: 69; Females: 54

Number in the meetings: Males: 44; Females: 33

Present number in the table meetings: Males: 16;
Females: 16

Names of leading brothers: Hsu Xiu-gen, Chou Yuan-lung, He Chai-gen

Neighboring denominations: In Yiyang—China Inland Mission; in Zhaobin—China Inland Mission outpost (fifteen li from our village) has already stopped.

Nearby transportation: Fifteen li from the Yiyang Station of the Chekiang-Kiangsi Railroad; Kiangsi-Chekiang Highway is on the eastern side (passing through Yangshuchiaow); two li from a river port on the west.

Education: We began a night school in the spring of this year (two hours every night). On Mondays we teach the Bible, on Tuesdays we teach hymn-singing, on Thursdays we teach from the cooperative text and the popular lessons. We teach the rest of the classes on Friday, Saturday, and the Lord's Day.

Notes: Our numbers include all men and women both young and old. Locally there are thirty-two households registered. Ninety percent of the population has a native origin of Nansha. Because there is a prayer meeting on Wednesday night, we do not have classes. There is a prayer meeting that begins at 3:00 p.m. on Friday afternoons.

1. Transportation Lines to Jixin Village

GRADUALLY BEING REVIVED

There are meetings three times a day in Kuling Mountain (with the exception of prayer on the Lord's Day morning and rest on Wednesday). There are two meetings in the morning. The first is a basic training for the ministry of the word. Messages have been given on submission to authority and the exercise of the spirit, emphasizing the separation of the inner man and the outer man. The second meeting is for individual judgments. Only one person is allowed to testify in each meeting, and then his problems are discussed after his testimony. It seems to be a practical training in the judgment in the house of God. The evening meeting is for the preparation of the edification of new believers.

Since coming to the mountain, my spirit has been gradually revived before God, and recently I have been moving gradually upward. (From the meeting in Shanghai all the way to Foochow, my entire being was prostrate before God as if I were paralyzed. I had no feeling or strength. It is really marvelous. Praise the Lord!) I hope I will not need to struggle in dealing with the negative things again, but can be strengthened in the positive things. If you have anything to say to me, I am willing to receive the help.

Your brother in the Lord,

Lee Yin-hsin

July 7, 1948

A FINAL LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Four publications—The Ministers, The Gospel, The Way, and The Present Testimony—have all been published on time. Although they are all bimonthly magazines, we must publish one publication every half month. Therefore, every department is very busy. We would like to answer some subscribers' questions and ask you to attend to a few points:

1) News of Believers will be discontinued with the eighth issue. The Present Testimony will continue after News of Believers. Its contents will be more specific than that of News of Believers. Subscribers to News of Believers will receive at least one copy of The Present Testimony from us. Whoever would like to continue to subscribe should fill out the subscription form and send it to us. If you do not notify us, we will discontinue your subscription in the following issue. (Please read the back cover of that publication to find out how to subscribe.)

2) Because of too many subscribers from the localities, we have no more copies of Issue No. 1 of The Gospel. From now on, those who subscribe to this publication will receive copies beginning with the second issue. This paper is very expensive. (It costs one hundred million yen to typeset one hymn with music and to have one picture on the front.) We hope that when you give copies to people, you will not just scatter them like tracts but will give some consideration to whom you are giving them to.

3) Some readers subscribe for others. It is best to give this information to your friends personally. Forgive us for not notifying them for you. Furthermore, it would be best if you would mail your personal letters directly to your correspondents in Shanghai (other than those who are working in the Gospel Book Room). Please forgive us for not being able to verify information or conduct business on your behalf.

4)When filling out a subscription order: a) Be sure to write legibly. b) Subscribers from other provinces must give us the name of their province and city or county so that we may prepare cards and labels. c) When subscribing to several publications, it is important to use the same name and address for each subscription because we file subscriptions according to a person's last name.

5)When changing your address or the number of copies in your subscription, it would be best to send us the paper wrapper from your subscription which contains your name, address, and quantity on it. At the very least, include your previous address. This will reduce the amount of time we have to spend in looking for your record. Please remember this. This will save us some trouble.

6)Although there are temporary prices for the three publications—The Ministers, The Way, and The Present Testimony—in reality we have only charged enough to cover the postage for The Ministers. (The price of sending one paper is now at least ten thousand yen.) While we were editing and typesetting the first issue of The Ministers, one roll of white newsprint cost almost five million yen. The price for one roll has now increased more than tenfold. The other costs, including typesetting and printing, have also risen with the rise of the cost of living and have increased more than tenfold. Our most recent cost was more than ten thousand yen for typesetting one word. You can imagine the rest of the costs. But thank God, through the offerings of many brothers and sisters, He has allowed us to put out these publications on time. We are sharing this so that you can thank God with us for the publications that have already been put out, and so that you will know how heavy our burden is in order to pray for us.

7)Although certain places can receive letters and wired money, the post office may not accept printed materials. Sometimes we send the materials by airmail. Even though we are willing to spend the money, sometimes it is not even accepted as airmail. We are now trying to find people who will go to these places to carry the publications with them. We hope that the churches in the far regions like the Northwest would also be able to receive these four publications.

8)We are unable to calculate foreign postage and domestic airmail postage because we have only a few workers (who are all very busy) and because the postage rates increase unexpectedly. (At present it costs more than 300,000 yen to send one magazine by domestic airmail.) We can only ask our readers to calculate the postage costs from the stamps on the publications when they receive them.

We hope to serve all the local churches well in the matter of the publications. It is difficult, however, to avoid errors because we are so busy. If we forget something, please tell us so that we may correct the error. May the Lord bless every reader.

The Shipping Department
Shanghai Gospel Book Room
August 17, 1948

(The monetary system changed while we were proofreading this copy. We are now charging by the "gold yen." If anyone has a need but is unable to pay the cost, we are still willing to consider giving the publications free of charge.)

CONCERNING THE MINISTERS

NATURE: To show the way to serve, to help the serving ones and the churches in the different localities go on, and to solve the problems related to the ministry.

TIME OF PUBLICATION: Temporarily set at bimonthly.

PRICES: A) In order to prevent those who do not need this publication from carelessly disposing of it, we are forced to temporarily set the following prices: The three issues of this half year are temporarily priced at two gold dimes in national coinage. (National and international postage is not included in the price. Air or surface mail postage costs will be added.) B) We will consider giving the publication to those who really need it but cannot afford it. C) We will receive gladly from those who are able to make a donation to help with the cost of publication.

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Gospel Book Room, P. O. Box 5008, Shanghai

September 1, 1948

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November 1, 1948

THE WAY FOR THE WORK HEREAFTER—

A RECORD OF A FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Our former pathway in the Lord's work has caused us to encounter some practical difficulties. This year we have spent considerable time to solve our problem through the two meetings in Foochow and Shanghai. Today we will come back again to this matter.

THE PROBLEM OF THE PAST

While we saw the light concerning the church quite clearly in the past, we did not see the light concerning the work so well. The Normal Christian Church Life, which was published following a co-workers' conference in Hankow, shows that our vision was clear about the matter of the church. We saw that the churches are local, a matter which is much clearer today than throughout the history of the church. By reading many books, we certainly can realize that the local character of the church has never been as clear as it is today. In relation to the work, however, we have always felt that we lacked the same clarity. This was because Jerusalem seemed to be superfluous when viewed from the perspective of Antioch. When we were in Hankow, we surveyed the entire book of Acts, but we were not able to take Jerusalem into account. Starting from chapter thirteen, the book of Acts lined up with our work, and our work lined up with the book of Acts.

However, we did not know how to apply the events that occurred before Acts 13. At that time we did not have sufficient light.

Due to the trials and difficulties we have encountered during these several years, we now see the usefulness of the first ten or more chapters of Acts. We have discovered the usefulness of these chapters. Please pardon me for speaking in this way, but this is the fact. We have to acknowledge that through the meetings in Foochow and Shanghai the first twelve chapters of Acts have become clearer to us than ever before. Just as the local churches after Acts 13 have never been seen with such clarity as in the time at Hankow, the work has never been seen with such clarity as it is today. The difficulties in the past are in the past; today the situation is different.

THE WORK BEING REGIONAL

One of several matters that we discovered relates to regions. While churches are local, the work is regional. This, I feel, is very clearly revealed in the Scriptures. We did not see this five or ten years ago because we just did not see it; we could not help it. Now, however, we have definitely seen it, and it can be stated in just two phrases: The churches are local, and the work is regional. In other words, the church is local, but the work is regional, being composed of many localities combined together to form a region.

In the book of Acts it can be clearly seen that the twelve apostles had a definite region for their work. Peter, John, and their group worked in one region, while Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Barnabas worked in another region. In the first chapter of Philippians, we can see many different regions. In 2 Corinthians 10:13-14, we find these words: "But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you. For we are not extending ourselves beyond our bounds." Here we are clearly shown something related to a region, a measure that God apportioned to the apostles. God drew a circle for them, and within that circle there was an area of work for them. Therefore, the work is related to the matter of region.

The churches, however, are not related to a region. No church should exercise control over other localities, because the churches are local.

In the past we made a great mistake in confusing the sphere of the work with the locality of the church. Now we clearly see that the work includes a number of localities within a certain area called a region. Just as Peter and John were in the region around Jerusalem, Paul and Timothy were in another region around

Antioch. Although they maintained contact and fellowship with each other, their respective regions were not the same.

Today we cannot speak too much, but it is more than clear that the work is regional and the churches are local.

REGIONS HAVING CENTERS

The second matter involves a center in each region. The churches do not have a center. The church in Jerusalem had no control over the churches in Samaria. Those who study the Bible know that churches are local and that a church in one locality cannot exercise control over a church in another locality. Moreover, the church in one locality cannot control the churches in many localities. The highest place a church can appeal to is its own locality; there is no district council or headquarters for the church. However, this is not so with the work, because the work has a center. In the book of Acts we can say that Jerusalem was a center in one region, while Antioch was a center in another region.

The Special Characteristic of Jerusalem

If we did not realize that the work has a center, Jerusalem would become a problem rather than a help. Even though the Bible reveals that churches are local, Jerusalem seems to be somewhat special, and even though the Bible reveals that the churches are local, Antioch seems to be special. Consequently, Antioch can become a problem rather than a help to us also. Both Jerusalem and Antioch can present problems rather than help to us.

Today, we see clearly that the church in Antioch is one thing, while Antioch as a center for the work is another. When speaking of the churches, Jerusalem stands equal with Antioch and also with the churches in Samaria. When speaking of the work, however, Jerusalem is the center of the work. God's command was that there would be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Jerusalem was a center of the work.

In Acts 13, there was another beginning in Antioch, and Antioch became another center of the work. The Holy Spirit started something there. The Holy Spirit made one start in Jerusalem, and the Holy Spirit made another start in Antioch in Acts 13. In both places the Holy Spirit started the work. From Antioch, some went forth to other places to do a work. When churches came into being, elders were appointed to be responsible for the oversight of the churches. But it seems that Antioch was responsible for them, because the workers lived in Antioch.

Peter Also Being an Elder

Here we see the preciousness of Jerusalem. In reading the Scriptures we also see the preciousness of Peter being an elder in Jerusalem. In the past we only paid attention to Peter as an apostle rather than to Peter as an elder. He was in a double position. In relation to the locality of Jerusalem, Peter was an elder, James was an elder, and John was an elder. In relation to the work, however, they were all apostles. Therefore, when they wrote letters to the church in Antioch, they signed as apostles and elders. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for the elders in Jerusalem to write and give orders to the church in Antioch, because the church in Antioch had elders as well. As elders, they told the church in Antioch what decisions they had made for the church in Jerusalem; as apostles, they also made the same decisions for the work.

Today this matter is very clear among us. With us this problem has been entirely solved; it is behind us. Not only is it behind us, but this very teaching has been gloriously brought forth. Now we see that God's work is carried out by a region. For His work God wants to establish a locality as a center. All of the workers should be centralized in that locality, sometimes going out and sometimes coming back. The elders are responsible for a local church, but if a locality is also a center for the work, then the workers should also be elders to share in the responsibility of church affairs there, in addition to just the elders.

The Scriptures do not offer one example of sending workers to reside in a locality. Such a practice is not found in the Bible. The only exception to this is when a worker migrates to a locality and becomes an elder there. An elder may choose to reside in Jerusalem or he may move to another city to be an elder in that city. He can take up responsibility in the respective cities where he resides. However, if a person wants to be a worker, he should move to Jerusalem.

The church has accused Peter for the past two thousand years, but we have to say that Peter was not wrong. The church has accused Peter during the past two thousand years of not leaving Jerusalem, but it was right for Peter to remain in Jerusalem; it was not wrong. Some have said that Peter should have left Jerusalem, but I do not believe this! Who can say that the Lord wanted Peter and John to leave Jerusalem? Some have said that Peter and John brought persecutions to the church in Jerusalem because they did not leave. This, however, has no scriptural ground. If the Lord desired that Peter and John leave Jerusalem, He could have caused persecution to fall upon Peter and John, not upon the church. It is not right for me to be wrong and others suffer for it. If the Lord caused others to suffer, then surely I am not wrong. If it was wrong for Peter

and John to remain in Jerusalem, God should have rebuked Peter and John; He should not have brought persecution to the church in Jerusalem.

However, the Lord said that the world would hate us because we are not of the world, and that if the world persecuted Him, it would also persecute us (John 15:19-20). When we follow the Lord, the world hates us because we are not of the world. Persecution does not occur because we fail to leave our home. If this were the case, all Christians who left their homes would be spared from persecution. Persecution is experienced equally by Christians who stay at home and those who leave their homes.

Going Out and Coming Back

You will remember that Peter went out to Caesarea and returned to Jerusalem. Then Peter went to Samaria (because the work of God was in Samaria) and then returned to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the center, whereas Samaria was a city in that region of work. The co-workers gathered in Jerusalem. They went out and came back, came back and went out.

Having a worker rule over a church in a locality is a Protestant thought; it is not the thought of the Scriptures.

Only God can make the decision as to which locality should be taken as the center for the work. Only God knows how and where to start; only the Holy Spirit knows how to initiate the work. Man's decision is of no use. We cannot decide which locality is "Jerusalem" through our own discussion, because God wants to do that Himself. This matter is in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Only the Jerusalem appointed by the Holy Spirit is Jerusalem.

In the first part of Acts, we see Peter going out and coming back to Jerusalem. Later, we see Paul going out and coming back to Antioch. They never remained in a locality but always came back. We must see that the work has an area as well as a center.

Whether we call it a region, an area, or a center, these are but terms. We need to emphasize the essential thing behind the terms. In the work in Jerusalem there was something essential. It matters not whether we call it an area, a center, or a region. The same is true with Antioch. Since the Lord measures a portion to a work, it is right to call it the measure of the work. One group of workers dwells in one area, region, or center, while another group of workers dwells in another.

Elders are not assigned to certain places from other places. In the case of Peter, he was not simply an apostle, and he was not simply an elder. He was both an

apostle and an elder. Therefore, brothers, when you, as a co-worker, reside in a locality, you are there as both an apostle and an elder. Taking this path in such a way is correct. It is right that some of our brothers go out to help, but they must come back. It is not right for them to stay and not return. Either they go out and travel a large circuit and then return like Paul, or they go out and immediately return like Peter—both are right. Coming back is a must. If men blame Peter for not going out, they have to blame Paul for returning as well. Peter returned to Jerusalem, and Paul to Antioch. This is God's Word; nothing can be clearer than His Word.

THE APOSTLES' PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AND THE PREACHING BY THE WAY OF MIGRATION

Now we will see the third matter, that is, how the work of God is carried forward and how the gospel is preached. Here we have two ways. As the work of Jerusalem is different from that of Antioch, so we have two different ways of preaching the gospel and two different ways of establishing churches.

The Way of Antioch—the Apostles Going Out

First, it can be done according to Antioch's way. Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Timothy, or Paul and Silas went to one place after another to preach the gospel and then returned to Antioch. It was the apostles who went out to preach the gospel and the apostles who went out to establish churches. This is one way.

The Way of Jerusalem—Going Out by Migration

The second way is Jerusalem's way. In this way all the believers migrated. They preached the gospel in every place. This migration resulted in the gospel spreading everywhere (Acts 8:4). Whether a migration is done peacefully or as a result of persecution, a migration is still a migration. The way of Jerusalem is to migrate. The only thing special was that they went out because of persecution.

I think that the Lord has left very clear footprints here. We should never think that the first half of Acts is of little significance. Acts, like Genesis, is a record of God's way. When we see how God worked at the beginning, we can do the same today.

The Measure of Increase Being in Proportion to the Number Going Out

God used persecution to force the saints to migrate. They could not stay; they were compelled to leave. At that time thousands of people were constantly going out. But Paul still found thousands of believers in the church upon his return to

Jerusalem. When he came back to Jerusalem and went to see James and all the elders, he was told of many thousands of Jews there who had believed (Acts 21:20). Wheat that is harvested this year will grow again next year. We must leave the ground we have occupied in order to allow others to become Christians. We should not remain stationary all the time. The number of Christians going out is indicative of increase in the same proportion. Staying all the time in one place will not cause our numbers to increase. The disciples in Jerusalem continued to go out to preach the gospel, yet the Bible says that there were thousands of Jewish believers when Paul returned to Jerusalem. God's way is to send people out group by group like scattered seeds.

Before God we need to see clearly these three principles before we can engage in so-called missionary work.

The Need to Preach the Gospel

When I was in London, I once told Mr. Austin-Sparks that our work in China is different from their work—we must take care of the gospel first. Since there are so many Christians in all parts of London, it seems as if the whole country is Christian. But in China, we must work according to the primitive pattern of first preaching the gospel. It seems that the work our brother is doing in London is only a work of ministry. As for us, we must preach the gospel.

Not Being Slack

Therefore, brothers, we must never be slack regarding these three points. During the many years of the Sino- Japanese War, we encountered numerous difficulties. Through these difficulties we learned these things. For many of us, at least half of our time is gone. The remaining half must be spent in taking a straight course. We should never walk as in the past. I believe (this is my personal feeling) that this light is sufficiently clear. For two thousand years the church has tried to make Jerusalem fit into the whole picture, but it has never been made to fit correctly. Today we are able to make it fit correctly and even clearly. This matter is now as clear as the truth we saw in Hankow concerning the locality of the church.

To us, it is clear that the churches are local, and it is clear that the work is regional. For this reason our work needs to be on the right track. If we still think that a worker should handle a locality, we will reach an impasse. Unless this matter is dealt with, the work can never go on. The old way will not work. For example, if the old way were right, then we would not have enough co-workers to take care of the more than one hundred meetings in the P'ing Yang region, even

if we sent them all. We would not have enough co-workers for the Wenchow region. We would need the sisters to be pastors. Following this way, we would never be able to meet the needs.

Maintaining the Testimony at the Center

We must see that the work has its region and its center. All matters pertaining to the localities can be placed in the hands of the local churches. The workers always go out to work. After a short while they return to Jerusalem. Then they move out again and return again to Jerusalem. For this reason, it is good to maintain a strong testimony in Jerusalem. It is an easy task for the twelve apostles to maintain the ministry of the word in Jerusalem, but it would be too difficult for them to maintain this ministry throughout Samaria and all Judea.

Therefore, before God we need to have much prayer and clear light concerning which locality can be used as the center for the work in a region. It has to be a place where a group of co-workers, both brothers and sisters, may dwell together and establish a center. It should also be the place where they serve as members of the local church to maintain the local testimony. By going out and coming back, the ministry of the word in that locality is properly maintained.

Shanghai Being a Center

For the provinces of Kiangsu and Chekiang, the center of the work along the Nanking-Shanghai and Shanghai- Hangchow railways lines is in Shanghai. Therefore, Shanghai must maintain a strong testimony, and Shanghai needs workers to maintain the work. The responsibility of the rest of the localities in this region should be left to the brothers of their own locality. At the same time the brothers in Shanghai should migrate to other places. After a period of time, the brothers in Shanghai should move out group by group. This is a very important matter. Going out to preach the gospel is in the hand of the brothers and sisters; we are not sending people out to be pastors, but just to be emigrants. Please remember that the principle of Jerusalem is migration. This was the method for preaching the gospel in the early churches. One can say that they went out because of persecution. But then where do we find children of God who do not suffer persecution? Hence, we must bear in mind that the path is clearly laid before us.

Foochow Also Being a Center

This is how I see this matter today. I may illustrate it in this way: If the province of Fukien and the island of Taiwan are one region for the work, we believe that

Foochow may be taken as a center. Of course, the brothers must support and maintain such a center by going out and coming back. When we bring people to salvation, we should admonish them that they too must go out by the Lord's grace. We should encourage twenty people to move to Nan-Ping, thirty to Putien, thirty to Amoy, thirty to Taipei, and thirty also to Tainan. When they move out, the gospel will go out with them. The gospel will simply follow them. If we are expecting a considerable number of evangelists to be raised up within a certain number of years, not only will the expense be high, but the number of people going out will be limited. Eventually, we will not see much result. Remember that the whole church must go forth to preach the gospel. It is right for group after group to go out.

In Foochow there are apostles and elders. Sometimes two or three of them may go to a locality to visit and then return. Two or three more may go to another locality and also return.

I am not saying that all the gospel work must be left in their hands from now on. Perhaps one or two brothers and sisters need to visit from village to village. But the gospel will go out only when these two ways of carrying the gospel are taken at the same time.

The Ministry of the Word and the Sending Out

We now can see that the work at the center becomes very important. There we not only need to maintain the ministry of the Word, but we also need to send people out for the work. Regardless of whether they are peddlers, rickshaw coolies or domestic servants, they all must be sent out to preach the gospel.

For this reason, we need to give all the brothers and sisters a proper training so that they will be brought to the point where they are ready to be sent out. Fifty will be sent to one place and thirty to another place where they will be able to help the local churches without becoming a burden to them. If the many who are sent forth become a problem and the local churches cannot deal with them, what good is this? Therefore, the brothers and sisters need to be properly trained in order to be prepared to go out as missionaries group by group.

The co-workers must see that the work has to be centralized, not scattered. The locality which is the center first must be set up in good order before the saints can be trained and sent out.

During the past few years we have encountered many sufferings and difficulties. We have learned some lessons. May we not treat these lessons lightly. We need to learn from these things.

THE NEED TO RECEIVE BASIC TRAINING

Now we come to the fourth point, that is, the need for all the brothers and sisters to receive the same training.

The New Believers' Training Meeting

We need to offer the new believers a special kind of meeting. In Shanghai and Foochow we have already offered this training to the new believing brothers and sisters. This meeting is the same every year. We do not want to move on to something new. Of course, we do not want these training lessons to be recited like the Lord's prayer to some people. If the speakers are living, there will be life. These instructional lessons are given in sequence from the beginning of each year to the end. After fifty-two weeks, the cycle is repeated again. When each brother goes out, he will at least have received all the basic instructions. In this way, we will eliminate some of the problems.

If some come into our midst, regardless of which week they join, they will finish the whole training in one year. After fifty-two weeks, the cycle will repeat itself again. If they come in at the tenth week of the first year, they will complete the cycle of training and teaching when they approach the ninth week of the following year. Everyone should get the same instructions and then be ready to be sent out.

Sent Out to Preach the Gospel

Advise them that when they migrate to a place they should try their best to save souls in the locality where they live. Thus, we should first bring men to salvation in the locality which is the center. These people should be edified and sent out to other places. They should be given the opportunity to go out to preach the gospel.

In this way the whole church will preach the gospel, not just the evangelists. If only the evangelists do the preaching, they can never complete the preaching of the gospel throughout China in their lifetime. Today the population in China is 450 million, but not more than one million are Christians. If these one million Christians are in our hand and everyone is sent out, we can evangelize China. We need to help them receive the same kind of training and then send them out. Then we will see the church preaching the gospel everywhere.

They go out to preach the gospel because they are sent out, not because they are persecuted. Perhaps they will meet persecution, but the main thing is that they must go out.

Some arrangement is necessary, and the leading brothers must make these arrangements. Some localities are strategic geographically, and we must take them. Perhaps we first should send three or five men there to take up some kind of employment. Then we might send a few more to take up other employment. When people are brought to salvation through them, the co-workers can then go there to raise up a meeting. In order to go on, we need a change from the present situation. This is the way to go on in the work.

The Church Being Fruitful

When It Preaches the Gospel

Today all the brothers and sisters acknowledge that when the church preaches the gospel there is always more fruit. Only the work of the church can become more fruitful. Recently, a group of brothers went to Kutien to preach the gospel, and a total of more than fifty were saved and baptized. Brother Chen returned and said that when he left he did not know what the result of the church's preaching of the gospel would be. But after his trip to Kutien, he had no more doubts: When the church preached the gospel, men were saved. Without advertisement, one person simply took hold of one or two other persons. In a short time more than fifty were saved.

In the past Nan-Ping had only a few saints in the meetings. After the brothers went there recently, more than twenty people were baptized. These people heard the gospel during the great fire in Nan-Ping, when only one fourth of the city was spared. About ten homes of our brothers were also burned. Brother Huang's store was burned too. But when the whole church preached the gospel, a number of people were saved. Our brothers wrote and said that since they discovered this way, they would give their lives for it and not turn in any other direction.

While the church is preaching the gospel, the Lord is working. We did not have to use any advertisement or apply any human methods. The brothers simply went out, each one bringing in another, and the people came. It matters little if the message is somewhat weak. As long as the church is preaching the gospel, scores upon scores of people will be baptized. In the future this work will be passed on to the local brothers; they will do the work themselves.

Kuling Will Furnish Help

What should we do here in Kuling Mountain? The local churches should send promising ones here to be given one or two months of spiritual help. Then they will be sent back to their localities to bear some responsibility. The co-workers

should always bear the responsibility of the work in the center, but they also should go out and return again and again. If we do this, the work will have a way to go on.

The Need for Coordination

For this reason, during the conferences in both Shanghai and Foochow, we paid much attention to the matter of coordination. Nothing will work without coordination. In the past, we were all going our own way, but without coordination nothing can be done properly. No one should act independently; everyone must give himself to be properly coordinated.

I believe that the gospel will spread quickly. Moreover, I believe that it will be easy for us to take over the whole of China. For instance, if the brothers in Foochow are faithful, it will be very easy for them to take over Fukien province and the island of Taiwan. If the brothers in other localities are also faithful and learn to take this way, they will also be able to take over their places.

Today we have found the way. Now it is altogether a matter of the person. The way cannot be clearer. If we do not see the principle of Jerusalem, we will feel that there is something in the Word of God which does not fit; it seems as if there is some problem. Today we have to declare that the whole book of Acts fits in very well; there is no problem. Furthermore, each time I read the book of Acts now, I marvel at the way Peter conducted himself in the first part. I think Peter has been unjustly accused for two thousand years. Peter's going out and coming back to Jerusalem was altogether correct. Undoubtedly, there are centers for God's work.

The Ministry of the Word

No Longer Being a Problem

If we take this way, the matter of the ministry of the word will no longer be a problem. All we have to do is maintain such a ministry in one central locality. The other localities need to be led to take care of themselves. There will be no problem with the ministry of the word if the local ones are the ones that are taking care of the matter themselves. It is for this cause that we in Kuling are preparing a place for training. In the future we will bring all the good, prospective ones from all the churches here to receive some training. Then we will send them back. Thus, I will do my work and you will do your work, each one attending to his own work. I believe that we can soon get through this way and strong testimonies can be built up continuously in many localities.

The Foundation of the Work

The foundation of all the work today is here. If this becomes confused, everything will be confused, and we will revert back to the situation before our gathering in Hankow. In Hankow we only saw the matter of the church; at that time we did not see the matter of the work. Now the way of the work is before us. If we have the right people and the mercy of the Lord is with us, within a few years the gospel will be spread all over China. I believe this is a great eventuality—to preach the gospel to all of China. Unless we take this way, the situation will remain the same for fifty years.

I acknowledge that much of God's blessing has been in our midst. In the past I have said that God always saves people. As a matter of fact, God has saved quite a number of people in our midst. However, I always feel that this is not enough; we still have not saved enough people. Recently, we all gave ourselves to study the Bible again. I myself have read God's Word once or twice again. I find God's Word becoming so very clear. In the past we only saw the way of the church. We did not see the way of the work. When the way of the work is not proper, the way of the church is not proper either. We thank God for His mercy upon us that today He has opened our eyes to see this way after so many years. The brothers in a locality must always bear their responsibilities. They must practice coordination, and they must migrate to other places group by group to preach the gospel.

This is a very simple matter. Jerusalem had great success in this matter. Before God, Jerusalem represents the church. The heavenly Jerusalem represents the church, and the earthly Jerusalem also represents the church. Peter was always working there, and as a result, many people went out to preach the gospel. Never do we see the gospel coming to an end when the people left. The gospel will go on continually. This is exceedingly glorious.

TODAY'S REQUIREMENT—

BEING FAITHFUL IN COORDINATION

Therefore, today there is a requirement not only for the co-workers to be coordinated but for the leading ones to be coordinated as well. None of us can choose freely. In this way the church will preach the gospel. Every person, no matter where he goes, must go for the gospel. Their mouth must be for the preaching of the gospel. We need to go out as the Body. I believe that the Lord will have His way today.

If we are not trustworthy and faithful, the Lord will choose others to take this way. I believe that it is possible for Him to do this, but it would take at least another twenty years. Do not say that the Lord will not lay us aside. The Lord can easily lay us aside, but it would waste another twenty years. We expect to save twenty years for the Lord. May the Lord have mercy on us so that we may catch up. Let us give our all for this. After passing through very burdensome and difficult experiences, He has shown us this way. May we not forsake it.

A message given by Watchman Nee and recorded by Brother Chou on the morning of August 19, 1948.

SEEING THE REAL CONDITION OF THE SELF

UNDER GOD'S LIGHT

The days seem to have flown by, and I have been at Kuling for three weeks now. If the start of school is not delayed, I will return to Shanghai around the beginning of September. I will only be able to stay for two or three more weeks at the most. My heart is filled with fear and trepidation; I really do not know how I will live in the coming days! In the light of the Lord's word—although I have really understood only a very small portion—I deeply feel that I cannot continue to live in the darkness of my previous days. Oh, I had not even dreamed that my previous days and previous "work" were this way. In today's light, almost every matter, word, and attitude were merely the hypocrisy of pride, even though others saw them as "restrained," "spiritual," "humble," and "learned." Oh! Even my bones are haughty. It is not enough to say that my previous "work" was full of man's hands, ways, and thoughts; I do not know how much would remain if all the elements of human lust were removed.

During the past months, almost everything has worked to expose me; I realize that I am intensely proud to the very core of my being. Yet I was in such darkness that I had no feeling of this. Although I discovered my pride many times, sought humility, and tried my best to learn to be humble, little did I realize that this "humility" was no purer and better than my pride. I really have no way to describe the depth of my pride! I am proud when doing something and proud when I am still. The Lord seems to have brought all of my former conduct to the light. He has shown me the source of all matters and activities and the depth of my evil. He also has shown me the leading of His hand through my circumstances. He has exposed my dark, insensitive condition!

My deepest parts are full of sorrow and repentance. I look to the Lord to give me grace and to have pity on me, His lazy and evil servant. May He break and

smash my pride! I feel that I am unable to continue in my old way, nor can I continue in my old work! My hazy future fills me with fear and trembling! May the Lord give you a burden to pray for me. May the Lord thoroughly break me and touch me.

A sophomore at Nanking Central University Medical College

August 15, 1948

WAITING FOR LEADING IN GOD'S ARRANGEMENT

Thank the Lord that His work is done apart from the power of man. The Lord has graciously taken care of me since school was disbanded, and I have been transferred to the general affairs department of a factory. May the Lord cause me to walk in His will.

An important town in Taiwan—Taichung—is about fifty minutes by car from my home. Three brothers have already begun to have a prayer meeting there. The participants are a student from the agricultural college, a special reporter from the Central News Agency, and a worker from the Third Airplane Factory. Of these three, the college brother already subscribes to all four publications put out by the Gospel Book Room. None of them want to attend worship services in the denominational churches. In addition, the head of the reporters' union, the chief of the Public Security Department, and many other local leaders have believed in the Lord. They want to attend meetings with brothers from the mainland provinces. We now have a small number of brothers praying in one accord in Taichung. We have begun small but will grow bigger. May God accomplish His own work and give us the proper guidance. It will take time to ripen. The brothers are now together watching and praying earnestly. It takes one day to get to Taipei, and we have to travel during the night. It is difficult to do this, and it harms our health and work. Since the Lord has now given us a small number of brothers as a foundation, we believe He will bless us. Most importantly, we ask the brothers and sisters in Shanghai to pray for us, as Moses prayed for Joshua during the battle. We have written a letter asking the brothers and sisters in Taipei to pray for us also.

We have begun meeting in the home of a brother in Taichung. Some people want to rent the local Kuomintang Party hall. A small number of brothers feel that we do not need to be so ostentatious. They feel we should have a solid foundation before spreading out, lest we bring on unnecessary misunderstandings. We want to pursue peace with all men. At this point in my

writing, I feel like thanking the Lord in tears for arranging for my time in Taichung. The person who introduced me to this place has already left, but I am still in Taichung county. By the Lord's grace, we are in a battle against Satan. May the Lord give us sharp weapons to fight the good spiritual fight!

Sincerely,

Kao Xuan-zhen

October 13, 1948

Mailing Address: Fuli Sinchun, 56 Dadu, Taichung, Taiwan

An Answer

A meeting place should not be established in the Provincial Political Party Office. The things of Caesar and the things of Christ should be separate. If local officials want to participate, they must be clean in their conduct, pure in their faith, and at the same time, they must have the desire to walk with us. We can receive them as brothers, but we can never receive them as government officials. If anyone retains his official status in a church, that church must be torn down.

Witness

October 20, 1948

CONSECRATING OUR BODIES AND OUR TIME

Among the churches in Nansha, a few brothers have recently had the desire to do some work for the Lord. They had a fellowship meeting in April in Cheluwan. The topic of the meeting was "How to Serve God." As a result, they decided to begin with preaching the gospel and visiting people. In every local church they began to have two or three days of meetings, and the work developed nicely. The most recent message was "Presenting Our Bodies as Living Sacrifices." In every church many brothers and sisters have consecrated their bodies and their time. About seventy have consecrated themselves in Jiazaowan, and many others in Shi-Er-Dai and Dangshanwan. Around forty have consecrated themselves in Wananchiao, and there are thirty in Fengjialou. After consecration, their works are assigned by the church. Those who are able to preach the gospel and visit people are assigned to preaching and visitation. The brothers who cannot preach the gospel or visit are sent to help in the farms and businesses of those brothers who are preaching and visiting. All the churches are joining together in this (we are not separated by locality or region). For example, a brother from Jiazaowan may be sent to help on the farm of a brother in Dangshanwan. Is this way of doing things according to the truth? We are sending

this letter particularly to ask for direction in the Lord. We hope you will give us an answer.

The brothers in Meilinwan: Wang Yu-gen

Sinwan: Fei Chang-hua, Sung Da-fu

July 12, 1948

Mailing Address: c/o Christian Assembly Hall, Sinwandi, Xiaoshan, Chekiang province

(Editor: The churches in the region of Nansha are unique in their location. Although there are more than twenty localities, they are all villages in Xiaoshan and Shaoshing counties. Some of the churches mentioned in this letter are only eight or ten li apart. Thus, they spontaneously combine forces and work together. This is not an organization of united churches.)

THE CHURCHES PRACTICING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

Thank God that now He is leading a few of us brothers and sisters to pursue life and to learn to serve. We learned something new through a brother's letter and saw something of the work the Lord wants to do in this age. This has enlightened our hearts and given us a way to go on.

When the lease was up on the old meeting hall in the spring, God led us to build a new meeting hall with eleven rooms. It is large enough for the present use. We still have enough land to build approximately ten more rooms. We have learned deeper lessons through this. God touched the hearts of all the brothers and sisters concerning the matters of service and offerings. They did not merely give according to the measure of their strength, but even beyond their strength. Some brought out their beloved possessions, while others offered up their livelihood. We really saw God working here.

It is unfortunate, however, that we do not have enough life and are unable to bring more brothers and sisters to rise up and serve God. Some have gotten cold and backslidden, some have gone to love the world, and some have gone into heresy. The biggest problem since the testimony was raised up in Lan-chou involves those who walk according to their own will. Recently, another person quit his job, saying that he was called by God to work for Him. This person works in many places and brings God's children into all kinds of lawlessness and rebellion. We were most troubled about this, but the Lord showed us that God sent Jesus Christ, the Lord sent the twelve apostles, and the Holy Spirit sent out Paul and Barnabas through the church. Therefore, Lan-chou dared not receive

these people anymore. We feel that we bear a great responsibility for the church. We are not strong enough. A doctor (the so-called workers) can write the wrong prescription, but the pharmacist (the responsible brothers) cannot give someone the wrong medicine. This responsibility is so great! We really feel that we cannot bear it. We have already stopped the Lord's Day message. May the Lord grace all His children so that the church would learn to preach the gospel. We are temporarily doing some work to prepare the way while we are waiting for God to send His servants to Lan-chou to begin working. There are now more than fifty brothers and sisters in Lan-chou who come to the meetings regularly.

Your brothers,

Huang Nai-yang, Si Lu-chen, Ku Zhong-yin

Mailing Address: 3 Park Road, Lan-chou, Kansu

1. A Simple Map of the Churches in the Kansu-Sinkiang Region
2. Table of Churches, Responsible Brothers, and Scattered Saints in the Kansu-Sinkiang Region
3. Diagram of the Churches in the Xisha Region of Xiaoshan, Chekiang
4. Table of the Condition of the Christian Assemblies in the Hsisha Region of Hsiaoshan County, Chekiang Province

ADDRESSES AND REMARKS

The Assembly in Ningwei, c/o Taichanghua Company, Yuzhiatan, Xiaoshan: This was originally a China Inland Mission Church started in 1935. In December of the same year, the brothers came out of the denomination. Then Brother Philip Luan came to preach the gospel for three days, and the meetings officially began. The table began in July of the following year.

The Assembly in Yinxia, c/o Chen Xian zhong, Post Office Agent, Kanshan Lower Street, Xiaoshan: This assembly began in 1937. They originally met with Ningwei, but because it was too far (more than twenty li), they began meeting and having the table in Brother Chen Bao-chu's home. A three-room meeting hall was built in 1940, and the meetings officially started in the same year.

The Assembly in Sungxiayuan, c/o Taichanghua Company, Yuzhaitan, Xiaoshan: This assembly began in 1942. They used to meet with Ningwei but later met separately because it was too far to travel to Ningwei (five li). They built a four-room house in this locality and began meeting in May of the same year. The table was established in July.

The Assembly in Ailientang, address same as above: They used to meet with Ningwei, but because the latter was too far away (more than five li), they built a

four-room house in 1945. They began meeting and set up the table here in February 1946.

The Assembly in Jianjiaoyuan, address same as above: They used to meet with Ningwei, but because the latter was too far away (more than five li), they built a six-room building and began prayer meetings in February 1947. The table began in July of that year.

Sixingyi Ferry Port, address same as above: In 1946, a flood left sand deposits in Toupeng Village, Dungsha. The inhabitants of the region around Toupeng Village and Sixing Village moved as pioneers to this area. The meetings were held in Brother Chen Da-liang's home. The table was started in the fall of the same year.

The Assembly in Yingshangwei, c/o Mr. Yu Lian-de, c/o Renshantou Post Office, Xiaoshan: They used to meet with Yingxia, but because there were too many people meeting in a small place, they built a six-room house here and began both the meetings and the table in the spring of 1948.

THE MINISTERS

NATURE: To show the way to serve, to help the serving ones and the churches in the different localities go on, and to solve problems related to the ministry.

FREQUENCY: Beginning next year, we will publish irregularly.

PRICES: Beginning next year, we will have no set price. Please send as much as you like. We will gladly receive whatever you send.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Beginning next year, we will only send one subscription per person. If you are a new subscriber, you must send us your order personally. We are limiting subscriptions to one per person. We apologize for not being able to send extra copies for you to give away.

ATTENTION: 1) When subscribing, please write neatly and make sure the address is clear. 2) When changing your address, your name must be the same as when you first subscribed. It is best if you can also send us the code number from the wrapper of your copy.

WIRING MONEY: Please wire money to Gospel Book Room Shipping Department, 18 Lane 240 Tong Ren Road (23) Shanghai. If you are wiring money through the post office, you will need to write our branch name. Please mark it: Jingan Temple.

PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

1) Some churches in certain localities have asked us to send a number of copies to them (without listing the names and addresses of individual brothers and sisters). If you want to receive the same number of copies next year, please send

the names and addresses of those brothers and sisters that we may file them individually.

2) It takes much time to answer letters. When we feel that certain letters do not need an answer, we will not answer them. Please forgive us for this.

3) Each issue is sent out as they are available. Later subscribers will only be sent issues left in stock.

4) The mail routes are erratic in certain localities. We will send out all that we are able to send. For those places that cannot receive our mail, we will send out the subscriptions whenever the routes become available again.

GOSPEL HYMNALS

Our first printing is sold out. Those whose orders came too late must wait until the next reprint. Because labor and material costs have risen, each hymnal in the second printing will temporarily cost five gold yen. (Those who paid in October will be charged the same price as the first printing.)

Gospel Book Room

P. O. Box 5008, Shanghai

November 11, 1948

ISSUE NO. 4

April 5, 1950

SPECIAL GRACE AND RESERVE GRACE

A Talk by Watchman Nee

Question: What is the cause of poverty in the life of a Christian? How can a Christian have a reserve before God?

Answer: In Revelation 3 the Lord said, "You are...poor" (v. 17). These words were addressed by Him to the church in Laodicea. This poverty implies that nothing had been laid up in store. It implies not merely a momentary lack but a continuous lack.

A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

Many brothers and sisters have a fundamental problem: They are maintained by the experience of special grace. This is a serious problem. They are dependent on temporary supplies of grace; they do not have the revelation which they saw "thirteen years ago." We have said before that God's work in our lives is wholly a work of grace. If He removed His grace from us, our lives would be an utter void. This is a fact which we need to recognize. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that God does not want to see His children to be devoid of any deposit of grace. He does

not want them to be dependent on interventions of special grace in order to be kept in His will. It is not well-pleasing to Him if His children live from hand to mouth on special grace. He desires us to have a rich deposit of grace.

Many people have no such deposit. Consequently, the Lord told us to fast and pray. In Matthew 17:21 the Lord said that some demons could only be cast out by prayer and fasting. He told the disciples that they needed to have special prayer and fasting, without which they would not have the needed power. Christians whose loins are not girded, who are unrestrained, and whose spirits are wild have no choice but to live by special dispensations of grace. If we have just come to the Lord, it is understandable if we live by special grace; but if we are still dependent on such grace after we have believed in the Lord for a year or two, this indicates a state of poverty and sickness. This poverty is the result of living by special grace without having any extra or reserve grace.

What is wealth? Wealth is the reverse of poverty. Being spiritually wealthy means to have a reserve of grace before God and not to rely on special grace. Poverty is banished by the surplus of grace within.

PAUL HAVING RESERVE GRACE

The other day a few of us talked together about Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians. For my part I believe that the greatest revelation of life in the entire New Testament is in the Epistles to the Corinthians.

First and 2 Corinthians have their place; they are the only two Epistles that show us the man Paul. In his letter to the Romans he unfolds the matter of salvation in a profound way, and in his letter to the Ephesians he brings forth the deepest revelation. All of these things are from God. However, if we want to know Paul the person, we have to come to 1 and 2 Corinthians. Only these two books give us a clear understanding of Paul; they open up his very own person to us.

Many people cannot minister the word of God apart from inspiration. If at any given time they have no fresh inspiration, their words stop. The source of their ministry of the word is their inspiration. It is a fact that we need inspiration if we are to have a ministry; there is nothing wrong about this. Please bear in mind the fact, however, that inspiration is not given to us in a stream of unbroken continuity. Even in the case of the first twelve apostles and in the case of such a person as Paul, inspiration was not continuous. In one instance he said, "I have no commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:25a). He did not have a word from the Lord; the Lord did not say anything. The Lord did not say it; he said it. In other

words, he did not have revelation, spiritual inspiration, or any fresh word from the Lord.

But there is something amazing here. Paul said, "But I give my opinion as one who has been shown mercy by the Lord to be faithful [or honest]" (v. 25b). Paul was expressing his own judgment. What a terrific thing to do. Over the past nearly two thousand years, theologians have been afraid to touch these utterances of Paul, but Paul knew what he was saying. When he was without immediate inspiration, he was still able to speak.

To speak without inspiration would be presumption on the part of others. Others have no word when they have no inspiration because they do not have extra reserves of grace. God only gives them enough grace for today. This kind of person does not have a word when they do not have immediate inspiration because they rely on special grace to meet the present need. Without special grace, they have nothing to say.

Here, however, we have a man who had a word without immediate inspiration. Paul's word was God's word. The Holy Spirit chose the word and put it into the Bible; we believe this was God's arrangement. Paul repeated several times that it was his word, not the Lord's. When he spoke, however, he indicated that the word did not seem to be his word, and he concluded with this remark: "I think that I also have the Spirit of God" (v. 40). It is very precious. He was unconsciously moved by the Holy Spirit. Some people are always ready to affirm that the Spirit is moving them. I am afraid that the very fact of their experience of immediate inspiration from the Holy Spirit betrays their shortage of a reserve. It is better to be moved by the Holy Spirit with no consciousness of the fact. Shallow people often doubt that they have not been moved by the Holy Spirit, while those with reserves doubt that they have indeed been moved, asking, "How can I say this is not the Lord's word? This is the Lord's word."

We find a basic principle here. Paul had something other than immediate inspiration. He had a deposit apart from immediate inspiration. He had this deposit because for many years he had followed the Lord; he had been restricted; he had avoided sin and failure. For years he had learned to fear the Lord. Over these years, things were collecting within him. Although he did not have any immediate inspiration, he still had things to say. These were his reserve, or in other words, his riches.

No other Epistles unveil the person of Paul to us as his letters to the Corinthians. He tells us that he is only expressing his own judgment; he has no specific

inspiration from the Lord. Yet we discover that what he uttered is actually a revelation to the church. Here is a man speaking his own words, and they are recorded in the Bible as the word of God. This touches the highest peak of the New Testament, where a man has been edified, carved, purified, and constituted by God to such an extent that his word becomes God's word. This is wealth. And this is an inward reserve which is the result of God's many years of work on Paul. Special grace cannot bring one to this peak.

THE NEED TO BE WEALTHY WITH RESERVE GRACE

It is a great grief to me that I frequently meet brothers and sisters who are so dependent on special grace that between the periodic help these experiences bring, their words and state of mind lapse into that of a non-Christian. What a poverty-stricken state this reveals! Once this kind of person lacks an incoming supply, he is empty. I readily acknowledge that we all would be utterly destitute if God's grace were removed from us; but it is also true that something of God's grace can be constituted into our very being. God's reserve deposit in man is also a fact. Some people live from hand to mouth, spending whatever comes in to meet their expenses of the moment. They cannot withstand trials.

What are trials? Trials are times when it seems that God does not care for us, listen to us, or fellowship with us. Madame Guyon understood trials best. Spiritual trials are times when it seems that God has covered His face and shut His mouth, when it seems that He will not answer or make a sound, when it seems He is so quiet that there is no God in heaven at all. These times of trial immediately separate those with reserves from those with none.

A poor person lives by the joy of prayer and sustains his living through the freshness of the Lord's table. Whenever he does not have these, he fails for the week because he cannot go on, and he stumbles. Many people rely on special grace for their entire life and for all aspects of their living; they do not have reserves.

Some people, such as Madame Guyon, go through trials for months at a time. During the trials the entire world may appear so confusing that it seems as if there is no God. A person with inward reserves of grace will be manifested by such a time. He will pass the test. He has something inside that is sufficient. This something is called wealth. This is the wealth that the Lord spoke of to the church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:18a).

In summary, poverty is a lack of reserves; wealth is having reserves. We mean, of course, spiritual reserves.

HOW TO HAVE A WEALTH OF RESERVES

Time Is an Essential Factor

How can we be inwardly wealthy with reserves? This is a question of fundamental importance. Permit me to say a very straight word to the younger brothers. No matter who you are, none of you are really wealthy. Perhaps you think you have become rich. But accumulating wealth requires time. Those who have spent time before God might have some riches. Those who have not spent time without a doubt are poor. It is impossible for young people to be wealthy. Time is an important factor. Formerly we were of the opinion that some of the young people were ahead of the older ones in basic spiritual matters. When we recently touched some deeper matters in Foochow, we discovered that many of the finest young brothers were unable to grasp the most practical matters. I appeal to you young ones to check how much you have accumulated in spiritual reserves. I am afraid you only have the tiniest of reserves. Do not be proud. Being proud is sheerest folly. You must realize that a long course still lies before you. You must be constituted with and established by the Holy Spirit in this course day by day. Time is a matter of primary importance. No one can skip over this consideration.

Experiences Are an Essential Factor

Second, we must go through various experiences. Many people have spent much time before God, but they have not passed through many experiences before God. If one wants to become rich, he must spend time before God, and he must pass through many experiences before God. The experiences one has to go through are the discipline of the Holy Spirit. Some people have been Christians for eight or ten years, but it seems as if the Holy Spirit is very lenient with them. It seems that He does not discipline them or even pay attention to them. It is as if the Holy Spirit does not want to concern Himself with their affairs. Other people, however, are taken in hand and not let off; they are severely disciplined by the Holy Spirit. It does not seem to matter what some people do, because the Holy Spirit does not speak to them through their situations or their consciences. Their situations do not give them much trouble, nor do their consciences. Even though these people have the benefit of the passage of much time, they do not learn much from God because they are not restricted, carved,

hindered, and chastised enough. Therefore, they are not rich before God. For this reason, let us not be dismayed by the difficulties we face before God. Every one of these situations adds to our wealth. The fewer problems we have, the less we will have in reserve, and the fewer words we will be able to share with others. No one can have a word without experience. Our wealth in the Word and our service to God's children are in proportion to the experiences we go through. Our supply comes through the lessons we have learned before God. This is not something that doctrines can give to us; nor is it something that commentaries on the Bible can give to us. It is something we learn when the Holy Spirit leads us in our daily walk.

Therefore, I hope that we will not be slack in our daily experience in learning to follow God. In all the disappointment and disillusionment we face, let us recognize the Lord's severe dealings with us. Let us bow before Him in gratitude and worship Him, acknowledging that His purpose in all these things is to enrich us and to lead us to abundance.

A certain brother thought that he was quite strong in faith until he fell ill. Then he began to learn the real meaning of faith. If we have never been poor, we do not know how to look to the Lord. If we have never been ill, we do not know faith. If we have never had problems, we do not know true worship. If we are without experiences and have not learned anything, we are poor. Anyone who tries to avoid difficulties is a poor person. Everyone who asks for easy circumstances is poor. If we want progress, we must ask for some situations to pass through. The more we want to learn, the more we must experience. Our hope, our faith, and our submission all come into these different situations to edify us and bring us through. If we have one more situation added outwardly, we will have one more item of spiritual wealth added inwardly. We must realize that every situation we encounter is for teaching us something, no matter how hard it is for our flesh or how much we dislike it. We must bow our head and say, "This is a chance, a once-in-a-lifetime chance, a hard-to-come-by opportunity! Lord, I thank You!"

There are many people around us who are Christians, but some seem to be protected from trials. This kind of brother or sister has a very peaceful, quiet life, but we immediately sense that the faith, hope, and reliance of these saints are very small and poor.

Therefore, I hope you will listen to my frank words. When you encounter trials, you should lift up your head and praise the Lord, saying, "Lord, You are creating another opportunity within me for me to gain some riches. Everything is working

together for good. You are going to produce something in me that others do not have so that I can supply the church." Brothers, do not be deceived into thinking that you will be able to preach by dint of much study. A man can deliver a message, but he does not necessarily have a rich spirit. A man can improve his preaching and increase the abundance of his words, but this does not make him wealthy in his spirit.

Being full of meaningful utterance and being full of the Spirit are two entirely different matters. God is not treating us wrongly when He gives us more trials and difficulties; He is actually treating us very well. He has selected us and has granted us favor by providing us this big opportunity. We must look for this. If we have the light, we should always consider one matter: How many experiences have we passed through before the Lord? Do we have any reserves? It does not matter how proud we are; our pride is worthless. If we have something inwardly, we have it; if we do not, we do not. The more we want to deceive others, the more they will know us. The prouder we are and the more we try to put on a good front, the more we will expose ourselves. Once we open our mouth, we expose ourselves. We should not presume that we can deceive others when our skin feels like Esau but our voice sounds like Jacob. The amount of our spiritual wealth is based on the amount of experiences we have passed through.

The Need for Finality

Third, finality is essential. It is not enough to go through many experiences. If we have spent the required amount of time and passed through the necessary experiences, we must ask if there has been a result. This can still be a problem. We must reach a place of finality. In carrying out a chemistry experiment in school, there is a principle: "Carry it to its finality." This means we must persist with the experiment until we get a result. Many times things are done but not thoroughly. If the work is not done thoroughly, it is useless. Everything must be thorough.

The Bible makes it abundantly plain that when God deals with a person, He does not let go easily; He does things thoroughly. It does not matter whether cattle are stolen, sheep and servants are burned, the house falls down, or the children die. It does not matter whether there are sores on the body. The lips and tongue must submit and the mouth must be pressed to the dust (see Job 1:6—2:10; 42:1-6). Such a day must come. The Epistle of James uses the word end in 5:11, saying, "...his end from the Lord." Here we see that it is not a matter of the frequency of

our trials but a matter of God reaching His end through the trials. Job's sons died. How many sons do we have that we can allow them to die? One person does not have that many sons to lose. This is a very serious matter. Job received a very heavy dealing, but he was still poor. We should not think that God can give us unlimited trials. There was a sister whose husband died, and she was a widow. However, she was very loose in spiritual matters. After she finished giving a testimony one day, I was very bothered inwardly. I spoke very frankly to her and said, "Your attitude is wrong. It is a serious matter that God took your husband away, but you have not learned the lesson! A person does not have that many husbands to lose." Many people want to go up to Kuling Mountain, but we should not think that Kuling is a nice place to go. Kuling is a place of heartless judgment. Your "cow and sheep" can be stolen, your "houses" can collapse, and your "sons" can die, but the matter still may not come to an end. Your entire body can be "covered with boils," but the matter still may not come to an end. This is the meaning of having no finality. A person must pass through many experiences, but there are only a limited number of situations he can go through. If a person does not learn the lessons from what he passes through, he cannot reach the end from the Lord. This means that the Lord will not attain His goal. Please remember that if the Lord does not gain anything, we will not have much reserve. If this is our case, we are just wasting the days, the dealings, the trials, and the discipline! This is a fearful matter. Many people go through dealings, but they become broken, useless vessels when they come out of them. This is like the potter's shop spoken of in Jeremiah 18:4. The floor is covered with vessels that did not turn out properly. Even though the vessels can claim that they have been put into the fire, they remain broken on the floor.

Therefore, our hope is not only that we would spend sufficient time before the Lord and pass through enough experiences, but also that we would become vessels unto glory after we pass through these experiences.

Job did not just pass through experiences. One day God saw that a point of finality had come. There was a new constitution in him; he had changed. This is a matter of fundamental importance. It is not a matter of receiving more life, but a matter of constituting the human life with the divine life.

I will make a statement that I fear is often misunderstood by people: The old man cannot be changed. It is a fact that God has crucified the old man, and it is also a fact that God has put a new life within us. If God took this life away, the old man would still be the old man. However, the Bible also says that man can be

changed and that the mind can be renewed and transformed (Rom. 12:2). Please remember that it is not merely the new life within us that makes us different from others; we become different from others by the working of this new life within us. When we live with someone for a long time, we begin to resemble that person. When we live together with God for a long time, it is really strange if we do not change in the slightest. Since the Holy Spirit lives in us, there must be something that we have learned of Him that makes us like Him. This is renewing and transformation.

Therefore, we hope to learn our lessons, and we hope to arrive at a finality. Hopefully, the time we spend before God and the lessons we have learned before Him will have an end. The Lord put His Spirit inside us to enable us to learn the lessons and reach an end. Only then will the Lord be able to use us to supply others. We cannot obtain this from reading or from listening to Paul; it only comes from learning Christ (Eph. 4:20). We do not do things merely because the Bible says so. We do them because we have learned them for ourselves. We must have this quality before we can serve God and before our words can supply others.

Light Is Also Necessary

The last thing needed is light. A person who is rich is one who receives much light. We must not just learn the lessons; the Lord must also enlighten us in spirit so that we see what we are learning. We do not merely know that something has happened. What has happened must be molded into a teaching in us. This is the only way we will be able to turn our experience into words to supply others. The situation does not just happen to us. We are able to take what we have learned and supply it to others. When the light comes, we can speak, and our words will supply others.

God often deals with us, but we do not know it. Sometimes, however, we know. This knowing makes the dealing more effective in reaching its end. We can believe and obey because of the enlightenment. Therefore, we can quicken the end of the dealing. Fruit is brought forth, and this fruit is ripened. This is man's end before God. This kind of enlightenment is the eyesalve spoken of in Revelation 3:18. It enables one to see and to shine.

ENLIGHTENMENT BEING DIFFERENT FROM INSPIRATION

Question: Is the enlightenment which you speak of different from inspiration?

Answer: Yes, it is different. This light comes through revelation; it is an inward light. The basic problem with the inward being is the matter of obedience.

CONCERNING THE DISCIPLINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Question: When a situation comes to us, we should submit as quickly as possible, but does this kind of swift submission depend on swiftly acknowledging that this situation is from the Lord?

Answer: Yes, that is true, but it is important for us to understand the meaning of the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

The discipline of the Holy Spirit means that when the Holy Spirit is operating in our outward circumstances to bring us to a particular goal, He is also making an inward demand on us. This operation is called the discipline of the Holy Spirit. If we do not obey, it will not serve His purpose immediately. But even if we do not submit, He will bring us to the point of obedience. A day will definitely come when He will make us submissive. The discipline of the Holy Spirit often brings about our submission. This is not to say that we have the will to submit in ourselves, but we are brought to the point where we obey spontaneously. Brothers and sisters who have believed in the Lord for many years can look back on their lives and count many times when the Lord spoke to them and they obeyed. The Lord spoke again, and they obeyed again. We can all say this. If we look back and think, we can identify many times when the Lord spoke and we had no intention to obey. Yet, in the end we obeyed. This is the result of the discipline of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we actually set our mind on disobeying, yet mysteriously, after two or three years of confusion, our resistance fades away, and the disobedience is no longer there. This is the result of the discipline of the Holy Spirit. When we submit by ourselves, the job is done soon. But thank God, even when we have no heart to submit, and there is no faith, we can still be brought to the point of submission. This is a result of the discipline of the Holy Spirit. I often consider the discipline of the Holy Spirit to be a measure whereby He fills up our own lack of submission.

There are two aspects of the discipline of the Holy Spirit. The first is to cause us to submit. God arranges our environment and calls us to submission. The second is the discipline of the Holy Spirit in taking over our submission. We do not have any intention of submitting, but the Holy Spirit works on us to the extent that we submit nevertheless.

There was a brother who loved money very much. The Holy Spirit disciplined him many times, but he still loved money. During the past three or four years, many

things came across his way which made him very angry. Today, however, unconsciously he no longer loves money. He has asked, "Must my love for money be given up in a spirit of obedience? What if I give it up in a spirit of disobedience?" I have answered that as long as he has given up his love for money, it is all right. Many times we want to submit quickly, and we ask God to give us grace that we might submit. This is very good. This will cause us to go through less chastisement; it can save us some dealings. We can reach the other side more quickly. But even if we are not that cooperative, He will bring us through according to His good timing as long as we give Him the time. This is the discipline of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the inward working of the Holy Spirit is precious, and the outward working of the Holy Spirit through our environment is also very precious.

Question: How can we obey more quickly?

Answer: Sometimes God's Holy Spirit works in us inwardly through His operation; sometimes He works on us through the passage of time. When the Holy Spirit of God moves within us, obedience is instant. But God does not only work through His Holy Spirit within men; He also works in men through the outward discipline of the Holy Spirit. This is not immediate. It is a day-by-day process. He continues this work until one day we are both willing and changed. This takes time however. When we ask God to give us submission, there are two kinds of answers to this prayer: inward operation, which is instant, and outward environment, which takes time. Thus, we are able to submit either through enlightenment or through discipline.

The day will come when the church will reach full maturity as depicted in Ephesians 4. Then the church will be without spot or wrinkle or any such things, as mentioned in Ephesians 5. Here are two sides to the work: John wept when he saw that no one was worthy to open the scroll (Rev. 5:4). I do not think that we are like John, but readers of the Bible become very worried about Ephesians 4 and 5. It seems as if it is easier to consider stars like figs and hailstones that weigh a talent falling to the earth than it is to think of the church maturing and arriving at the full stature of Christ, no longer having spots or wrinkles or any such things. It worries them to think that the church has to be so holy that it becomes absolutely irreproachable, being able to present itself for open scrutiny and not be found with any flaw or criticism. We see, however, that the Holy Spirit not only works inwardly but also disciplines outwardly to bring us to the point of being irreproachable. How real is the discipline of the Holy Spirit! We struggle to

deal with many things, but many things are dealt with unconsciously. Our Lord has arranged all kinds of things for us; He has planned our future. This is truly the Christian gospel! It is marvelous to realize that Christians have the discipline of the Holy Spirit.—Watchman Nee

Recorded by Tao

January 20, 1950

THE WAY OF MIGRATION

Seven or eight years ago, God released messages about "migration" through His servant. Although some brothers and sisters have already migrated from Northern China to the Northwest, most still do not pay much attention to what migration really is. Two or three years ago, God's servants reminded us again. The eyes of a few more brothers and sisters were opened, but the practice seemed to be far away in the unforeseeable future! Thank God that in the winter of the year before last, He began a migration from eastern Chekiang. Last winter, He also began the migration from Shanghai. Even to this day, there are still migrations going on. All the brothers and sisters who take the way of migration sell their possessions, leave their homeland, and move to farming communities where they do not know anyone. What is the purpose of this? While one intention surely is to engage in rural production, the real goal is to share the benefit of the gospel with others.

We see more and more clearly that we must migrate if we want to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. If we want to be released from the bondage of the world, if we do not want to struggle with the world, we must migrate. Furthermore, if we want to really prove our love and willingness to suffer for the Lord and give up everything to follow Him, we must take the way of migration.

Migration is God's heart's desire. It is God's call and our response. When God created man, He wanted man to fill the entire earth (Gen. 1:28). After the fall, man built cities on earth and even the tower of Babel. Then God called Abraham and told him to leave his country, relatives, and father's house to go to the place which the Lord would show him (12:1). We see two signs in the life of Abraham: an altar and a tent. This means that he lived a life of consecration and the life of a sojourner. His desire was to live absolutely for the Lord. His living did not take root in this world. As descendants of Abraham, there is no doubt that we should follow in his footsteps.

In the New Testament the Lord commands us to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15). He said, "You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and...unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). If this were just for the twelve apostles, the seventy-two disciples, or even the one hundred twenty, how could they complete this commission? Therefore, all of God's children must have a burden and be willing to "go" in response to the call to "proclaim the gospel to all the creation." It is true that our hearts are for "Jerusalem" because it has a spiritual church, life-giving messages, and sweet fellowship. But if we continue to live in Jerusalem and forget God's intention, persecution will come as that recorded in Acts 8, and it will scatter the disciples abroad. It was through such persecution that the gospel went out.

The gospel has been in China for about one hundred years now, but it is only somewhat manifested in the few provinces along the coast. There is still a large area where no one has preached the gospel. There are still so many people who have never heard the gospel. The reason for this is that we are not willing to answer God's call to leave our homeland and families and go to the inland and the frontier lands.

How easy it is for us to fall into Lot's failure! (See Gen. 13:6-13). When we settle down in a place and establish roots, we lose the life of the tent. We forget that we are sojourners on the earth. We neglect the warning that woe will come to all those who are dwelling on the face of the whole earth (Luke 21:35; Rev. 8:13).

We are like those who are spoken of in Deuteronomy 32. The baby eagles do not want to leave their nests; they desire a peaceful life. God, however, has to accomplish His goal. To accomplish His heart's desire, He shakes the "nests" with His hand and forces us to leave the places we love (v. 11). May we have the inward sense to understand God's heart's desire and meet His demands. Even if we do not have a sense and understanding, we should be like the ignorant eagles; we should wake up when God's hand rocks the nests. We should answer His call and take the way of migration.

Only migration will spread the gospel. Only migration will cause us to forsake the world. Migration is the one way to express our consecration and true love for the Lord. Over the past few years, five or six hundred brothers and sisters in the North, in Shanghai, and in Xiao and Shao county in eastern Chekiang have answered God's call to give their all for the gospel. They have migrated to the Northwest and Kiangsi. We can truly testify that God is with those who have

migrated. It is a confirmation that this way is pleasing to God! This is the way to obtain God's blessing!

We call on the Spirit of God to open the eyes of all the churches to truly see that migration is God's way for His churches today. We pray that God would touch more people with His love to take the way of migration.

Chang Yu-zhi

A HYMN

Hymns, #918

1. Christians, make haste, your mission high fulfilling,
To tell to all the world that God is Light,
That He who made all nations is not willing
One soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace;
Tidings of Jesus, redemption and release.
2. Behold how many thousands still are lying,
Bound in the darksome prison-house of sin,
With none to tell them of the Savior's dying
Or of the life He died for them to win.
3. 'Tis yours to save from peril of perdition
The soul for whom the Lord His life laid down;
Beware lest, slothful to fulfill our mission,
You lose one jewel that should deck His crown.
4. Proclaim to every people, tongue, and nation
That God, in whom they move and live, is love;
Tell how He stooped to save His lost creation,
And died on earth that men He might approve.
5. Give of your sons to bear the message glorious;
Give of your wealth to speed them on their way;
Pour out your soul for them in prayer victorious,
And all you spend our Savior will repay.
6. He comes again; O brothers, ere you meet Him,
Make known to every heart His saving grace;
Let none whom He hath ransomed fail to greet Him,
Through your neglect unfit to see His face.

NOT DARING TO BE SO SLOW ANY LONGER

The burden for the arrangement of migration is definitely in my heart. An unworthy child as myself has surprisingly begun caring for adult matters. How can I avoid being in fear and trembling! I can only ask God to provide special care for His leading.

I have decided to take care of the arrangements in Kueixi. I ask the brothers and sisters who will be coming to be assured.

From Shanghai I took a detour through Shadi before returning to Yiyang. Because of pressure from many matters, I am very weak physically, and my body temperature has dropped. Although I feel that there will be difficulties in the future, I am not in the least disappointed. I do not lose hope. God will teach me and deal with me through these difficulties.

God sent us out in the migration first for the purpose of serving brothers and sisters who will migrate later. This is really grace to us. It is a responsibility we should bear. This vision has been seen by most of the brothers and sisters in our group.

Thank God! In the region of Shadi and Tangnei this fire (of migration) is burning brightly. The brothers and sisters are prepared to submit. They dare not be as slow as they were before.

Your brother,

Feng He-ren

January 14, 1950

NEW GRACE

I feel that God is among us. He is leading us step by step. I only want to learn how to serve like Martha and how to fellowship with the Lord like Mary. The day will come when I will spontaneously live out the testimony of resurrection like Lazarus.

I recently spoke according to the burden of my heart and said some words concerning the consecration of material possessions. Thank the Lord! The brothers and sisters offered up even their prized clothing.

Yesterday, the responsible brothers and sisters in our group decided that we will eliminate all inequality in our houses. In the matters of food, clothing, and work all will be arranged according to the Body principle. Thank the Lord! He has given us new grace and has caused us to take a way that amazes the world!

Your brother,
Feng He-ren
February 7, 1950

ARRANGEMENT FOR THE HOUSEHOLD (YIYANG)

Practicing Not Having Anything for Oneself

The locality of Yiyang has made the following arrangements:

- 1) The food in the Household will be the same for everyone. (Those who are physically weak will have special allotments.)
- 2) The clothing in the Household will be entirely in the principle of "adorn...in proper clothing." We all have been constrained by the Lord's love to practice the principle of handing oneself over and to have everything in common. We receive items and return them to the saints according to each one's need. We keep the extra to make up the lack of those who have nothing. If there is anything left after the distribution, we give it to the storage service group and then distribute to the saints as time goes on. If some are cold or are ill, we contribute extra clothes to meet their special needs.
- 3) In the matter of work, we make arrangements according to age, strength, ability, and the gifts which God has given them. From the oldest to the youngest, all have their area of assignment. We hope that none would be idle.
- 4) Our time schedule is as follows: We have morning watch and prayer from 5:00 to 6:30 in the morning. We eat breakfast at 7:00. We work from 8:00 to 12:00. We eat lunch after work. We work again from 1:00 to 5:00. We eat dinner at 5:30. We meet and read the Bible from 6:30 to 8:30. We turn the lights off at 9:00.
- 5) We fellowship with the other communities that have migrated out in the following ways: a) We have financial fellowship. b) We help them farm for a short period of time.

Presently, we are a little short in our food budget. This is not a problem. We think it is best to be a little short. Our lack causes God to give us more. It is a way for God to manifest His doings.

The fields in Kueixi are twice as rich as those in Yiyang. Four or five days ago, we went to Yingtan two times to look things over. It has a very good water supply. It has wood, bamboo, and lime, and straw is plentiful. It would be very convenient to build houses there. The soil is twice as rich as that of the fields in Kueixi and three times as good as the soil in Yiyang.

We hope to set things up in one locality after another according to the little light God has given us and to inform you as we go. I often make mistakes. I really need the elder brothers to support me in prayer and give me much direction.

Your brother,

Feng He-ren

February 13, 1950

TO THE BROTHERS IN YIYANG AND KUEIXI

We want to thank God for showing us the way of migration and for moving a group of brothers and sisters this way. Some brothers and sisters migrated from here to Yiyang and Kueixi on the twenty-third of this month. Before we parted, I felt a heavy burden to speak a word to the migrating brothers and sisters. The main idea is summarized here:

First, "I do all things for the sake of the gospel." The goal of migration is the gospel. The gospel speaks of love, sacrifice, denial of self, and giving. Therefore, after migrating to Kiangsi, all elements of our living, whether clothing, food, or travel, must be in accordance with the main goal of being "for the gospel." Even our loving of one another must be for the same goal.

Second, "unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." If the gospel is to be preached, a great price must be paid. We must be like grains of wheat planted into Kiangsi. We must die in Kiangsi; only then will we be able to bear much fruit.

We are already taking this way. Because of the Lord's love, we are willing to give up a more comfortable life and live for the gospel in a remote area. This is pleasing to God. For the future of the migrations and for the way of the gospel, I feel that I must present a word to you:

First, please do not give the brothers and sisters who migrated from Shanghai special treatment. It is only right that they have the same food, clothing, and lifestyle as the rest of the brothers and sisters. On the one hand, it is good that you showed your love toward the brothers and sisters from Shanghai, but in reality "differing love" is a hateful thing. Furthermore, its influence on further migrations is too great. For the sake of giving the Lord a way, I hope you will not pay attention to personal feelings but will speak the truth in love. I hope you will avoid divisions among you. It does not matter how much education or talent you have. All are brothers and sisters, and all should do the same work and receive

the same treatment and care. Only give the elderly and sick extra food and rest according to their needs.

Second, all should labor together, working with their own hands. Do not have some overburdened while others are idle, doing nothing but sitting and enjoying the fruit of others. Work and rest, labor, and enjoyment should all be equal.

May you live out the testimony of the Body so that the gospel may flow out through you. May God bless you!

Chang Yu-zhi

January 25, 1950

A DESIRE TO MIGRATE

It is truly God's will to spread the gospel through migrations. Abraham lived a life of migration. He established a testimony in his migrations. I, too, have a desire to migrate. I have handed over the responsibility for the church in Anchang to others, and I feel peaceful and assured. If God allows, my family hopes to migrate to Kiangsi this year. Do the brothers want me to serve in Yiyang or in Kueixi? Please give me direction.

Your brother in the Lord,

Fei Chang-bao

January 15, 1950

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

TO PREACH THE GOSPEL (YIYANG)

Thank the Lord! He has led us to peacefully and joyfully perform the first group wedding of six couples. Everything was filled with God's presence! Friends from this region also attended. We did not accept any gifts. We preached the gospel in the afternoon, and ten people confessed the Lord and accepted Him. May the Lord save them.

Shangrao wants us to go there. After we finish the arrangements for a few farms, we will see how the Lord leads us.

He-ren

March 3, 1950

BEING RAISED UP IN THE LORD'S MERCY

(MANCHURIA)

In 1933 God's servant came to Ch'ang-ch'un in Manchuria, and the meetings started. Later, some were raised up in Shenyang and Jilin. In the past ten years the number of assemblies has increased to more than twenty localities.

In 1942 God's servant, our brother Philip Luan, came to Manchuria to make some arrangements. Because of the change in the world situation and the cruel attack of the Japanese, we passed through many trials and tribulations, but we all came through safely.

We were not able to fellowship with the elder brothers and sisters in the inland for some time because communication was blocked. Because of our immaturity and uncertainty in our direction, many brothers and sisters received teachings that appeared to be truth but were not. This occurred because we were starving and had no choice of food. These ones departed from the proper way. With the exception of Jilin and Ch'ang-ch'un, almost every locality was carried away by this deception. These brothers and sisters suffered much for their moment of blindness!

Last summer, the church in Peking sent a brother to visit the churches in Manchuria. He passed through the localities of Ch'ang-ch'un, Shenyang, Jilin, and Harbin, and he met with the saints for forty days. The assemblies in all the localities were much blessed by the Lord.

The brothers and sisters in Harbin suffered much for four or five years because they left the proper way. They turned this time and all were released. They are now very fresh. The Lord's presence is with them in a special way. The Lord is also gradually adding saved ones to the church. The meeting place was too small, and a larger place has been rented which can hold three to four hundred people. The population of Harbin is almost one million. It is an important point in the water and land transportation network in the area north of the Songhua River. It is at present full of needs.

There is also Mudanjiang, a locality along the northeastern border of the country. It is a center of transportation: east to Vladivostok; west to Manzhouli; north to Jiamusi, the mines in the Heligang mountains, the forest regions, and the Heihe border; southeast through Tunhua to Tumen and on to North Korea; southwest to Harbin, Ch'ang-ch'un, and Shenyang. Its produce is abundant, and life is easy. It has a population of almost three hundred thousand. It used to be a Baptist region, and there are many people who love the Lord. Although they are in tribulation, their testimony is strong. They have been reading books from the bookroom for many years. Those who have a heart for the Lord are looking for the way to go on. Once a brother from Ch'ang-ch'un visited them, and everyone was helped through the fellowship in the Lord.

In January of this year, Peking sent a brother to visit all the local churches in Manchuria. He went to Shenyang, Harbin, Mudanjiang, and Ch'ang-ch'un. There were meetings for two months. By the Lord's grace and mercy, every locality received much blessing. There are now thirty localities. Some already have assemblies; others do not have as many people, but they do have prayer in one accord. Only Ch'ang-ch'un, Shenyang, Jilin, and Harbin have the Lord's table. All the churches in Manchuria are now one. The Lord has led us to the way of righteousness for His name's sake. We can only give thanks and praise to Him.

Dalien was not able to send people to visit these places because of barriers to transportation. The brothers sent letters of invitation, and Brother Yuan Zhu-wu and Brother Chin Jia-ye came to attend the meetings. They fully received the Lord's truth and expressed the desire to stand with all the churches on the ground of oneness to serve the Lord. They also consecrated themselves and are willing to follow the footsteps of the flock. After they returned to Dalien, the brothers and sisters willingly received the Lord's truth and obeyed all the Lord's arrangements. They hope some brothers will go and visit them.

The brothers and sisters in Manchuria spiritually have lost much over the past few years. Since the Lord has brought them back to the way of oneness, He will indeed multiply His blessings to them. We ask the brothers and sisters in every locality to pray for them!

On the following page is a map of the churches in Manchuria. Please forgive us if it is not detailed enough!

Fang Ai-guang

March 20, 1950

THE LORD'S LOVE

BEING LIKE RED-HOT BURNING COALS

We received your letter on January 28. The word in that letter has truly become light to our pathway and strength for our living. Thank the Lord! He dispenses food to the needy at the right time.

When I consecrated myself during the conference in 1948, my desire was to give my very blood to the Lord. There was no such opening in my environment. I desired to shed my blood but did not have anywhere to shed it. I wanted to die but had no place to be buried. Thank the Lord! He is the God who hears prayer. He received my small consecration and brought me to the place He ordained.

"O Lord! Keep my consecration, that I would not be shamed by these words. Lord, You know our weakness and that it is possible for anyone to deny You three times. Lord, I truly dare not trust in my consecration. I put this consecration into Your hands. May You accomplish it. Make me burning but not foolish; make me willing to die but not live lightly. May You gain something in me whether through life or death. Amen."

O brother! My heart feels as if it has been stabbed by a knife! The Lord's love is like red-hot burning coals within me! We will fellowship more later! Tears!

Lee Tien-giao

January 29, 1950

1. Map of the Churches in Manchuria

FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS (NANCHANG)

Our original idea in coming to Nanchang was to serve with Brother Hsu during the Nanchang conference so that the brothers from Nanchang would not be distracted by anything else. After we arrived, we found that Brother Hsu unexpectedly was unable to come. At first we thought we should return immediately, but inwardly we felt that this would cheat the brothers and sisters in Nanchang. After praying on the spur of the moment, we decided to continue in our responsibility of our service.

We had three fellowship meetings beginning the first day of the Chinese New Year. Thank the Lord! He blessed His children. Many brothers and sisters gained some knowledge concerning the church and consecrated themselves to the Lord. They are also willing to coordinate with the church and to learn to serve the Lord together.

There are almost thirty brothers and sisters here in college. Their spirits are very clean. I hope some brothers and sisters who are strong in the truth would migrate to Nanchang soon to give them some good help.

Thank the Lord! He has heard our prayer and given us some farmland near the Tungjia Railway Station. It is twelve li from Yingtan and eighteen li from Kueixi. It can be reached by a fifteen-minute train ride.

Tien-giao

February 24, 1950

DOING OUR BEST TO SOW (K'UN-MING)

I have been in K'un-ming for almost half a year learning to serve God with Brother Dao-sheng under the leading of Brother Ruo-tien. Brother Ruo-tien is

mostly responsible for edification. Brother Dao-sheng and I are responsible for preaching the gospel on the Lord's Day afternoon. We are very busy in the gospel work in K'un-ming. The brothers and sisters are very burning for the gospel. In addition to the large weekly gospel meeting on the Lord's Day, there are two or three home gospel meetings or outdoor gospel meetings. We are doing our best to sow the seeds of the gospel, leaving it to the Lord to do the work of bringing in the harvest.

We went to Mongtze County recently and stayed there for two months. We preached the gospel for twenty days. Some were saved, and they have begun meeting and having the table.

We feel really ashamed that we have not met the people's needs enough! May God have mercy on us. We hope you could instruct us more.

Your brother,

Shao-zu

February 19, 1950

FEELING ALONE (PINGYUAN, HONAN PROVINCE)

When I returned from Shanghai, I went home quickly because my father was ill. After several days my father recovered. Then it snowed, and I was trapped in the house. At the time of the Chinese New Year, I touched something of the world which bothered my spirit. Therefore, I left home on the second day of the Chinese New Year and went more than two hundred li to Handao to visit the brothers. At Chingfeng I saw that the brothers were blessed through tribulations, and I rejoiced very much. I personally felt, however, that I was set aside by the Lord.

While I was at the North China Seminary in Teng Shian in 1940, I read The Normal Christian Church Life. Since then I returned to this region to preach the gospel.

In the past two years, I have felt a deep need—I am lonesome and without a partner. I have read the messages in The Ministers concerning the coordination between the co-workers. This is my need. If the work is regional, there must be a local church like Antioch as the center of the work. I feel that it is very difficult for me to be alone here. The churches in this region all need edification for new beginners. The distance between churches is over one hundred li. How can I do the work? How should I choose the way ahead of me? I am praying to see how the Lord would lead. I hope the leading brothers could give me some direction. Oh, I am really not worthy to preach the word!

Your little brother,

Wu Tong-tang

March 23, 1950

(Please refer to the map of the churches in Honan on page 142.—Editors)

A CHRISTIAN'S OCCUPATION

After God created man, He gave Adam and Eve the occupation of caring for the garden of Eden. After man fell, God's ordination was that man would eat bread in the sweat of his face. Later Abel was a herdsman, and Cain was a farmer. As the human race multiplied, different skilled tradesmen developed. Later, men like Abraham, Jacob, and the Israelites were either farmers or herdsmen. This shows us that God's desire is for man to be in a farming or ranching profession. We should produce things by our hand.

In the New Testament the Lord often gave parables about sowers and shepherds. Most of the twelve apostles were fishermen. Paul was a maker of tents, and Luke was a doctor. These all show us the following basic principle: Production through labor increases the quantity or value of the commodity. It takes things from nature and adds labor and strength to give them value. Farming and ranching increase the quantity of a commodity. Tent making increases the value of a commodity. Laboring and practicing medicine require effort and time for wages. A proper occupation for a Christian must be one which requires labor and is productive.

Everyone knows that commerce comes from Satan—it begins in Tyre and culminates in Babylon (Ezek. 28; Rev. 18). Its end is judgment and condemnation. Therefore, Christians should not be engaged in pure commerce. Buying and selling which does not increase the quantity or value of the commodity but only makes a profit through the trade is pure commerce. Pure commerce has only one thought in mind—making money off of people. Thus, it is easy to become evil in heart and in practice. It is not easy to be delivered from money, either. If we want to serve God, we cannot engage in such professions.

We must see that a producer takes something from nature, not from man. A laborer does not take anything from nature, nor does he take anything from man. A person engaged in commerce, however, does not take anything from nature, but takes from man. Our principle is that we must expend energy to earn money. We must increase in physical riches, not in money. Therefore, we hope that the

brothers and sisters would do their best to avoid engaging in pure commerce and to find occupations that require labor in production.—Selected

1. A Map of the Churches in Hopeh and Honan

THE MINISTERS

NATURE: To show the way to serve, to help the serving ones and the churches in the different localities go on, and to solve problems related to the ministry.

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THE OPEN DOOR

(1950-1951)

ISSUE NO. 20

June 30, 1950

THE GROUND OF THE CHURCH:

A TRANSCRIPT OF A TALK

Question: The brothers and sisters who have been meeting with us for more than ten years all seem to know our ground and how it is different from that of others. The brothers and sisters saved during the past seven or eight years (especially those saved during the most recent six or seven years), however, do not know what our ground is. Therefore, I would like to ask what the actual ground of the church is.

The Importance of This Question

Answer: I think this matter is very important, because the Lord has shown us explicitly in the Bible that the church has a definite ground. I presume we all recognize that the blessing of God, the Holy Spirit of God, the light of God, and even the very life of the Lord Jesus Himself are all in the church. Although we ordinarily stress the Lord's life in individuals, the fact is that His life is in the church. Whether or not a so-called "church" is really the church is very important, because God has committed so many spiritual things to the church. If God had given many spiritual things to us as individuals, the problem would not be so great. But God has shown us in the Bible that He has placed all spiritual things in the church. Therefore, it is a very serious matter whether or not the group of which we are is a church. If we fellowship with many brothers and sisters who are not the church, it will be a great loss.

Let us give an illustration. Some of the sisters who work in hospital laboratories use glass slides for bacterial examinations. For such a purpose, a glass slide is sufficient. However, if a brother or a sister comes to visit, the same kind of glass slide that you use every day cannot be used to serve him a beverage. The glass slide has an important use in the laboratory, but it is useless for serving a brother or a sister a cup of water. The brother is not a grasshopper or a sparrow; he cannot be satisfied with water on a slide. He must be served with a glass. Many problems can never be solved with just a slide. At least you need a glass made up of many slides before you can solve the problem of thirst.

A flat surface can hold much less than a three-dimensional object. We are not seeking to nullify the spiritual attainment of a person before God. An individual may enjoy many spiritual things and sometimes attain great spiritual heights, but God has committed more spiritual things to the church. Therefore, when a person seeks them as an individual, he cannot obtain them. This does not mean that an individual has no blessing, but it does mean that he cannot obtain it by individual seeking. God's riches today are in the church. The church is three-dimensional, just like a drinking glass. As an individual, one must become a part of this "glass" before he can touch the living water. Only the church can contain many spiritual things.

We must clearly see before God that many spiritual things are in the church, not with individuals. The Lord's word, "Upon this rock I will build My church," is very clear and wonderful. The result is that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). This promise is for the church, not for individuals. Many

times it is very difficult for individuals to resist the enemy, but as soon as the church appears, Satan is defeated. In these years we do see individuals experiencing blessings, but their blessings are limited. It is only in the church that the blessings are limitless and rich. Therefore, as soon as a person departs from the way of the church, his blessing is limited and God's presence with him is limited. (I do not say "nonexistent," but I do say "limited.") Furthermore, he is not able to touch many things before God. Please excuse me for speaking very frankly. Especially during the past ten years, I have been watching to see if people know what the church is. Strangely enough, many brothers who have known the Lord for twenty or thirty years do not know God's church. What they have already obtained has gradually declined, and what they think they have cannot be preserved intact. At the same time, there are other brothers and sisters who know God's church. The riches of the Head have become their riches, and they are able to go forward continuously.

Therefore, I wish that all the young brothers and sisters would note that a Christian must be concerned with not only his own gain but also whether or not the brothers and sisters with whom he fellowships are the church. Remember that each person is but an individual. Two may be the church, or they may only be two individuals and not the church. Do not presume that five hundred people gathered together are the church, or a thousand people gathered together are the church. This may not be true. Thank God, one thousand people can become the church, but one thousand people may just be one thousand individuals; thus they are only individuals and still not the church. There is a great difference here. God's children today realize that one person cannot be the church, but they may not acknowledge that one thousand people can be one thousand individuals only and thus still not be the church. Even ten thousand people can remain as ten thousand individuals and not be the church. The church before God has other requirements. Therefore, we as children of God must pay special attention to the ground of the church.

Two Basic Requirements

Today, let me bring out two matters; both must exist before there can be the church. The New Testament clearly shows us two basic requirements: first, the authority of the Holy Spirit; and second, the boundary of locality.

The Authority of the Holy Spirit

We must realize that where there is not the Holy Spirit, there is not the church. The church is absolutely not Witness Lee, Chang Yu-zhi, or Yu Cheng-hwa; the church must only be the Holy Spirit. In other words, the church from beginning to end can only have one authority, one power, and one life, which is the Holy Spirit. There is only one life of the Holy Spirit, only one power of the Holy Spirit, and only one authority of the Holy Spirit. For example, there are many elderly brothers here today. Brother Du may say, "Since I have been in the church for twenty years, I may make a proposal or initiate something." This is something extra coming out as a frustration. When Brother Du is expressed, the Holy Spirit is not here and the church is not here as well. Please remember that wherever the Holy Spirit is not, the church is not. The church is the place through which the Spirit of the Lord may express His desires without any hindrance. As the Lord used the body given to Him by Mary when He was on this earth, so He in the Holy Spirit uses the church today. The church in its highest state is the Body of Christ. In other words, only that which is able to express the mind of the Holy Spirit can be called the church.

Only the Holy Spirit Has Authority

I will go on a little further by speaking first to the elderly brothers. More or less we know what authority is, and we tell the younger brothers to submit to authority. The basic question today is this: When we are obeying authority, whose authority do we obey? Let me say that just as the younger brothers become a disturbance when they speak according to themselves, the elderly ones also become a disturbance when they speak according to themselves. The young ones who speak according to themselves are a disturbance, and the elderly ones who speak according to themselves are also a disturbance. Only the authority of the Holy Spirit is authority. Why then do the younger brothers need to obey the elderly ones? It is because the elderly ones have learned more before God and know more of God's authority; consequently, the Holy Spirit can flow out more easily through them. They are like a water pipe through which water has flowed for years without any blockage. The younger ones should obey the elderly ones, not because the elderly ones are the authority, but because it is easier for the Holy Spirit to speak through the elderly ones. Because they have worked for the Lord for many years, it is easier for the Holy Spirit to flow out of them. We learn to submit to the elder brothers because there is the authority of the Holy Spirit in them. Once I do not obey, I easily lose the authority of the Holy Spirit in me. We are not building up the authority of the elderly brothers, but the authority of the

Holy Spirit which easily flows out from the elderly brothers. In other words, the only authority in the church is that of the Holy Spirit. There is no authority that comes out from individuals. The elders do not have authority, the elderly brothers do not have authority, and the spiritual ones also do not have authority. Only the Holy Spirit has authority. This is called the Body of Christ.

An Outlet for the Authority of the Holy Spirit

Recently, I saw what happened to a brother who had carried a very heavy object over a long distance several years ago. His hand felt somewhat sore then, but now it has become so disabled that it can hardly move. The brother said, "My whole body belongs to me except this hand. This member seems to belong to someone else, and it struggles with me." I have never heard anyone say this in such a way before. I am often sick. Through my sickness I found out that whenever the existence of a certain member is felt, that member must certainly have some kind of sickness. When the human body is in perfect condition, there is no consciousness that the body exists. Whenever we feel the lungs breathing, the lungs must be sick. Whenever we feel the heart beating, the heart must be sick. From my birth to my teens, I was never conscious of my teeth, but the day I became conscious of my teeth, I was unable to sleep the whole night. The body is very natural and spontaneous. Its harmony does not result in consciousness of any of its parts; rather, because of its harmony, it does not seem to feel its existence. Today we may not feel like we have fingers. We would regard it as strange to be asked, "Do you feel that you have fingers?" But if one of our fingers is broken, we will feel uncomfortable the whole day. Whenever we feel something, then something is wrong. Whenever the body cannot use one of its members, the body is sick. In order for the Holy Spirit to have complete authority in the church, the whole Body must move freely without any hindrance. As soon as there is hindrance in a certain part, it means the Body is sick. When everyone is under the authority of the Holy Spirit, He can use everyone. Then there is no hindrance in the Body, and everything moves smoothly. When authority operates smoothly, the Body is healthy. When everyone can be used by the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit has authority and everything is very natural and spontaneous. The complete authority of the Holy Spirit is the ground of the church. Where this authority exists, there is the Body of Christ.

A group today may have some brothers and sisters who are under the authority of the Holy Spirit and others who are not under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

Immediately, we can see that there is no ground of the church there. The ground of the church is the Holy Spirit. Whenever the Holy Spirit is offended, the ground of the church is lost. The unanimous decision of all the brothers and sisters does not make up the Body of Christ. It is not a matter of sixteen hundred people raising their hands to pass a resolution, and then there is the church. It is not a matter of these sixteen hundred people, but a matter of whether or not the authority of the Holy Spirit has been executed. If the authority of the Holy Spirit is absent, there is no church ground. Only when everyone submits to the authority of the Holy Spirit does the church have its ground.

The body is that which we can freely use and move around in. It has no conflicts or difficulties at all. Whatever we want to do, it does. That which struggles with us is not the body. Whether or not a local church can be manifested depends upon whether or not it can submit to the Holy Spirit. When this kind of submission is manifested, the church is manifested. Therefore, if a brother likes to speak and make decisions by himself, the authority of the Holy Spirit is damaged, the Body of Christ is damaged, and the church is damaged. Consequently, there is no church in that place. A place with a signboard does not constitute a church. Instead, it is only as the brothers and sisters lay down their own thoughts and subject themselves to the authority of the Holy Spirit, allowing the authority of the Holy Spirit to flow through them without any hindrance, that there is the church.

As those who serve God and bear responsibility in the work, we need to remember this one thing: After twenty, thirty, fifty, or even sixty years, when all our hair has become white, we will still be only a transmitter of authority, a channel or mouthpiece of authority. We still will not be the authority. Whenever we become the authority, everything is finished. The brothers and sisters who are workers must thoroughly know what the authority of the Holy Spirit is. Do not think that today we can give some proposals. Our proposals will not do. The Lord has never granted us the authority to make our own proposals. We can only be a channel of authority, not authority itself. If we live to be a hundred years old and have followed the Lord for those hundred years, we should not think that we can give some proposals. Only as our spirit becomes more trained, as we learn something, as the sense of our spirit becomes keener, as we receive more light, and as we touch God's basic principles, thus becoming more familiar with the Word of God, is it easier for the authority of the Holy Spirit to come out through us.

We use authority to serve the brothers and sisters, not to govern them. Authority is just one part of our service. I hope all the leading ones of the home meetings would take note of this. Authority is related to your ministry; it is in fact one of your many ministries. It is not for governing others but for supplying others. In a certain matter other brothers may not see, but we see; they may not understand, but we can understand. Since we understand God's heart's desire, we can tell them of God's desire, saying, "Brothers, you should not do this in such a way; I know this will not do. If you do it, you will violate God's authority. You must give up this matter." This is not exercising authority to govern the brothers, but exercising it with a view to supply and serve them. Before the Lord, we are learning to be an outlet for the Holy Spirit's authority to supply the brothers. We are not governing them. We are learning to let God's authority come out as a supply; we are not here to establish our own authority.

Regardless of what kind of position a brother may have, whether he is an overseer, an apostle, or a deacon, he loses and ruins the ground of the church in its entirety whenever he establishes or manifests his own authority. The ground of the church is entirely established upon the authority of the Holy Spirit. Whenever His authority is offended, the ground of the church is gone, and problems arise.

When the whole church is under the authority of the Holy Spirit, it is like the Lord's own body given to Him by Mary when He was on this earth. He can speak, listen, and walk as He wishes. The body which Mary prepared for the Lord could not have been more appropriate. His body cooperated with Him to such an extent that it was as if such a body did not exist at all and that the Lord Himself was acting alone. It was so harmonious, so united, so free of problems and conflicts. His hands were never unavailable when they were needed, His eyes never malfunctioned when they were called upon to see, His tongue was never tied when it needed to speak, and His mind was never absent when it needed to think. The church likewise can reach such a level that it is as if it does not exist at all and that Christ is acting alone. The Lord can exercise Himself spontaneously and pass through such an outlet freely. It can be in such harmony, such oneness, and such spontaneity that it is as if the Lord is not passing through it at all. The authority of the Holy Spirit passes through the church so freely and harmoniously that it is as if He has not passed through the church at all. When the authority of the Holy Spirit is able to operate so completely, there is the church. Whenever there is resistance or hindrance, that is not the church. Whenever the Holy Spirit

cannot move, whenever individuals stand out, there is some problem and the church is damaged. In such a case, it can no longer be considered the church.

Now I want to go back to today's question. There are many so-called denominational churches. The Lord has not given us the freedom to criticize them. However, we do confess that there are many elderly brothers among us who have come out of the denominations. They know the histories. Many other brothers came out of the world and sin. They do not know how much man's opinions, decisions, methods, organizations, names, and traditions are in the groups that use the name of the Lord. I do not wish to say more about this. From the beginning when we were called out by the Lord, we insisted on a fundamental ground—that is, we must obey and establish the authority of the Holy Spirit in the church and destroy our own authority. I ask the Lord to forgive me for saying this, because the authority of the Holy Spirit does not need to be established by man. Excuse me for using the following illustration for the sake of the younger brothers. If I release a tiger in the streets, is it necessary to send guards to protect it? No, the tiger does not need any guards; it can protect itself. Likewise, the Holy Spirit does not need our support. The authority of the Holy Spirit is in the church. It does not need our zeal to establish it. The only thing needed in God's children is their willingness to consecrate and yield themselves to Him so that the authority of the Holy Spirit can come out of them unceasingly. It is now a matter of whether or not we are willing to consecrate ourselves. Whenever God's children disobey, the authority of the Holy Spirit cannot come out. The basic matter today is whether or not we have consecrated ourselves adequately.

I hope that we will consecrate ourselves afresh to the Lord for the authority of the Holy Spirit. We must pray, "Lord, You are the Head in the church. Grant me the grace that I may not be one who hinders or resists. May I have nothing of my own." We must realize that whenever we bring anything of our own into the church, regardless of how good it is, something extra has been added to the church, and there is a hindrance. My body can only consist of its own members. I cannot allow the things of others to be added to my body. Even the best things of others cannot be put into my body. What is of my body must be my own. The things of others may be precious, but once they are added to my body they may be poisonous. We must learn before God not to bring our own things into the church. Some of them may be very good, but if they are not of the Holy Spirit, they cannot be brought into the church. Once they are in the church, the church

loses its ground. In the church there is only one Holy Spirit, one authority, one power, one fellowship, one name. Anything that is brought into the church which is not of the Holy Spirit will ruin the church ground, and then there is no more church.

Anything Not Initiated by the Holy Spirit

Is Not the Church

In Shanghai many people can establish an evangelistic mission, seminary, Bible institute, or Bible study class. Such a mistake is minor. But no one can establish a church! If we are not able to obey the Holy Spirit, and man's authority and man's things come in, there is no church. If it is not started by the Holy Spirit, it is not the church. I do not know whether we have seen the seriousness of this. It is possible for a few of us to establish a factory; this is comparatively easy to do. Allow me to say that we are men who have the leading of the Holy Spirit. Many people in the world who do not have the leading of the Holy Spirit can open a factory. However, the church cannot be started like this. Regardless of whether we are a believer or an unbeliever, whether we have the life of God or not, we cannot establish a church. If it is not started by the Holy Spirit, it is not a church. This is quite a serious matter. No one can start a church, because in the first place, no one has the authority of the Holy Spirit. If there is no authority of the Holy Spirit, there is no church. Regardless of the situation, we cannot establish a church if the Holy Spirit does not start it. First, we must ask, "What about the start?" If the Holy Spirit is not the initiator, we cannot start anything. We must submit ourselves to the mighty power of the Holy Spirit and put ourselves under the authority which operates according to God. We must be wholly restrained and not seek our own freedom. We must let the authority of the Holy Spirit pass through all of us freely.

The Boundary of Locality

In addition to the above, a church has to have a second ground. Without the second element, there also is no ground of the church. We will probably ask: Is it not enough to express and live under the authority of the Holy Spirit? Is this not enough to establish the church? No, it is not. The Bible clearly shows us two things which must exist in order to establish the church: first, the authority of the Holy Spirit, and second, the boundary of locality. If we do not see this, we do not understand the church ground. Does this seem strange? Does this seem like falling ten thousand feet from heaven to earth? Yes, but remember that the

church is also on earth. It is part heavenly and part earthly. The heavenly part concerns the authority of the Holy Spirit; the earthly part concerns the boundary of locality. This is a very wonderful matter in the Bible. The Bible clearly shows us this one thing: The church absolutely belongs to a locality, such as the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), which is a place; the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2), which is a place; the church in Antioch (Acts 13:1), which is a city; and the church in Ephesus (Rev. 2:1), which is a seaport. In the Bible the ground of the church is the locality where the church is. The churches all take locality as the boundary. Here is a special point; please pay attention to it. If the brothers and sisters in Shanghai desire to stand on the church ground, they can only stand on the ground of the Holy Spirit and the ground of Shanghai. They must stand on the ground of the Holy Spirit and also on the ground of Shanghai because Shanghai is the locality in which they live. Once we disregard locality, we immediately lose the ground of the church. Let me give a few illustrations.

The Church and the Churches

Acts 9:31 speaks of the churches in Judea. The church spoken of here is plural in Greek, English, and Chinese. It is the churches in Judea. It is plural in number because at that time Judea was a province of Rome. Since a province included many localities, there were many churches. Thus, the Bible does not speak of the church in Judea, but the churches in Judea. In the Scriptures there is only a local church, not a provincial church. The same is true of Galatia, which was a province consisting of many localities; therefore, Galatians 1:2 says, "The churches of Galatia." Ephesus is a seaport, a locality; therefore, the church in Ephesus is referred to in the singular. This point is very clear in the Bible. Philadelphia was a city, and only one church existed there. Asia, which is Asia Minor today, was a large province; therefore, the Bible says, "The seven churches which are in Asia," not the church which is in Asia (Rev. 1:4).

Only One Church in One Locality

There is one thing we must all notice: The world does not have a church; therefore, the Roman Catholic Church is wrong. A country does not have a church; therefore, the Anglican Church (i.e., the Church of England or the Episcopal Church) is wrong. A province does not have a church, nor does a race. In the Bible only the smallest administrative unit is related to the church—only a locality or a city has a church. The church in one locality cannot combine with the church in another locality to become one church. Each city can only be matched

with one church, just as a husband can only be matched with one wife. Therefore, in Antioch, there is the church in Antioch, not the churches in Antioch. It would be wrong to say the churches in Antioch. According to God's arrangement, a locality can only be matched with one church, not many churches. In the Bible we can never find the churches in Corinth or the churches in Antioch. But the Bible does say the church in Antioch, the church in Philippi, and the church in Philadelphia. All of these churches are referred to in the singular. There were not multiple churches in Antioch, Philippi, or Philadelphia. God's arrangement for the church on the spiritual side is the authority of the Holy Spirit, and in its outward appearance, it is the limitation of locality. When the church in Corinth was about to divide itself into four parts, Paul immediately rebuked them for being divisive and fleshy (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-4). When the Corinthians were about to divide into a few smaller churches, one of Paul, another of Cephas, another of Apollos, and another of Christ, the Holy Spirit said that was fleshy. Each city, each locality, can only be matched with one church. Whenever more than one appears, it is a division, a sect, which God rejects. From God's point of view, the church in Corinth became fleshy because there can only be one church in one locality; a second church can never be established. If one church is already established, the second is a division and is fleshy. There can never be more than one church in one locality. Someone may say that he desires to supply others with spiritual food, but supplying spiritual food is not sufficient ground to establish a church. Someone may say that he wants to help others to understand the Bible, but helping others understand the Bible is also not sufficient ground to establish a church. Neither is teaching others to know the Holy Spirit adequate grounds for establishing a church. Someone may say that we need a revival and that a revival church should be established. Recently in a certain place, someone established a Revival Church for the sole purpose of revival, but revival is not sufficient grounds to establish a church. Men cannot establish a church, because men do not have the ground to establish a church. Paul did not have the ground to establish a church; neither did Cephas or Apollos. Ephesus had the ground to establish a church, but Paul was not equal to Ephesus. Corinth had the ground to establish a church, but Paul was not equal to Corinth. Neither was Cephas or Apollos; they were all not equal to Corinth. They did not have the ground, and they were not qualified to establish a church, because a church must be matched with a locality. Anything that comes short of

a locality cannot establish a church. If there is no locality, there is no church. It is more than evident that God takes the boundary of locality as the ground.

There Can Only Be One Church in Shanghai

In Shanghai the church does not stand on denominationalism, sectarianism, or any other ground, but on the ground of Shanghai. This is the church in Shanghai. Suppose I have a quarrel with Brother Chang. I let him meet on Nanyang Road, while I find a place on North Szechuan Road. One goes south and the other goes north in the opposite direction. At North Szechuan Road I can preach the gospel, and a group of people can be saved. While the meeting hall on Nanyang Road can seat 2,400 people, I can build a bigger hall to seat 2,600. Even though I preach the gospel and start a meeting, bringing many to salvation, giving messages, and edifying the saints, I can never become the church because the qualification to take Shanghai as the ground of the church has already been taken. I am not qualified to set up another church because there can only be one church in Shanghai.

A Church Can Only Be Established in a Locality

Where No Church Exists

Today in Bijie in Kweichow province, no one has taken the standing of establishing a church on the ground of locality. If anyone desires to establish a church, it is all right for him to go to Bijie because in one locality there can only be one local church. If an additional church appears there, God will say that is a division. It is just like a woman matching a man. If a man does not have a wife yet, she can marry him and be his wife. If he already has a wife, how can she become his mate? She can only be the mate of a man who has no wife. The whole New Testament tells us this one thing: The church is local. We must see that the church is local. The Epistles speak of the church in Corinth and the church in Ephesus. Revelation speaks of the seven churches in Asia. In each locality there is only one church. The church cannot become independent of locality.

Please remember that a church can only be established in a locality where there is no church. If there is a church in a certain locality, we can only join it; we cannot set up another one. Once we set up another one, that is a division, a sect, which is condemned by God. I want to ask, "What is the difference between a woman who is a man's wife and a concubine?" Everything is the same, except

the position. Only the ground is different; everything else is the same. Though outwardly they may appear alike, something is lacking in one—the ground.

What Is Division?

What is division? Division is to be without the ground, and to be without the ground is to be divisive, and is something condemned by God. Please forgive me for using Bijie as an example again. What is the difference between going to Bijie to preach the gospel, to save people, and to edify saints and going to North Szechuan Road in Shanghai to do the same thing? Outwardly, there is no difference. It is not that people cannot be saved and receive eternal life when the gospel is preached at North Szechuan Road; neither is it that the people at North Szechuan Road will lose their experience of salvation. The gospel truth is the same, and the messages may be the same. Everything seems to be the same. But we cannot establish another church at North Szechuan Road. If we go to North Szechuan Road to establish a church, that is a division. The messages given in Bijie may be exactly the same as the messages given at North Szechuan Road, but in the two different localities there are two different grounds. In Bijie it may be the church, while at North Szechuan Road it is a division. The same message is given at these two localities, but what a difference there is! Suppose we set up the Lord's table in Bijie, that is, the Lord's supper, the breaking of bread. If we move the table with all the attendants from Bijie to North Szechuan Road, we may pray in the same manner as before, study the Bible as before, and praise the Lord as before. In these things there is no difference at all, but in Bijie there is a church, while there is a division at North Szechuan Road. When a woman marries a single man, she is his wife; if she marries a man who is already married, she is not his wife. When we go to a place where there is no church, we can establish one. But in a place where there is already a church, we can only join it, we cannot set up another one. This is a basic principle in the Bible. If we do not care for the boundary of locality, everything is finished. If we discard this basic ground, we have no ground.

I hope that before God we understand these two points: First, God's church is established upon the authority of the Holy Spirit; second, God's church is established with the boundary of locality. The ground of the church is something according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We cannot say, "The Holy Spirit has guided us to meet at North Szechuan Road." In regard to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the first thing He would argue is that the place where we are meeting is wrong. Consequently, we violate and offend the first limitation of the Holy

Spirit, and we have no ground on which to stand. Saying that we have the Holy Spirit is not enough; we must also pay attention to the boundary of locality, which is set up by the Holy Spirit. We can never violate the boundary of locality; we can only submit. Men have no freedom in the jurisdiction of locality set up by the Holy Spirit.

Locality Restricting the Formation of Divisions

I hope the brothers and sisters will hold fast to this basic principle. If they do, they will be clear about the standing of the so-called denominations, churches, groups, and organizations. If any group is not built upon the ground of locality, we can see that it is not the church. Are we clear? Is this not amazing? I am amazed when I read this in the Word. Going from the authority of the Holy Spirit to the boundary of locality seems like dropping ten thousand feet from the heavens all the way down to the earth. The Bible reveals that the ground of the church is based on the authority of the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible also shows us that just having the Holy Spirit is not enough; we also need the match of the ground of locality. These two together produce the church. As we look back, things become clearer and clearer, and more and more we have to praise the Lord. In the past two thousand years, if the people in the church had been willing to be limited by locality, there would not have been the difficulties and confusion. If man had submitted to God's authority, neither Catholicism nor Protestantism could ever have been established. Neither could the more than one hundred denominations in China and more than six hundred major organizations and five thousand minor organizations in the world today have been established. All would have been restricted by the boundary of locality.

Locality Never Being Subject to Change

Excuse me for using political terms. A dynasty may change, but a locality never changes; a political party may change, but not a locality; a country may even change, but a locality does not. Shanghai has always remained Shanghai, and Ch'ang-ch'un has always remained Ch'ang-ch'un. During the Ching Dynasty, Shanghai was Shanghai; during the Republic, Shanghai was still Shanghai; even now Shanghai remains Shanghai. During the Sino-Japanese War when the country almost became part of another country, the locality remained the same. Many things will change, but the locality will never change. God wills the locality as the ground for the church. We have the church in Rome as a locality, but never the church of the Roman Empire. The name is similar, but in fact they are

different. The church in the city of Rome is recognized by the Holy Spirit, but not the church of the Roman Empire. For this reason, we must learn before God to keep the ground of locality.

Please remember this one thing: The church must stand on the ground of locality. For many years we have been standing on this ground, rejecting all that is not in keeping with this ground, rejecting all other labels. Any group which does not take the locality as its ground is not the church. The service we have entered into here is with the hope of building up the church in Shanghai. If an inquiry is made about this matter by an outsider, we must make it clear to him that the church has the authority of the Holy Spirit inwardly as the content and the boundary of locality outwardly. The authority of the Holy Spirit plus the boundary of locality make the church. If there is no authority of the Holy Spirit within and no boundary of locality without, there is not the church.

The Church Ground and Spiritual Blessing

The clearer the ground of the church is, the richer are the spiritual blessings. In these recent years and in particular during the past one or two years, we have seen God blessing the church ground. Many brothers and sisters have begun to see the difference between the way of individualism and the ground of the church. As the authority of the Holy Spirit is manifested in all the members, causing them to serve God in coordination rather than in individual activities, we see the Lord's blessing. In some local churches the members increase twofold, fivefold, and tenfold—all in multiples.

Originally there were only thirty or more members in Taipei, but now they have increased to over a thousand. We have sent some brothers there, and they have worked very diligently. God has continued to bless, and the members have continued to increase. When I was in Hong Kong, I received a letter from a brother. I feel this brother knows what the church is because of the following incident. The church in Taipei expected Brother Witness to be responsible for their gospel campaign during the Chinese New Year. After this decision was reached, Brother Witness had to come to see me in Hong Kong concerning some matters. They were really disappointed because they thought that they could not carry out the campaign themselves. Brother Witness said to them, "To have Witness is just to have one more brother; to lose Witness is just to lose one brother." If there is a church in Taipei, having or losing Brother Witness is just a matter of having or losing one brother. However, if there were no church in Taipei, it would be terrible. In the end, the brothers in Taipei preached the gospel.

Some of the brothers who you would think could not preach the gospel preached the gospel contrary to expectation. As a result, over fourteen hundred people received the Lord. At the follow-up meetings, two hundred twenty-eight people were baptized on the first day alone. It does not matter whether a brother is taken away or added, because there is still the church. Now I will come back to that brother's letter. I am very pleased with his statement: "I believe that if the brothers learn to serve the Lord in a coordinated way, whether there are three thousand or ten thousand newly saved ones, we will be able to absorb them. When the church comes into being and begins to function, it can absorb five hundred new believers if five hundred come, and one thousand if one thousand come." What is this? This is God's church.

A Vessel Needed to Contain God's Blessing

Some of us pray that the Lord would bless us as He blessed the church during Pentecost. But if the Lord really answered our prayers, what would we do? If the Lord really granted us the blessing of Pentecost, what would we do? If the Lord gave us three thousand or five thousand people, what would we do? If several thousand people suddenly filled our meeting place, we would immediately see that we would not be able to absorb them all. If three thousand people were added in Shanghai at one time, we could not absorb them. We would not know how to baptize them, how to divide them into different home meetings for the Lord's table, how to edify them, and how to visit them. However, when God blesses and the church is strong, we can easily absorb them. Regardless of how many come, we will not drag along through our inability to handle them adequately. We now have about fifteen to sixteen hundred brothers and sisters among us; our fellowship is not adequately covered already. What would we do if another thousand were added? It would be hard for us to bear them if God should bless us with that many. We are not talking about an organization but a container that can bear God's blessing. If God blessed us by giving us three thousand and then two thousand disappeared after two days, this would not be the church. If we do not know when people come and when people go, or how many have been added or how many have been lost, this is not the church. The church is a container of such capacity that it is able to contain God's blessing. A church is supposed to attain to such a degree that when God blesses—abundantly blesses—there is a vessel which is able to contain this blessing.

When all the brothers and sisters obey the Holy Spirit, they will all rise up to serve and receive the blessing. No one will bring in his own opinions, but everyone will be occupied with service. When this happens, God's church will come forth. If we are not getting ready for the Holy Spirit's work, He will not work. We must be prepared for the Holy Spirit's work. We must always prepare more room. We would rather let the Lord bring people in than let Him take people out. When the Holy Spirit begins to work, we will really see that there is not enough room. We must prepare for the Holy Spirit's work. We must prepare a larger meeting place and enlarge our capacity; then the Lord will bless. We must prepare men for service; then the Lord will bless. If we do not prepare everyone for service, the Holy Spirit will have no way to work.

All Must Learn to Serve

I hope the brothers and sisters will see that the ground of the church is based on locality and on the authority of the Holy Spirit. For the authority of the Holy Spirit to come in means that every person learns to reject his own ideas and submit to God's authority. As everyone learns to serve, the church of God appears. As the church, it is not sufficient that our own personal opinions are denied. On the positive side, everyone must submit to the authority of the Holy Spirit. Once we submit to the authority of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit immediately will direct and instruct everyone to serve.

I would ask the leading brothers, especially the leading ones in the home meetings, to excuse me for saying the following words: The minimum responsibility you have before God is to serve, but this is not enough. If you can only serve but cannot bring others into service, you have failed. The Holy Spirit is directing every person to serve. On the negative side, do not bring in your own ideas; on the positive side, let the Holy Spirit direct everyone to serve. The authority of the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit can pass through everyone, the Holy Spirit can direct everyone.

Therefore, whoever can only serve by himself, but cannot commit things to others, is a failure. Whoever does not hold responsibility in his own hands, but distributes it to the brothers and sisters that they may share in the same work, is useful in God's hand. We should not think that we must do everything when situations arise. Those who hurriedly finish things themselves, who hold things in their hands, and who will not assign them to others are hindering the work of the Holy Spirit. Responsibilities must be distributed; they should not be retained in our own hands. Retaining things in our own hands is a hindrance. Things should

not get stuck to us. When the authority of the Holy Spirit is given full freedom in the church, it no longer is a matter of doing it or not, but it is a matter of letting the Holy Spirit have the freedom to release Himself. When the authority of the Holy Spirit works, moves, and is released in the whole Body, that is the church. The work must always be distributed. Distribution is a principle. Whenever a responsibility comes upon us, we should distribute it immediately. A thing may be done by one person, or it may be done by five persons. It is better, however, to distribute it among five persons. Always be involved and always involve others. If we practice this, we are training the brothers and providing them the proper guidance. In this way, everyone will learn to serve.

Brother Witness Lee and I have had a long time of looking to the Lord and conversing. We believe all the more in what we have seen before. In the days ahead God will certainly take the way of migration. Therefore, every brother must be trained. We should not hope that people will migrate to Nanchang in the future, yet expect the church in Nanchang to train them for us. We have to train them now. I am afraid that the brothers and sisters have no training before God, and when the time of migration arrives, such ones will not be able to go out. Therefore, everyone must learn something concerning the church. We must learn much more before God regarding how the whole Body serves. If we do this, there will be a way for God to go out from us.

A message by Watchman Nee, recorded by Brother Kun-min and others.

April 1, 1950

The Church in the City and the Church in the House

Question: Concerning the ground of the church, we have said that there should be only one church in a city, because there is only one unit. Some people, however, speak of "the church in a house," quoting the Scriptures as their basis, as being an additional unit to the locality. They imply that the church may possibly have several units in a locality. What should we say to this kind of statement?

Answer: The New Testament has a total of four passages which refer to "the church in a house," that is, in a home.

Romans 16:5

"And greet the church, which is in their house." "Their" refers to Prisca and Aquila mentioned in verse 3. Here the fact is simple. The church in Rome, like hundreds

and thousands of other local churches, first started in the house of a brother. This means that the principal members of such a house were brothers and sisters in the Lord. At the same time, there were not many members in the church; therefore, they used this brother's house for their meeting place. This is a historical matter, not a doctrinal matter. It is possible to give an explanation for a doctrine, but it is impossible to give an explanation for historical events, because historical events are facts. Anyone who is acquainted with history knows that hundreds and thousands of churches first started in homes. Therefore, the church in a certain place became the church in a certain person's house. The church in Rome was the church in Prisca and Aquila's home.

Question: Some say that since Paul sent greetings to the church in Rome as well as to the church in a house, this signifies that there was not only a local church but also a church in a house. Are there not, therefore, two churches?

Answer: Let us consider the matter slowly. I fear that you have not listened to the word of God carefully. The book of Romans never speaks of "the church in Rome." How then could the apostle have greeted the church in Rome? The book of Romans does not present clearly in writing one greeting to "the church in Rome" and another greeting to "the church in the house." But in greeting the church in the house of Prisca and Aquila, it is implied that such a greeting is to the church in Rome, which was meeting in Prisca and Aquila's house. Hence, the church in Rome was the church in Prisca and Aquila's house.

I presume the difficulty of those who argue about the church in both the house and the locality lies in the fact that after verse 5 Paul mentions so many names. I think all Bible expositors know that after Paul greeted the church in verse 5, he purposely mentioned several important individuals and especially greeted them one by one. This does not mean, however, that these people were outside the church in the house, but that they were the ones inside the church in the house to whom Paul sent his particular greetings. Some people, besides being included in his general greetings to the church, needed special attention. Do not make the mistake of thinking that since everyone is included in the general greetings to the church, it is unnecessary to add further greetings to them individually. That is not holy affection; neither is it the fact. Paul did not do such a thing, and neither would you or I.

The proof of this is in verse 3. If the greeting sent to the church automatically included everyone and it was unnecessary to greet them again by mentioning certain names, Paul should not have greeted Prisca and Aquila in verse 3. Paul

should have greeted in verse 5 just "the church, which is in their [Prisca and Aquila's] house." Should this not have included Prisca and Aquila already? Greeting the whole church naturally includes individuals. However, mentioning individuals in addition to greeting the church does not mean that these individuals are not of the church but members of another group. If this were so, then Prisca and Aquila were not of the church that was in their own house! Do you see the point? Paul greeted Prisca and Aquila in verse 3. Then in verse 5 he proceeded to greet the church which was in their house. If mentioning individual names in addition to greeting the church means that these individuals were not of this church and that there was another church in existence, then even Prisca and Aquila, whom Paul mentioned separately in his greeting, were not of the church which was in their own house!

The fact is that the church in the house of Prisca and Aquila was the church in Rome. The church in Rome at that time was in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Just as the individuals mentioned before verse 5, such as Prisca and Aquila, were of this church, so the many individuals named after verse 5 were also of this church. Moreover, the many individuals who were not mentioned were also of this same church.

In verses 10 and 11 two more houses are mentioned in which there were also the Lord's people. Nevertheless, Paul did not say, "Greet the church in Aristobulus's house" or "Greet the church in Narcissus's house." Only in verse 5 did Paul say, "Greet the church, which is in their [Prisca and Aquila's] house." Even though the whole household of Aristobulus believed in the Lord, there was only one church in Rome, which was the church that was in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Therefore, although there were believers of the household of Aristobulus, they could not become the church. Although many of Narcissus's household were believers, the believers in his house could not become an independent church. There was only one church in Rome, which was the church in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Therefore the Bible does not mention the church in the house of Narcissus. The household of Aquila, the household of Aristobulus, and the household of Narcissus all belonged to the church in Rome. Although these were three households of believers, there were not three churches. There was only one church. Rome was a locality; therefore, it had only one church, which was in the house of Prisca and Aquila.

History tells us that Rome was a very large city during the time of the Lord. But in the early days the believers in Rome were few. Because the city was large and

the believers were scattered throughout the city, it was normal for Paul to add personal greetings to the greeting sent to the church in Rome, which was meeting in the house of Prisca and Aquila. He especially mentioned, "Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them" (v. 14), and also, "Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them" (v. 15). These saints were scattered in places far away from each other in the city of Rome, just like the saints today in the church in Shanghai who live in the Yangshupu District or the region of Jiangwan. But Paul told us that there was only one church in the city of Rome and that was the one in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Although they were scattered and a few brothers were together with those who lived nearby, Paul did not call them the church; Paul only called them "the brothers with them" or "all the saints with them." Only one church can exist in one locality.

First Corinthians 16:19

"The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you much in the Lord with the church, which is in their house."

This salutation was given in A.D. 59 when Aquila and Prisca lived in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19). The church in Ephesus was meeting in their house; it was therefore called "the church, which is in their house." This does not mean that one church was in the city of Ephesus and another church was in their house. It means that the church in the city of Ephesus was the church in the house of Aquila and Prisca. This historical fact cannot be changed.

Later, they returned to Rome and again opened their home to be the meeting place for the church in Rome. They were really a faithful and lovely couple.

Colossians 4:15-16

"Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nymphas and the church, which is in his house. And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also."

We can discover from history that the church in Laodicea met in the house of a brother by the name of Nymphas, a believer in Laodicea, not Colossae. (Please refer to the writings of Moore, Alford, Earle, and Finley.) Therefore, Paul called the church in Laodicea the church which was in Nymphas's house, that is, the church in Laodicea in the house of Nymphas. This is a fact, and it is very evident. Question: Is it possible that "the brothers" mentioned in verse 15 are different from the church?

Answer: No. How could it be possible? Paul mentions three categories of people: 1) the brothers, 2) Nymphas, and 3) the church. If the brothers and the church are not the same, where does Nymphas fit in? It says, "The brothers...as well as Nymphas." Does "the brothers" include "Nymphas" or not? Everyone has to acknowledge that "the brothers" includes "Nymphas." Therefore, both "the brothers" and "Nymphas" are of the same group. Although both are of the same group, after Paul had greeted the brothers (that is, after Nymphas had been included in the greeting to the brothers), he especially singled out Nymphas and greeted him personally.

Furthermore, regarding "Nymphas" and "the church, which is in his [Nymphas's] house," does the latter include the former? Of course, the church has to include him. If so, why is it not enough for Paul to say, "Greet the church, which is in the house of Nymphas"? Although the church in his house includes Nymphas, Paul still says, "Greet...Nymphas and the church, which is in his house." He greets the church, but he especially greets Nymphas.

In these three categories of people, Nymphas is a part of each. In the same manner, "the brothers" and "the church" are identical. Therefore, Paul does not stop with greeting "the brothers in Laodicea," he goes on to greet a particular brother by the name of "Nymphas." Since the meeting of the church is in Nymphas's house, Paul therefore goes on to greet "the church, which is in his house." "The brothers" refers to individuals, while the church refers to the whole group. But they are identical. Paul first greets individuals, then greets the whole church.

Question: What is the relationship between "the church, which is in his house" in verse 15 and "the church of the Laodiceans" in verse 16?

Answer: Verse 15 is a greeting, while verse 16 regards the reading of the Epistle. In verse 15 Paul greets the brothers in Laodicea who are the church meeting in Nymphas's house. In verse 16 he spontaneously informs those at Colossae explicitly and without further explanation that the brothers in Laodicea whom he has greeted in verse 15 are the church that meets in Nymphas's house and that this church is the church in Laodicea. Now he requests that the brothers in Laodicea read his Epistle to the Colossians. (Colossae is only twelve miles away from Laodicea.) By reading these two verses carefully, you will see that the church in Nymphas's house in Laodicea (v. 15) is the very church of the Laodiceans (v. 16). Peter is Cephas, and Cephas is Peter—the two are interchangeable. The same is true here.

Philemon 1-2

"To Philemon...to Apphia...to Archippus...and to the church, which is in your house."

Philemon was a believer living in Colossae, and he was a co-worker of the apostle Paul. The church in Colossae met in his house; consequently, the phrase "to the church, which is in your house," indicates the church in Colossae. This is history.

Theorian (?) said that until the fifth century, whenever visitors toured Colossae, they would visit the house of Philemon as a historical site. It was a place tourists could not miss in Colossae. This was due to the fact that the church in Colossae met in that particular house.

The church in the house of Philemon was the church in Colossae, for the church in Colossae met in the house of Philemon. Therefore, the churches in the Bible all take locality as the unit—the house can never be the unit for the church.

The House Being Insufficient as an Unit

We have seen that the New Testament speaks of the church in a house four times. What do all these actually mean? We must see whether or not the house is the unit for the jurisdiction of a church by examining this matter from another angle. I do not know whether or not you understand what a "unit of jurisdiction" means. For example, when we weigh things, we use the pound as the unit of measurement; thus, the pound is the "unit of weight." When we measure things, we use a foot as the unit. Thus, a foot is the "unit of length." A pound is a unit of weight, and a foot is a unit of length. Is a house the unit of jurisdiction for the church? As I have said before in other places, the unit of jurisdiction for the church is a city, or a locality. This is based upon God's teaching.

Why is it that a city, or a locality, is the unit? It is because Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea were all localities, and only one church stood in each locality. If God did not take locality as the basic unit of church jurisdiction, there would not have been seven churches in these seven localities. There would have been instead one church for all seven localities. In other words, although one can say that there are seven localities, he cannot call the seven congregations in the seven localities seven churches (presuming that a church is not based on locality). But in the Bible, God told us that there were seven localities and there were also seven churches! They were seven churches in Asia, not the church in Asia; they were churches, not the

church; they were the *ekklesiae*, not the *ekklesia*. Not only were there seven different churches on this earth, but there were also seven lampstands in the holy place before the Lord—there were seven, not one. It is undoubtedly evident that what men should obey is what God has shown us, that the locality should be the unit of jurisdiction for a church.

This is to say that a church takes a locality as its unit. When we add more than one unit together, we do not have just one unit; we must have two or more churches. Therefore, we have "the churches...in Judea [a province]" (1 Thes. 2:14) and "the churches of Galatia [a province]" (1 Cor. 16:1). Because a province is made up of many localities and the basic unit of the church is a locality, once there are many localities, there are also many churches.

Again, may I ask, Can the house become the unit for the church? To answer this question, we must have a very clear mind; otherwise, we will make mistakes. We have to understand the difference between the house mentioned in the Bible and the house mentioned by those who advocate house churches today. The house that is spoken of in the Bible is the place where the church in that locality met. Therefore, the church in a certain person's house is also the church in that locality. The church in the house of Aquila was the church in Rome, the church in the house of Nymphas was the church in Laodicea, and the church in the house of Philemon was the church in Colossae.

What about today? Some people teach that although Rome is one locality, there can be two churches in Rome—one on a street and one in a house. They say that in Colossae there can be three churches—one on a street and two in different houses. They teach that the church in a house is a church that is smaller than the jurisdiction of a locality, and in the same locality there can be many churches. They utilize the word house in the Bible to assume that the church unit in the Scriptures is not limited or bound to a locality but to a house. You must take note that the house spoken of in the Bible and the house proposed by some people are entirely different.

Now the question is: In the Bible, is there a unit smaller than the locality for the boundary, the jurisdiction, of the church? Man says there is; God says there is not.

This question is very easy to answer. We have seen that there was only one church in Rome, one church in Colossae, and one church in Laodicea. Clearly, the book of Revelation shows us that the church in Laodicea was singular in number, which also corresponds to the one golden lampstand in the heavens.

The most obvious example was the church in Jerusalem, which at that time was the church with the greatest number of members. All those who study the Bible know that the meetings of the church in Jerusalem were held in different homes. The Bible says, "In the temple and...from house to house" (Acts 2:46). The word house here is not merely one house. Acts 5:42 also records, "...in the temple and from house to house." Here again it is not merely one house. Later, when Peter came out of prison, he went to the "house of Mary" (12:12), which was one among many of the houses. Now the question is whether this kind of house can be the unit of jurisdiction for the church. History shows us that among all the other churches, Jerusalem had the greatest number of members and the greatest number of home meetings. If God had any intention to take the house as the church unit, then Jerusalem would have been the most qualified locality and the best church to be a pattern to others. If in Jerusalem, where there were many members and many houses, God did not use the house to be the sphere, the jurisdiction of the church, then we know it is not likely to find any factual basis for taking a house as the sphere of the church elsewhere in the Bible.

What then is the fact? There were many houses in Jerusalem, but God had only one church in Jerusalem. Every time the Holy Spirit speaks of the church in Jerusalem, He consistently uses the word church in the singular, never churches in the plural. The Bible only uses the term the church in Jerusalem, never the churches in Jerusalem. It never says, "Every church in every house in Jerusalem." There may have been many houses for meetings, but there was still one church in Jerusalem. Any thought of taking the house as the unit of the church is a human concept, not the teaching of the Bible. Just this one phrase "the church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1) is enough to make it impossible for anyone to establish an isolated, independent, individual, and solitary church in a house.

We also can compare Acts 14:23 with Titus 1:5: "...appointed elders for them in every church" and "...appoint elders in every city." These two verses correspond and agree with each other. "Every church" is in "every city." It is in every city, not in every house. The house may be used as a meeting place, and the church may be called the church in a certain person's house. However, the church in Nymphas's house was still the church in Laodicea. The city or the locality, not the house, is the proper designation of a church; it is the proper boundary of the church and the proper unit of the church.

Two Mistakes

Two great mistakes are found in men today.

First, some people desire to have a church bigger than a city or a locality. They want to unite many churches in different localities and make them one big church, that is, bigger than a locality. They have never considered that there is not such a term like the church in China in the Scriptures. How many realize that the term the church in China is not scriptural? All of God's children must understand that in the Scriptures there is not a united church that is greater than a locality.

It is "the churches of Galatia [a province]" (Gal. 1:2), not "the church of Galatia."

It is "the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16:4), not "the church of the Gentiles."

It is "the churches...which are in Judea [a province]" (1 Thes. 2:14), not "the church in Judea."

It is "the seven churches which are in Asia [a province]" (Rev. 1:4), not "the church in Asia."

It is "the churches" in Syria and Cilicia [districts], not "the church" in Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:41).

Therefore, the boundary, the jurisdiction, of the church on the earth is limited to a locality. Even if we put two churches in two different localities together, they cannot be one church; they are still two churches. In the province of Asia, if we add up the churches as one plus one plus one plus one plus one plus one plus one, the result is not one church, but seven churches. In the whole province of Galatia, if all the churches in the different localities are added together, we still will not have the church in Galatia, but "the churches of Galatia." Who can say that the church is over and above the locality? May God open our eyes so that we will not cause confusion to the testimony of God.

Second, some people desire to have a church smaller than the city or the locality. They want to divide one locality into many "churches," many "assemblies," or many "congregations." Some euphemize these gatherings as "house churches." But these are all of the same nature. They are divisions, the purpose of which is to establish men's own sects according to the flesh. God's children must discriminate between the house spoken of in the Bible and the house as it is conceived in human thought. In the Bible, when the house is equivalent to a locality or city, that house is called the church, like the church in Rome, the church in Colossae, the church in Laodicea, etc. But when the house is smaller than the locality or city, that house cannot be called the church, like the house

meetings of the church in Jerusalem. This is very different from the house conceived in human thought, which is purposely made smaller than the locality or city, perpetuating the life of the sects or changing the sects into another form.

The brothers, therefore, must remember the teachings of the Bible:

It is "the church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1), not "the churches in Jerusalem."

It is "the church...which is in Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2), not "the four churches in Corinth."

It is "the church in Laodicea" (Rev. 3:14; Col. 4:15-16), not "the two churches in Laodicea."

There is "the church in Ephesus," not "the churches in Ephesus." There is "the church of the Thessalonians," not "the churches of the Thessalonians." There is "the church in Antioch," not "the churches in Antioch."

God's church takes locality as its boundary. When the church in a certain person's house is completely equivalent to the church of that locality, it can be called the church in that person's house. However, when the "church" in a certain person's house is smaller than the church in his locality, it cannot be called a church. If the "churches" in the "house" of Cephas, in the "house" of Paul, in the "house" of Apollos, and in the "house" of Christ were added together, there would not be four churches in Corinth, they would still singularly be the church in Corinth. From this we can see that God has never made this type of "house" a unit for the boundary, the jurisdiction, of the church. Since the four houses are not four units, the believers meeting in them respectively cannot be four churches.

There must have been over ten thousand brothers in Jerusalem, and they might have been divided into one hundred houses for meetings. Since houses of this kind are smaller than the city, that is, smaller than the locality, and smaller than Jerusalem, they are not sufficient to become the units of the church. If we add these one hundred houses together, they do not become one hundred churches. In the Bible there is only the singular church in Jerusalem. Since one hundred meetings added together could not become one hundred churches, but only one, this means that each one is not sufficient to become a unit by itself.

If the church in Nymphas's house (Col. 4:15) and the church in Laodicea (v. 16) are not the same, then when we add them up they must be two churches, but after we add "them" together in this way, God speaks of "the church in Laodicea"

in Revelation 3:14, not "the churches" or "the two churches in Laodicea." They are just one.

When the house is smaller than a locality, it is not sufficient to become a unit. When the house is equivalent to the locality, it is qualified to become a unit. But the unit is the locality, not the house. We must be very clear that the standard unit for the boundary of the church in the Bible is the city or locality. When the house is equivalent to the locality, we can speak of the church in So-and-so's house. When the house is smaller than the locality, we can add one plus one, but the total is not two; it is still one. We may add ten plus ten, but the total is not twenty; it is one. We may add one hundred plus one hundred, but the total is not two hundred; it is only one. The total is always one. By this we know that a "house" cannot equal the unit for the boundary, the jurisdiction, of the church.

Who can point out from the Bible two churches in one locality? No one! I can only say that one locality has two denominations, or one locality has four sects, or one hundred localities have more than one hundred manifestations of the flesh. But I cannot say that one locality has two or more churches. I can only say that one locality has over one hundred home meetings. One locality only has one church. This is certain.

For the past twenty-eight years, as a result of the Lord's calling, the denominations have lost their place in the heart of those who love the Lord. The brothers who recommend dividing the church into houses must guard against the suspicion that they are changing things for the sake of defending the sects or themselves. May the Lord cause His children to see that all those who have left the denominations have not necessarily left the sects. May God have mercy on me for speaking frankly.

We must seriously ask our hearts in the light: Am I rejecting the sin of denominations on the one hand, while refusing to "submit to the church" on the other hand, and by so doing have I only come up with the compromise of the house? May the Lord have mercy on those who do this, and may He have mercy on me for speaking it.

I am very sad at heart because at the critical moment when the Lord is moving on victoriously, such a disruption has come in. If we are only slightly disobedient today, a hundred years from now—should the Lord delay His coming—this disobedience will become a great detour for the church. I hope you brothers would fast and pray for our brothers. May God turn back their hearts. On the other hand, those who have contact with them must demonstrate firm and

unchanging love so that the Lord could gain back these ones. May the Lord put a fear and a trembling in them. May they know that speaking for the Lord requires the putting aside of oneself. They should be humble, and they should see and listen before speaking. May they also see the serious result of speaking without revelation. Once Ishmael is born, the fleshly will forever persecute the spiritual. This is going on all the time, even until today (Gal. 4:29).

The Impossibility of Having It Both Ways

Some people have a wrong thought. They agree that the boundary, the jurisdiction, of the church is locality, yet because they are unwilling to get out of the sects, they think that the house is also a boundary of the church. They think the two can go together side by side without contradiction. They cannot distinguish when the house is the same as the locality and when the house is different from the locality. When the house is the same as the locality, it can be the boundary of the church. When the house is different from the locality, the two cannot be the boundary, the unit, of the church at the same time. The key rests with locality, whether or not the house equals the locality.

If the house is the unit, then locality, which is bigger than the house, cannot be the unit. How can locality be the unit if it can be divided into smaller units? If we acknowledge locality as the unit, how can we also acknowledge the house as a unit? Since locality is the smallest unit, how can it be divided into smaller units such as houses? (Please remember that those who promote "house" churches do not view the word house scripturally; that is, they do not consider house in the context that locality and house are identical. Instead, they view the house according to their own concept, making it smaller than locality. This is not the kind of house spoken of in the Bible. Please pay attention to this matter.) If a foot is one unit of measure, then an inch is not sufficient to be the unit, because it is less than a full unit. If we take an inch to be the unit, a foot can no longer be the unit, because a foot equals twelve units. Likewise, if the unit for the church is locality, then the many houses in one locality cannot be many churches. One locality with one house has but one church; one locality with one hundred houses also has but one church. With one hundred houses there are not one hundred churches. If the house is the unit, then there is one church with one house, and there are one hundred churches with one hundred houses. In this case a locality with one hundred houses could never have only one church. These two, house and locality, are completely different units. Either we take the house as the unit or

locality as the unit. There must be a unit, but we cannot have both. The house and the locality cannot both be units for the church.

If the locality is the unit, then 1) a united church of several localities joined together is wrong, and 2) isolated divisions within one locality are also wrong. If the house is the unit, then 1) the united church is still wrong, but 2) the divisions in each locality are justified. All the divisions within a locality can hide behind the word house. If the "house" is the unit, all who refuse "to hear the church" (Matt. 18:17) can organize separate "house" churches. The "house" church becomes a shelter to all the divisive ones in a locality. May the Lord be merciful to His church.

Therefore, we must be clear that there can be only one unit—either house or locality, not both of them together. Similarly, if our salvation is not by grace, it has to be by works. It cannot be by grace and works; we cannot have both. According to the Bible, the boundary, the jurisdiction, of the church is the locality, just as our salvation is by grace. Dividing the church in a locality into many "house" churches brings divisions into the Body. It is the work of the flesh.

I believe God in His great wisdom made the locality the boundary of the church in order to eliminate the works of man, which try to divide the church within one locality.

The Intention and the Outcome

When we search the Bible for judgment and settlement upon some teaching, we must not only check the intention of our heart, but we must also take heed to the direction in which this kind of teaching leads and the outcome it produces.

For example, someone said that the Bible never prohibits Christians from smoking opium. He said, "If you say that Christians should not smoke opium, please prove it from the Bible." Undoubtedly, the Bible does not have clearly written statements prohibiting the smoking of opium. But we must take note of the outcome that this kind of saying will bring to the children of God. The only thing this teaching will do is lead men into the world and to fulfill their lusts. Another example is baptism. Some think that immersion is right, but sprinkling is also right. They give many reasons for their position. But these reasons simply reveal that man can change God's word. Likewise, if anyone says that there can be the church in a house besides the church in a locality, we will also ask, What will be the outcome of this kind of teaching? Could there be any other outcome than that of men within a locality having the freedom in the flesh to break the

unity of the church and to lead God's children into the way of divisions? If in one locality there can be many "house" churches, with all having their own administration and thinking that they are one spiritually, are they not deceiving themselves? If we maintain this kind of teaching, how many more divisions will result in a locality, divisions under the name of so-called "house" churches? At present there are already scores of denominational churches, but if "house" churches are scriptural, there will be hundreds more churches in one locality! Is this something that a person who has consecrated himself to the Lord and who loves the Lord would want to see?

We all know there is only one church. Throughout history, past and present, there is only one church. Because there is only one Head, there is only one Body. The church is a Body with life; thus, it is not right to divide it for any reason. We must stress this: The church is one because the Body is one. Any excuse to divide the church is a sin. Division is sin, because it is a "division in the body" (1 Cor. 12:25).

Although the church is one, it is impossible for all the brothers to meet together. Time and space prevent all the brothers around the whole world from meeting together all the time. Besides this, it is impractical as far as church administration, supervision, and management are concerned for all the brothers to come together in one world church. Therefore, God's Word not only permits but also ordains that the church be separated. In order to practically make the church (singular) become the churches (plural), God has established the way for one individual church and another individual church to remain two churches instead of one. This is the principle of "locality" as revealed in the Bible.

In the Bible no church is bigger than the locality; neither is any church smaller than the locality. Whenever people gather and dwell together, there is a "locality." A locality is where people gather and dwell together. As long as a locality is a place where people gather and dwell together, it is the boundary of the church according to the Bible. People who dwell together in one locality can be independent of other localities. It is not a matter of the number of people (believers), but a matter of locality. The basis for separation is not love or lack of love, but locality. The basis for God allowing the church to be separated is locality. Any other kind of separation is sin. We commit sin if we are separated from our brothers for any other reason than that of locality. In the Bible the only kind of distinction that does not touch upon the nature of the church is the distinction of locality. The distinction of locality is God's great wisdom. I am in

Shanghai and you are in Soochow, but when we both come to Nanking, we will not create any problem. Other than the boundary of locality, there absolutely should be no other boundary. In the church God only allows us to separate by the principle of locality.

Undoubtedly the church is one. How then can there be many churches? The distinction can only be on the basis of locality. Because we have our physical body, we are naturally limited by geographical boundaries. Any difference because of names, human feelings, or other factors is harmful to the nature of the church. Only the distinction of locality does not touch the nature of the church. In this way, no one can turn away from the general ground of locality. We may be able to do many things, but we are not qualified to establish a church as we like. Once we see that the ground of the church is local, there will be no more reason for the existence of any sects. The matter of locality cuts man's flesh to the deepest part.

Now let me repeat what I have been saying about the nature of the church. Any reason to divide the church damages the nature of the church; that is, it turns the unity of the church into disunity. Due to the fact that we are in the human body, geography is the only factor that can separate us. Such separation does not threaten the nature of church unity. Therefore, God ordained to have locality as the earthly boundary of the church. God also ordained that in one locality there should be only one church to express the unity of the heavenly church.

We must see the spiritual reason for separating the church by localities. Once we see this, we will know whether or not the present-day principle of separating the church by houses is of God. The way to separate the saints at Jerusalem by houses was scriptural. Due to the great number of people—a physical reality—they were separated into many meetings in the houses. The church, however, was still one, "the church [singular number] in Jerusalem." Today, man's way to divide the church by houses is to make many churches within one locality. It has nothing to do with physical limitations, geographical reasons, or the inconvenience of coming together from great distances. It has nothing to do with the fact that the crowd is large and that there is not enough room to sit together. It has nothing to do with the fact that there are so many people and that care for them is impossible. It has nothing to do with the practical problem of handling administration over great distances. It is simply a way of dividing the church into many churches. Dividing people into many churches because of such an underlying reason is harmful to the nature of the church. Separations that are not

based on geographical or physical demand are spiritual in nature; they touch the spiritual unity. This kind of separation is not outward and limited, but inward and spiritual. Any division that is not for a geographical or physical reason is an intrinsic, real, basic, and spiritual division. Therefore, this kind of division is a division in the very nature and essence of the church. It is damaging to the spiritual unity.

This is very serious. Since we first saw the light concerning the oneness of the Body of Christ twenty-eight years ago, we have passed through many waves of adversity. But I believe we have never passed through one that is more serious and more ambiguous than the teaching about the "house" church. This is the first time people have opposed the truth by agreeing with it. Since we all are people who serve God, I beg you to seek the light of God. Do not send forth a confusing voice in the church of God; rather get rid of the sectarianism from your heart.

We must not push the oneness of the church entirely to the "spiritual" side by saying, "We are one in life! We are one spiritually!" Brothers, when we do not live together in the same city, we might be able to cover ourselves with spiritual words and hide our disunity with such "spiritual oneness." But since we all live in the same city, is it conceivable that we would not express or demonstrate our oneness? Since there are no geographical and physical factors to divide us, is not this the time to show that we are one church? Why at such an opportune time for us to show our oneness should this different teaching related to a "house" church come into being? Does this teaching related to a "house" church represent unity or separation and sectarianism? Lord, have mercy on us!

I dare not say from where the teaching about the "house" church comes. But I am afraid that the brother who speaks about this has not seen the sin of sects. This teaching is a halfway place to sectarianism; it is not a thorough rejection of sects. A person who has left the denominations is not necessarily one who has left the sects. I am afraid that some who only know their individual movement, individual living, and individual work are not willing to be limited by the Body. These are the ones who love this kind of talk about the "house" church. Those who do not desire to listen to the church but desire to establish their own churches value this kind of "doctrine." May the Lord's blood cover me for speaking like this. I think humility may be profitable to some people, but not to take our own way is profitable to all of God's children.

Finally, this kind of "house" church is not the house that is in the Scriptures. This kind of "house" church is a sect, a disguised sect. This kind of "house" church

causes people to divide, not to unite. This kind of "house" church hurts the nature of the church while concealing its wound. This kind of "house" church builds up the individualism, lawlessness, and ambition for leadership in many. May the Lord have mercy on me for speaking in such a way. May He have mercy on His churches that they may not be damaged.

Watchman

THE WAY OF MIGRATION

Since the publication of the fourth issue of The Ministers, many of God's children seem to have a feeling concerning migration. We have already received many letters asking about the matter of migration. We will now answer them as follows:

1) The meaning of migration: Migration is a term used in the world. In the Bible migration is to "get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Gen. 12:1; cf. Acts 7:3).

2) The goal of migration: It is to preach the gospel to all the nations and to be the Lord's witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).

3) The requirements for migration: We must have an inward burden for the gospel and a will to suffer. We must be willing to absolutely obey and to give our all for the gospel. If we do not give up everything, migration is not only meaningless, but a joyless suffering, and can even put us into turmoil.

4) The preparations for migration: First, there is the spiritual preparation. We must resolve the matter of our consecration. All should live for the Lord and His gospel whether in life or death, through sweetness or bitterness. We must have a strong, thorough consecration. Second, there is preparation for the work. In our own locality we must first learn to preach the gospel, visit sinners, and do the individual work of leading people to the Lord. Third, there is the preparation of practical affairs. We must learn something about how to manage the church finances, care for the brothers and sisters, arrange baptisms, and accept people at the table meeting. Fourth, there is the preparation of our livelihood. We must be prepared to take up a skilled trade (such as barber, cobbler, tailor, toothpaste maker, soap maker, chandler, weaver, coppersmith, farmer, or rancher). Those who migrate must engage in some form of production work. We must be able to at least support ourselves, and it is better if we can contribute to the support of others. The worst thing that can happen is for a person to migrate not for the gospel but for solving his personal problem with his livelihood. Some may even

think that if they migrate, they will not have to work again and others will take care of their living.

5) The areas for migration: We must be certain that we migrate to places with people to whom we can preach the gospel. Do not migrate to the wilderness or a valley in the mountains where there is no one to hear the gospel. Thus, we should first concentrate on the areas with big cities. If there are brothers and sisters who want to migrate, it would be most appropriate for them to go to Shenyang or Ch'ang-ch'un in Manchuria; Sian, Lanchow, or Tihua in the Northwest; Hankow, Chungking, or Ch'eng-tu along the Yangtze River; and Kweichow or K'un-ming in the Southwest. It is best if we are able to first contact the church in the locality we want to migrate to and make some arrangements.

6) The practice of migration: It is all right if we want to go out alone. If the brothers and sisters can go out corporately, it is best if they have all things in common and work together in one accord for the gospel. (Anyone who has not made a thorough consecration and does not meet the requirements for migration should absolutely not be part of a group which has all things in common.) If we cannot live with all things in common, but want to migrate individually, then it is best if we migrate to a locality with a church. At the same time, if there are members of our family who do not agree with us, do not force migration on them. We must put it into the Lord's hands and wait with patience for the Lord's arrangement in our environment.

7) The result of migration: Those who migrate for the sake of the gospel in this way are Christians who have been uprooted from the world. They are consecrated Christians, those who love the Lord. Another result of migration is the spread of the gospel.

May God strengthen the way of migration so that all the brothers and sisters in all the churches would be able to give and expend their all for the total outreach of the gospel. For the sake of carrying the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, it is right for each church to have fifty to one hundred brothers and sisters coordinating together to migrate to various places. If we practice this, the glorious dawning will soon be here!

Chang Yu-zhi

May 3, 1950

A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT MIGRATION

- 1) Because the migration of the church is for the gospel, the motive for migrating must match the goal. Migration cannot be done with any other motive.
- 2) Those migrating must have a mind to suffer. Without such a mind, it is best not to move, or you will become a problem to the group.
- 3) Those migrating must give up their all. They cannot keep anything for themselves and cannot insist on any personal rights. All must be done with the "house" as the center.
- 4) The qualification for the responsible ones in each house must center on their spiritual condition. Their ability to manage affairs should not be the criteria for their selection. (It is best if they have both.) Internal unity has much to do with spiritual leadership. Abilities should be channeled under the direction of the houses to meet the various needs.

Brother Wei

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCHES IN WENCHOW AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS

Twenty years ago Brother Wang Tian-zuo and Brother Chang Wu-seng went to the first conference in Shanghai and brought the revival fire to P'ing Yang. At that time Brother Wang Yu-ting received the light of the truth and started the Lord's table at Chiaotunmen. This was the first assembly in the Lord's name in Wenchow and the surrounding areas. In the fall of that year, the two brothers and Brother Chang sent a letter of invitation to Brother Chai Ji-ching with Brother Mao Ching-shi from Taishun, and more than ten brothers from Pumen including Brother Su Ti-sheng, Brother Chin Zhi-fang, and Brother Su Jie-min came in one accord to Chiaotunmen for a ten-day conference. The conference was very strong, and there was indeed the supply of life. After the conference, the brothers went to Fanshan, Mazhan, Leejiating, Channei, and Nansungyang to build up the local churches. When the brothers arrived in Pumen, they met Brother Wu Zheng-zhong. He also received the light and invited Brother Chai and Brother Mao to pass through Fuding on their way back to Taishun. This produced the meeting in Sanjiaocheng and meetings in the Lord's name in the Taishun area.

In January 1929, a second conference was held. Brother Chen Ching-fa, Brother Huang Li-chuan, and Brother Dai Yun-zhang, who received the light earlier, joined this conference. In the third year, at the third prayer meeting, Brother Lin Wei-zhong, Brother Wang Zhu-you, and Brother Cheng Tseng-yu, all who had previously received the light, joined the rank of the brothers. In the previous three conferences, all felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, and all witnessed the

tremendous working of the Spirit. During every meeting, saints cried out in tears to God, asking Him to open their spiritual eyes so that they could see His plan and heart's desire and so that all the believers could arrive at the oneness of the faith.

In 1931 there was a ten-day conference in Jinxiang. The responsible ones from all the localities and many of the co-workers from P'ing Yang attended it. After this conference, many localities heard the news and were raised up. In 1933 Brother Wang Yu-ting went to Yungjia and Brother Pan Huo-ling was enlightened. Next, Brother Wang Jin-yi went to Rian and Tsengduichun and began meetings in the Lord's name in those places.

As we look back over the abundant grace received from the Lord and see that there are more than one hundred miniature local churches, we cannot refrain from praising and giving glory to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The only problem is that the present situation is not as good as the past. Furthermore, many of the co-workers, such as Brothers Chai Tze-ching, Wang Tian-zuo, Wang Jin-yi, Wang Yu-ting, Chang Ming-hua, Pan Huo-ling, Lee Shu-ren, Chen Ching-fa, Fu Xuan-gao, and Sister Huang Lan-ru, have all left this world to be with the Lord. We who remain are young, weak, useless members who really need the supply of prayer from the brothers and sisters in other localities.

THE OPEN DOOR

(The Ministers is now combined into this paper.)

NATURE: To show the way to serve, to help the serving ones and the churches in the different localities go on, and to solve problems related to the ministry.

FREQUENCY: We publish irregularly. (The burden of materials and labor is not light. We are looking to the Lord, and whenever His supply is sufficient to publish an issue, we will publish it.)

PRICE: We have no set price.

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1. A Map of the Churches Near the Fuding and Wenchow Areas

PLEASE SPEND A FEW MINUTES

TO READ THIS ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER

1) From this year, we hope to resume publication of The Christian and The Present Testimony. Hence, The Way will be merged with The Christian, and The Testimony will be merged with The Present Testimony. However, The Christian and The Present Testimony will be published irregularly and at no fixed price. (There are no stock copies of back issues of either The Christian or The Present Testimony.)

2) There are still copies of the sixth through eighth issues of Collection of Newsletters, the second and third issues of The Ministers, and the second through fourth issues of The Testimony. Those who want copies should send one thousand yuan postage to us. We will limit it to one copy per person until all have been given out.

3) We apologize that there are no more back issues of The Open Door.

The Gospel Book Room, P. O. Box 5008, Shanghai

June 1950

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SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY—

A RECORD OF A TALK WITH CO-WORKERS

As we are gathered today, I think I have something to say. Let us first look at two passages of the Scripture.

Colossians 4:5 says, "Redeeming the time," and Ephesians 5:16 says, "Redeeming the time."

I have wanted to talk to you about this matter in these past few days. There are several Greek words for the word time, as it is translated in the two verses we just read. In both these passages, the Greek word is not *chronos*, but *kairos*. This word does not merely refer to time. There are many passages which use this Greek word in conjunction with other words, and in those instances it is

translated opportunity. Galatians 6:10 says, "As we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all." This means that we should seize the opportunity to do good. These words from the Bible show us the Lord's thought about opportunity. The Lord considers opportunity to be something very important. One could translate the word time in the passages from Colossians and Ephesians as "redeeming the opportunity." I do not know how much you understand the word opportunity. I always wonder how many opportunities I have missed. In many matters, on the negative side, we do not know how many opportunities we have missed. Many things which we can do are all too easily missed by us. Many people which we can save are all too easily neglected by us. Many cities where we can start an assembly are all too easily overlooked by us. Many brothers whom we can gain are lost through us. We have lost so many opportunities! When we face the Lord in the future, we will truly have much regret to face! We are confused and unclear about everything, and we do not know how many opportunities we have missed!

Of the days which the Lord has ordained for us, perhaps yesterday should have been the greatest day of our life, but we may have lived yesterday in an ordinary way. This is what it means to miss the opportunity. One who is learning to serve should not do the same thing today as he did yesterday. If he is the same today as yesterday, he has squandered his opportunities. If we do not know what the Lord is doing today or what is going to happen today, we are missing the opportunity.

In the early days in Shanghai, the brothers did not pay attention to the need for a meeting hall. As a result, we do not know how many souls we lost. I want to say to the brothers who want to save their money, "You have indeed saved your money, but you have lost the souls of men!" We could have saved more souls, but because there was not enough space for them, some were lost. Losing a soul is losing an opportunity. Souls were lost when we saved our money. We now think that we have spent our all in moving from Hardoon Road to Nanyang Road. It may never have occurred to us that if we had not missed some opportunities before the Lord, certain kinds of meetings would never have been started. We have missed some opportunities, and as a result, some meetings were produced. It is very easy for us to work in a place in a habitual way. Every Lord's Day we preach the word; every week we have an edification meeting. We think it is all right if we gain ten to twenty people a week. We do not know that the Lord

wanted us to gain one thousand in one day. Through negligence we lose nine hundred of them. We throw away and miss many opportunities.

As I was considering this whole matter, I thought perhaps the Lord would want to gain more people in Yangshupu than at Nanyang Road. But can we seize the opportunity? Perhaps the Lord wants to gain more people at North Szechuan Road than He does at Nanyang Road. Can we seize the opportunity? Perhaps the Lord wants to gain more people in Nanshi than He does at Nanyang Road. Can we grasp the opportunity? No worker or servant of the Lord can feel satisfied with what he has done so far. All who are satisfied with the present are losing opportunities. We do not know what great things the Lord wants to do. Among the 470 million people in China, there are only a few hundred thousand Christians. We do not know how many opportunities we have already lost! I believe that God has given more opportunities than we can imagine. If we can seize every opportunity God gives us, the increase of the work will be according to God's expectation. The work has not increased as God wants because we have limited it. We hope this limitation will end here today.

When we appear before the Lord one day, I hope that all the young brothers will be together and will examine the calendar of 1930, 1935, or 1949. Granting that we will know all things as the Lord knows them, we will see that on January 1, 1930, the Lord had ordained an opportunity for us to go to North Szechuan Road to save twenty souls. But we did not go on that day. Instead we went to Nanyang Road and missed the opportunity. We lost twenty souls. Perhaps we will examine January 2. Perhaps that day the Lord wanted me to hold a gospel meeting at Pudong. Perhaps He wanted to gain five hundred people during those six months. But on that day, I did not go. I missed an opportunity, and five hundred souls were lost. On January 3 perhaps the Lord gave me a thought that I should seek out a certain person who could have turned out to be a great vessel in the hand of the Lord in the next five years. Perhaps the Lord wanted to use such a person to save tens of thousands of souls, but on that day I did not go because I was afraid the weather was too hot, and I was too lazy. I lost an opportunity and neglected a person who was potentially very useful to the Lord. Day by day, the Lord gives us countless opportunities in our life, and we miss them all!

Why does the Bible translate time as opportunity? Because "opportunity" is something that is found in time. Every day the Lord gives us opportunities. Today we can only bow our heads and say to the Lord, "I do not know what

opportunities You have given me today. There is never a day without Your arrangement. Every day You have ordained something to happen to me." Those whom God can use never miss the opportunities He has provided. The Lord may ordain that we should rent some place tomorrow. We should rent that place. Or He may ordain that we help a certain person get over some problems. We should do so accordingly. As we finish one matter, another will come our way. When the second matter is finished, the third, and then the fourth will come. Things happen continually, and we do not know how great any one of them will be. This is like throwing a stone into the water; the circles keep expanding until the ripples touch the shore. If we are faithful to follow up every event, we will not miss any opportunity, and we will reap colossal benefit. But if we miss any opportunity, the rippling may stop at any point, and our reluctance may result in no further widening of the circles.

Who would have guessed that one day an illiterate cobbler could become a Moody? If someone had missed the opportunity to preach to him, the world would not have had a Moody. Who would have guessed that Philip would meet the eunuch the day he went into the wilderness (Acts 8:26-39)? The entire church in Africa owes its beginning to that day, and we know that the church in Africa began earlier than the church in Europe!

We do not know how many opportunities we have missed. When we wake up early in the morning, sometimes we feel as if all is light (perhaps from the sunlight). At other times we feel as if all is dark (perhaps from considering our own future). We do not know what will happen to us. I beg you to discover every opportunity God has given you every day. We hope we can discover the opportunities today instead of being reminded of them in the future. Today is July 19, 1950. Today the Lord has put certain opportunities before me, and I can see them today. Redeeming the time means seeing what the Lord has arranged for us. If we do not miss the opportunities, the Lord will make tremendous gains, and the work will make immense progress.

In order to not miss the opportunities, we need spiritual training. We also need spiritual sensitivity. If we are spiritually sensitive, we will sense the opportunity. With spiritual training, we can identify opportunities when they come our way. We cannot allow opportunities to go away. We must not be dull to any direction from the Head. We must not let the Head have a sense that we are numb to His leading. We have to be desperate for this. We should grasp whatever opportunity we have. If we do not have this kind of training and feeling, we will miss the

opportunities the Lord has arranged. Day after day, we will become a person dull to opportunities.

One day we will face the Lord. Perhaps we will regret the things in our life that now provide us with satisfaction. We have come short of God's will. We have not been faithful. We have acted foolishly. The Lord may have put ten opportunities before us, but we have not even touched one. Woe to us when we stand before the judgment seat! We do not know how many opportunities we have missed. Woe to us, for we have acted thoughtlessly and have missed many opportunities that God has given us!

It is a terrible mistake and a great loss to the church to bury the one talented ones in the ground, thinking that they are useless and unqualified for the service, not giving them the opportunity to produce. We must put out the capital before we will have the chance to earn money. If we bury the one talented ones in the ground, we take away the opportunity for such spiritual gifts to be employed and we stop their function. We will never be able to grasp the opportunity. This is called digging a hole to bury our gold. This is foolishness. I do not know how many opportunities are missed because of this.

My feeling is that the Lord could do a work ten times greater than is now among us. I do not say a thousand or ten thousand times greater; I only say ten times greater. But today we cannot do it. We have not seized the opportunities. We are already satisfied! We think that everything is finished for the rest of our lives because the meeting hall on Nanyang Road is built, and so we stop here. We have missed and buried the opportunities. Soon there may not be any more opportunities. Brothers, we must wake up. We do not know how great the opportunity ahead of us will be. It is possible for us to increase according to God's desire. We must bring God's children into His ordained way. Day by day we must take the opportunity to go on and to do the work before us.

I think the responsible brothers need to be fully conscious of the need to seize all opportunities. We should be filled with an awareness of all God-given opportunities. Every time we make a decision, we must be accurate. Whenever we make a decision, we should not just look at the present. Instead we should check whether our decision matches the opportunity given us by God. I think that if our sense is sharp, we will know the things that will put us to shame and the things that will give us joy. Doing certain things means losing certain opportunities. Perhaps I should have visited Brother Tang a certain time, but I

visited Brother Chang instead. Perhaps I should have gone on an errand at eight o'clock, but I was late and did not go until nine. Perhaps I should have gone north a certain time, but I went south instead. As a result, I have lost many opportunities and can do nothing but regret my failures. On the other hand, there are occasions for which I have to thank God. On a certain day the Lord preserved me as I was about to make a mistake. Or I almost visited Brother Tu but instead visited Brother Hsie. I almost lost the opportunity, but the Lord kept me from missing it. Perhaps I almost went north when I should have gone south, but the Lord kept me from going north. I do not know what that little turning of the Lord has done to me. But I know God has kept me and has saved me from losing an opportunity.

Before the coming of that day, I pray we will all learn to put ourselves into the Lord's hands so that He might train our spiritual sense and spiritual sight. If we are short in these two things, we will not know how to deal with situations when they come up. We should give ourselves to Him this way daily. The situations we encounter daily are not necessarily opportunities. Opportunities come and go as the days pass; they are not constant. Time is constant, but opportunities are not. Opportunities appear in time. Time is continuous, but opportunities come and go. Therefore, we must grasp the opportunities. We must sense the opportunities whenever they come and make the most of them.

At the same time, we must have spiritual insight. Once we have spiritual insight, we will identify the opportunities when they come and lay hold of them. We must be quick. If we do not miss opportunities as they march by us one by one, the church will increase by leaps and bounds. This increase will far surpass our greatest expectation.

Today the problem is not that the Lord does not give us opportunities, but that we miss the opportunities. Every one of us must rise up. The responsible brothers of the church must rise up. We do not want to let the opportunities from God go by. We have seen how God has blessed Brother Witness's work. His strong point is that he does not allow any opportunity to slip by. It is hard to find him missing an opportunity. Once the opportunity arises, he takes advantage of it. If we let the opportunity go, we will limit God's work.

More than half of God's will is found in His opportunity. One day when we stand before God, we will see that most of God's will lies in the opportunities He has given us. If we can identify the opportunities, we can identify God's will. This is a very serious matter. Daniel 11:32 says, "The people who know their God

will...take action." This means that the people of God will open up new horizons. The more we know God's will, the more we will seize the opportunities. Anyone who hesitates is living in a habitual way. Those who know God will never act in a habitual way.

The brothers from Shanghai must learn to break new ground. It is not good to stop where we are. How many brothers do we need before we can say we have enough? There are not enough. We must go out continually and never stop. Every time we go out we have to have the sense that we have not done enough and that our business is not finished yet. We cannot organize everything in such a sterile way that there is nothing more for us to do. The affairs of the church are endless and always emerging. The first business is never finished before the second emerges. The second matter is never complete before the third appears. It is the principle of Babylon to engage in self-appreciation. Nebuchadnezzar boasted one day: "Is this not Babylon the great, which I have built up as a royal house by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30). He was satisfied with his own work—this is the principle of Babylon. In the church one thing comes after another. Before a person has time to complete a task, a second one is just around the corner. The work is continually expanding and reaching new fields.

I have no other intention than to exhort the brothers and sisters to not miss our special opportunity. There have never been as many wonderful and numerous opportunities as those that we are facing today. If we but open our eyes a little, we will see these opportunities. Let me repeat: We should not miss any opportunity. If we seize every opportunity, we will stop many things from happening. If we grasp every opportunity, distracting situations will not develop in some areas. Diversions developed in some areas because the brothers were lazy and poor. The brothers should be strong to take action. Once God moves, we should move. We should not give up any opportunity.

I am happy that God has given us opportunities. When an opportunity comes, we find money coming as well; souls are saved, and the work advances. If we just afford these opportunities a little opening, they rush in. The problem, however, is that opportunities do not wait for us. When God opens the way for us to do something, we must do it. Once time moves on, the opportunity is gone. If we wait until tomorrow to do something, we will miss the opportunity. It may be useful to talk to a brother today. However, if we wait until tomorrow, it may no

longer be useful because the opportunity is gone. We must have spiritual insight, and we must have spiritual senses. We must ask God to preserve each opportunity He has given us.

Recently, I experienced a great change in my feeling. I believe the Lord wants our senses to be sharpened. If we make any mistakes now, we will lose the God-given opportunities, and once these opportunities are gone, we may have to wait a few decades before they will come again. Perhaps I will conclude my words here. But I still want to bring up some practical matters. Once the new believer edification meetings are well established, I believe we should find a way to reach out to the groups that love the Lord and are amicable to us. We should establish fellowship with them and bring them to the church. In the past our emphasis was to gain sinners from among the "Gentiles." Among believers, we only sought to bring in individuals. We were afraid that people would say we were stealing sheep. We were hesitant to go out to them. This was our attitude in the past. Even to this day, we have taken this way. This was what the Lord wanted us to do in the past.

After the second Kuling conference, my feeling began to change. It was not a doctrinal change. Over the past three months, this inward feeling has become stronger and stronger. Today I feel that we must not only gain lovers of the Lord individually but must gain group after group of those who love the Lord. Suppose there is a group of people who love the Lord in a pure way, who are not a mixed denomination. Suppose further that the people there do not know the church and have not taken the same way as us. When the new believer edification meetings are well established, I think the Lord will want us to fellowship with such a spiritual group. Of course, if the new believer edification meetings are not strong, we cannot stand up easily. All the brothers must be mobilized to go out and reach these ones. We did not do this in the past; we must do it now. We must pray much. Everyone must consider before the Lord to see if these feelings will grow within us. On the one hand, we must emphasize the gospel. On the other hand, we must pay attention to the spiritual groups. We will gain not only individuals but entire groups. The responsible brothers in each locality must see if this is what the Lord wants us to do today.

For example, there is the "Family of Jesus" Church. Perhaps the time has come when we should gain them. We can learn something from them. They know more than we do and are more advanced than we are in the matter of possessing all things in common and living the communal life. They can help us. Perhaps, we

can help them concerning the truth of the church. This can become a great move of God in China. May God lead us. If this is His opportunity, I hope we do not miss it.

If our goal is to bring all the groups that love the Lord into the same way, there are many other spiritual groups aside from the Family of Jesus. All the brothers and sisters have to rise up to do this. We want to turn them as a group. I am presenting this matter before us today in a simple way. I hope we will spend some quiet time to meditate upon such God-given opportunities. This is the opportunity of opportunities. We do not want to miss it; we want to take advantage of it. We must repent and confess our sins for having missed so many opportunities! We have continually dropped the opportunities which God has given us. If we had not lost so many opportunities, there would be more than one meeting hall and one place for training today. There would be more than one communal farm today. I hope that from now on, no opportunity will escape our feelings and our eyes. If we take the way of opportunities, perhaps we will be able to gain a few more steps along the way.

Watchman Nee

Shanghai,

July 19, 1950

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRUDENT AND THE FOOLISH

Among the ten virgins in Matthew 25, there are five foolish and five prudent. What is the difference between the prudent and the foolish? They are called by the same name, carry the same lamps, have the same goal, hear the same voice, and rise up the same way. The difference between the prudent and the foolish is that the five prudent virgins have oil in their vessels before the bridegroom arrives. The five foolish virgins do not take oil in their vessels and go to buy when the bridegroom arrives. They obtain oil, but do not have it before the bridegroom comes. The time to buy oil has already passed. It is not a matter of having oil or not, but of when they obtain it. Timing is a great matter. Oh, foolish people are those who miss opportunities.—Selected

NEWS

A Trip to Sian

On this trip to Sian, we clearly saw God's presence with us. Before the formal start of the conference, there was a fellowship meeting. We went to observe the

condition without any intention of doing anything. While we were sitting there, we had an inward feeling to speak something concerning the attitude of the meeting. Just as I was going to get up, Brother Yu got up. He spoke on exactly the same topic—the attitude of coming to the meeting. I was inwardly surprised and joyful beyond description. After Brother Yu finished, I continued the speaking. This was the first time I have had such an experience since becoming a Christian. It gave me great faith for the coming work. Thank and praise God. Glory be to God.

We can say that the problem in the assembly in Sian has been satisfactorily resolved. Today's problem is that there are a few unemployed brothers who cannot find jobs.

Next week we will go to Lanchow. Are there any special matters in the church in Shanghai? Have the wall and small house on the south side been finished? (All the work is finished.—Editor)

Your brothers in the Lord,

Yu Cheng-hua, Chu Chen

July 29

Turning Back in the Light of the Word (Sian)

The difficulties in the church in Sian have been completely resolved. All but a very few have turned back in the light of the Word.

There were fellowship meetings for six days this week which began every evening at 7:30. The Lord's Spirit was very strong in these meetings because He wanted to glorify Himself. Many brothers and sisters from other counties came to these meetings to receive the grace. The Lord truly blessed those who sought Him. When our eyes were opened just a little, we could not help but fall on our faces and worship Him in the dust. God is fearsome and awe-inspiring. I dare not say anything here because the way before me is so long. Please pray much for me.

Brother Chao Xu-dong came to Shensi province from Peking on the ninth of this month. God used him to speak faithful words to the brothers and sisters, and they were well able to receive such words. We see that God is arranging everything from all sides to bless His church. We deeply believe that greater blessings lie ahead of us.

Liu Xian-zhi

July 12, 1950

Mailing Address: 5 Shihaozhuang, Sian, Shensi province

May the Lord Have a Clear Way through Here (Sian)

As Sian is a door to the Northwest, may the Lord have a clear way through here so that the gospel work in all of the Northwest would be brought into oneness and would combine forces with the brothers in the coastal regions. There are approximately twenty young brothers and sisters who are all engineering and agricultural graduates of Northwest University. They all have the heart and desire to serve the Lord. May the Lord gain them.

In retrospect, I did not learn many things well last year before the Lord. Nor was I able to read the Bible as often as I had planned. My mind is still too active. However, my feelings toward the Body and toward authority seem to have gradually become weightier. I have personally experienced some of the things I saw in the Word. May the Lord allow me to touch something of resurrection again in my experience and to leave all vain matters behind. I hope you would also remember my poor, weak, blind, and pitiful condition and instruct me much.

Lee Yin-hsin

January 2, 1950

The brothers in Lanchow, Pinching, and Tienhsui were all blessed by the Lord in the gospel after the new year. The Lord willing, we will go to Meixian (more than three hundred miles west of Changan) to preach the gospel the day after tomorrow.

Lee Yin-xin

February 10, 1950

Mailing Address: 23 Garden Road, Lanchow, Kansu province

The Desperate Need for "Edification" (Lanchow)

The gospel conference over Chinese New Year lasted for seven days with ten meetings. Eighty-three people registered to be baptized. Apart from those who needed more time or did not have the time, we actually baptized thirty-seven (one was an aborigine). There is another aborigine who is ready but has not yet been baptized. On the fourteenth through the sixteenth day of the first month of the lunar calendar, we arranged for three more days of gospel preaching and increased our visits to those friends who had not yet been baptized. As a result, eighteen more registered to be baptized. We have preached the gospel four times since January 1 and saved a total of ninety-two people: fifty-nine brothers and thirty-three sisters. We now feel that God has especially blessed us in the matter of the gospel. Thank Him. However, now we need "edification." Although we have increased our visitation, we still feel that we are not giving them enough

guidance. Furthermore, the young brothers and sisters have started school, so "edification" is our desperate need.

Your brothers,

Lee Jing-san

Ku Zhong-yin

Tu Xin-xue

Mailing Address: 3 Garden Road, Shuang Cheng Men Wai, Lanchow

A Conference in Meixian (Shensi Province)

We stayed in Meixian for ten days and preached the gospel on three days. Thirty-six brothers and sisters were baptized. The atmosphere of the gospel is very burning, and the brothers are all doing very well. There are now more than ninety people in the meetings, with at least one third who have turned from the denominations (mostly from the China Inland Mission). Christianity has a sixty-year history in Meixian. Some people from the denominations told me that they started using our hymnal and reading The Present Testimony twenty years ago. The responsible brothers now are all their sons and students. We had more than ten edification meetings there, and people came from villages as far as thirty miles away to gladly receive the ministry of the word. This was the Lord's work; man cannot do anything. The responsible brother, Jia Xiu-gi, is a young brother (twenty-nine years old). We recommend him to you for some edification. Please accept him.

We have received four application forms for Kuling from Lanchow. Because we will not return to Sian until the twenty-fourth, we will be a little late in forwarding the applications. It would be best if you could send us a few more forms. I personally would like to attend the fourth session of the training and be edified by it.

Lee Yin-xin

February 27, 1950

Mailing Address: 22 North Sichun, Meixian, Shensi province

A Door for the Gospel Being Opened (Tsingtao)

I received the four copies of Messages for Building Up New Believers which you sent. They were immediately passed on to the four regions of Tsingtao for their use. Because the needs in Jiaoxian, Kaomi, and Pahe were urgent, I gave them two copies. Their condition in the Lord is very good. The Lord has manifested His special doings in Qixiaxian. After the brothers finished working there, they were

arrested and taken to Chefoo, but they were later released on bail. All the brothers went to work with a mind to suffer.

Last week 340 were baptized in the church in Tsingtao, and they were filled with the Lord's presence! One woman who had to crawl on her hands and legs was healed! There were also more than twenty who had once tried to commit suicide, but who were called back by the Lord. Once they were saved, they made marvelous improvement. The door for the gospel is really opened.

Chang Tze-jieh

June 24, 1950

The church here has prepared three or four rooms for those who come to Tsingtao to rest. In addition, we have another floor. Is any co-worker willing to come? If anyone wants to come, please tell me, as I hope to be able to meet you in Chinan.

Chang Tze-jieh

July 11

Mailing Address: 4 Long Shan Road, Tsingtao

Truly Hungry and Thirsty (Peking)

The number of those meeting in Peking has increased gradually, and our meeting hall cannot contain everyone. Due to the desperate situation, we intend to tear down our old meeting hall at Kuanjie next spring and build a new, bigger meeting hall that will be able to hold eight hundred to a thousand people. (The new meeting hall has been completed.—Editor)

Recently, many people who are seeking the Lord have been raised up in many places. There are brothers in some places in Hopeh province who have found their way to Peking to fellowship with us. They wanted us to go to them and lead them. The brothers from Ch'ang-ch'un, Manchuria, and other places in the Northeast have also sent several letters imploring us to go there because the brothers are truly hungry and thirsty. Many who seek the Lord in the various denominations have expressed the desire to come to join us.

God has greatly blessed the entire area of Suiyuan, and the meetings increase gradually. The brothers and sisters also are desperate for the Lord, and all the churches zealously preach the gospel. The Lord has really saved many sinners. During the winter season, more than sixty young brothers and sisters met for more than four weeks at Baotou. They received much of the Lord's mercy.

Caleb Yen

January 23, 1950

Mailing Address: 9 Kuanjie, An Nei, Peking

What Is the Reason for Little Fruit in the Gospel? (Pingliang)

In Pingliang we preached the gospel four times over the New Year, and only three brothers and one sister were baptized yesterday. Thank God! Brother Wang Zhi-xiao's father was also baptized at this time. There has been very little fruit in the gospel over the past few months. We do not know if it is because we do not do enough visiting or if there is another spiritual reason. Please instruct us and pray for us much.

Your brothers in the Lord,

Wang Zhi-xiao, Lian Qi-xiu, You Ling-chuan

January 9, 1950

Mailing Address: 61 Fuxing Road, Pingliang, Kansu province

Moving to Yiyang (Kiangsi Province)

Through the love of the brothers and sisters on the farm, I have been received into the cooperative farm here. My work has been assigned as well. I belong to the group managing the storeroom, and my wife does the work of making clothes. Yue-xu (my child) is learning to be a farmer. With regard to the coordination in the service of the church in Yangshuchiao, I am in the gospel service group and the ushering service group. In the matter of the corporate living, I deeply desire to place myself before the elder brothers and sisters and to live together with them. I ask the Lord not to allow me to fall into error again.

A weak member,

Lee Wen-fu

June 25, 1950

Resumed Meetings (Kweiyang)

Dear brothers! We want to report to you the good news that the meetings in Kweiyang have been resumed. We believe you also will rejoice over this matter. About four or five years ago, there were meetings in the Lord's name at 33 Chaoyao Street, Nan Men Wai, Kweiyang. Later, they were stopped for some unknown reason. Thank the Lord for His grace in bringing a few brothers and sisters here from other places. In order to not grieve the Holy Spirit and to serve Him according to His will, we started home meetings on November 21 of this year, and we began to break bread to remember the Lord on December 4.

We now have gospel meetings or message meetings on the Lord's Day mornings at 10:00 and the Lord's table meeting in the evening. There is a prayer meeting every Tuesday evening and a fellowship meeting every Saturday evening. There are four brothers and three sisters who meet regularly. We meet in a sister's home at 222 Zhong-Hua South Road, Kweiyang. We are few in number, but by the Lord's grace, we firmly believe He is with us. We passed through several months of prayer and waiting until we clearly realized that we should rise up to meet in the Lord's name. We know that we are very young and weak. But we also know the importance of the commission given to us by the Lord and the holiness of His work. We feel that we are very unworthy! Therefore, we are forced to cry out to you and ask you to pray desperately for our meetings and for the Lord's gospel. Through your prayers we will receive mercy so that we may not bring shame to His name!

Your weak members in the Lord,

Chen Tieh-mei, Sung Jing-hung

December 18, 1949

Mailing Address: 222 Zhong-Hua South Road, Kweiyang

Time Spent at Ninghai (Chekiang Province)

The work here in Ninghai consisted of a twenty-day conference for the responsible ones and those who are more advanced in life from all the surrounding localities. We gave them thirty-four of the lessons for the edification of the new believers. We showed them the way of pursuing the Lord individually, the way before the church today, the way of the gospel, and the way of the entire Body coordinating in the service. The Lord opened the eyes of many to see the way, and all were willing to rise up to serve and to leave everything to follow Him. With the exception of a few who had come from the denominations, all consecrated themselves. With regard to the brothers' and sisters' money, we asked them to give it to their respective local churches to be dispensed by each locality. We asked the leading brothers and the local churches they represented to make a statement and a pledge to the co-workers in Hangchow, pledging to place themselves and the churches under the authority of the Head and in the hands of the co-workers, and to follow the footsteps of the flock in the way of recovery. We have already sent a report of the situation and their consecrations to Brother Hsu Da-wei in Hangchow. Presently, all the churches are in coordination. I have asked the elders to wait for the co-workers from Hangchow to come make arrangements. They will temporarily serve God according to their

individual leadings. The Lord has placed the fire of revival in the church. All the localities have risen up. I personally am pursuing the outflow of love. I seem to have a vision of a person who is humble and meek, full of love, kindness, and sweetness, who is seeking for the lost ones. This is such a beautiful picture! But I am too far from this picture and can only look to Him for mercy, hoping that one day I will be matured.

Hua Tien-min

February 1, 1950

(Brother Hua has already returned to Ch'ang-ch'un.— Editor)

May God Have a Clear Way Here

(Bangbu, Anhwei)

By the Lord's leading, the meetings began here in Bangbu at the beginning of this year. The Lord has continuously added saved ones to our number. As a result of this, the church in Nanking sent someone here, and we held our first baptism meeting on June 4. We had the second baptism meeting on the twenty-third of this month. A total of thirty-four brothers and sisters were baptized into the Lord's name in the two meetings. We began having the Lord's table to remember the Lord on the same day (July 23). We all want to give glory and honor to our Father God and to the Christ on the throne. Amen.

We have just begun and are immature and weak, so we need all the churches to pray for us. May God have a clear way here. May He lead us and keep us until He comes.

From the brothers meeting in the Lord's name in Bangbu,

Shu Pei-zhi, Shao Yi-ming, Han Tseng-yu

July 23, 1950

Mailing Address: 1 Hua-Tung Li, Hua-Sheng Road, Bangbu, Anhwei province

News from K'un-ming

(Yunnan Province)

Brother Dao-sheng, Brother Shao-zu, and Sister Bao Xue-jie went to Mongtze to preach the gospel, and a total of more than sixty people were baptized into the Lord in three different meetings. Thank the Lord for saving sinners. The brothers were there for more than two months and have now returned. Brother He Jun-yu of Weixi, who is about thirty years old, has gone to the remote border regions to preach the gospel (he comes from that area), and many people have come to the Lord. We have heard that there are sixteen places with meetings. Sister Yu-rui

sent us the letter she sent to you, but we did not have an opportunity to get together with her before we received word on January 25 that she had gone to be with the Lord like the faithful witness Antipas! She was the only co-worker raised up by the Lord here who could speak the Yunnan dialect. Last year when she came to K'un-ming, she really wanted to go to Kuling to be edified, but was too late in returning. Now that she has gone to rest, the Lord's work has suffered a great loss; we are very saddened! The work there will be very difficult from now on!

Andrew Chen

February 7, 1950

It is very difficult to spread the work in K'un-ming at this time. The brothers and sisters all seem to have heavy burdens in spirit. The only place with gospel work apart from K'un-ming is Mongtze. But it is very immature and weak. A Tibetan brother, Jiang-Ba-o-se, is responsible for taking the lead there.

I am teaching mathematics at En-Guang Girls' Secondary School. I have nine classes a week plus tutorial lessons. I work for half a day and use the rest of the time for reading the Bible and visiting people. Brother Dao-sheng and I take turns bearing the responsibility for the message at the Thursday night new believers' meeting. Brother Dao-sheng is working for an architect. He has more time than I, and he bears more responsibility for the work of visitation in the church. The elder Brother Chen Ruo-tien bears the responsibility for edification of the believers on the Lord's Day morning and for the work of Bible study. (We are in Romans 8 in our Bible study.)

Your brother in the Lord,

Shao-zu

May 31

I have been in K'un-ming for about a year now and really am in debt to the Lord's work. I have discovered two matters in this past year: First, I have not learned enough about preaching the gospel, and I am unable to meet the church's need. Second, my personal growth is too immature, as I have not received enough dealings. I can only beg the Lord for much mercy.

I am now teaching school here and learning to serve God in the church at the same time. This has all been arranged by the elderly brothers; I did not make any choices. The Lord's arrangement is always good. I did not learn enough at Haiguanxiang last year. I really hope to attend the third session of edification meetings at Kuling....I am praying now, and if the Lord wills, I hope to return to

Shanghai, attend the third session of training, and then return to K'un-ming. May the Lord have mercy on me, this miserable wretch.

How has the church in Shanghai been recently? I heard that several hundred people migrated to the Kiangsi Province. (Less than one hundred people went.—Editor) Thank the Lord! Who is responsible for the church in Nanchang? (Brother Fan Zhi-guang and others are responsible.—Editor) Did Brother David Hsu go to Nanchang? How have the brothers at Jiao-Tong University been lately? Greet them for me when you see them.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Shao-zu

June 5

Mailing Address: 3rd Floor, 312 Jinbi Road, K'un-ming, Yunnan province

Recent News from Foochow and Kuling

Brother Guang-tao is here and is still able to mingle with the brothers in the service. We spend most of the time in physical labor. He washes clothes himself and cleans the house, which seems to be good for him. We feel that we need his portion in many matters.

Your sister,

Peace Wang

July 17

The brothers at Kuling have hope for their harvest if there is one more month without a typhoon. Their difficulties in making a living would then be solved. There are not many elderly, weak, or sick ones in the church in Kuling. Most are strong, but without work. There are difficulties in giving aid to them, however: 1) Many are too proud to take it freely. 2) Some are lazy and easily become greedy. We have asked the local responsible brothers to go before the Lord together to find a way. With the exception of those who are sick, we now render help in return for work. We have assigned them to fix up the clinic and the school on the mountain. They have recently volunteered to repair the Ministers' House on Haiguanxiang on the same ground of fellowship. The brothers and sisters living in the Ministers' House had some precious fellowship in the Holy Spirit with brothers living in the neighborhood. Thank God! He has done all things well in this matter!

All of us together are still doing our best to cultivate the fields and raise rabbits, bees, and pigs, but we are far from making ends meet. (Kuling is too remote, and

there is not enough area at Haiguanxiang.) The brothers have made several plans but have not been able to carry them out. We plan to plant flowers for honey at Kuling and are preparing to make honey in large quantities in the future.

Your sister,

Peace Wang

July 25

Mailing Address: Ministers' House, 14 Haiguanxiang, Foochow

Hoping Only that the Lord

Would Have Mercy on Us Again (Nanking)

There are many places in northern Kiangsu that only have home meetings. When the brothers went there, they were all prepared to recover the Lord's table. They will recover the other service as the situation allows. They are inwardly burning! More than ten brothers came from northern Kiangsu. They were all responsible brothers in the churches. They stayed in Ningpo for more than twenty days and returned yesterday.

If the Lord allows, we want group after group of them to come to Ningpo to learn to have fellowship with the churches on the one hand, and to lead them according to the measure of strength given by the Lord on the other hand.

We can only confess our sin with regard to the churches in northern Kiangsu and cannot say anything more. We have let down the churches, the co-workers, and all the brothers, sisters, and sinners in northern Kiangsu! Our foolish unfaithfulness has been manifested! We only hope that the Lord would have mercy on us so that He would give us the time to repay this debt. We can now only confess our sins and repent; there is nothing else to do! The Lord, however, is giving grace, and He is using Brother Feng Xian-zhi to minister to a group of seekers of the Lord. His spirit has been very strong in the past year, and he has helped many people there. Praise the Lord! He came to Ningpo recently and returned yesterday.

All the brothers and sisters who bear some responsibility in the church in Nanking are in one accord. Although each has problems with his own disposition, everyone is in one accord for the things of God, and the entire Body has developed such a taste.

The Lord's Day morning messages alternate between gospel messages and edification messages. Many from the denominations come. Some have taken a turn this way and break bread together with us. Every Monday afternoon for half a day, the responsible ones come together to wait on the saints for fellowship.

During these times, there are counselings and prayers. After learning the situation and needs of each one, they help them according to their ability. The result has demonstrated God's blessing.

There are many brothers and sisters with a heart for the Lord, but their occupation has become a big problem. Some are jobless, and some want to get out of business and into production. There is no practical way to solve their problems. We do not know how to help them.

Ji Yung-tung

January 23, 1950

Mailing Address: Hsin 26 Citanxiang, Zhongshan East Road, Nanking

Staying in Ch'ang-sha (Hunan Province)

After leaving Shanghai and returning to Hunan, I visited the brothers and sisters in Xiangtan and Yiyang. I also went to Wuhan and preached the gospel with the brothers and sisters there. I formally began to stay in C'hang-sha in October of last year. The Lord arranged a teaching job for me, and I have been learning how to serve Him with the brothers and sisters.

There have never been many brothers and sisters in the church in C'hang-sha. The condition of the meetings has been lifted up during this year, and there is the inward supply. As everyone felt the inward need, we began to formally break bread in remembrance of the Lord on March 12 of this year. There are about ten people who come to break bread.

I was really burning when I first returned to the inland region. My entire heart was filled with the desire to serve the Lord. At the beginning the Lord really had mercy on me, but later I saw that I could not make it....Thank the Lord for giving me some deeper dealings.

I hope to learn some Greek during my vacation and spend more time studying the Bible while I am still young. I do not know if this is what the Lord wants. Please pray for me concerning this matter.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Chang Fangzheng

June 4

Mailing Address: 1 Xundao Street, C'hang-sha, Hunan province

Brother Lie-shan's Orphan (Hweichang, Kiangsi)

After my older brother, Lie-shan, left this earth, my sister-in-law remained in Hangchow for three years before returning to her hometown. Our family is very

poor and does not produce anything. We depend on manual labor to make a living. My sister-in-law was very thankful to receive our occasional help. She became ill with a tumor in her nose and left this earth last June! My brother had three daughters who are all grown and married. He had one son named Xiang-xin who is eighteen years old. Last semester he graduated from junior high school, and he wanted to attend high school this coming semester, but he was unable financially.

My brother Lie-shan was the eldest child in the family, and I am the fourth son. Since graduating from the Gospel Hospital in 1924, I have been working in the neighboring countryside of Junlingzhen as a doctor to make a living. I have had some ability to support my nephew in his studies after graduation from junior high school. This has really been the Lord's great grace, and I thank and praise Him for it.

Because my nephew will not be able to go to high school next semester, he has become mentally ill. For the last two months he has hardly eaten or drunk, and he has become physically weak. Although he has taken medicine, received shots, been exhorted with kind words, and been the subject of many prayers, nothing seems to work. His future is very precarious, and I am very worried. I hope that you pray that he will be healed soon, lest something terrible happen to him.

Your brother in the Lord,

Tseng Chi-zhong

November 27, 1949

Mailing Address: Jien Min Hospital, Junlingzhen, Huichang County, Kiangsi province

Returned from Hunan, Hupeh, and Kiangsi Provinces (Chekiang)

Our meetings began in 1935. During the Sino-Japanese War, most of the brothers and sisters left for Hunan, Hupeh, Kweichow, Kwangsi, and Kiangsi provinces. They worked and preached the gospel at the same time. After the war, we began to return from Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi, and other places to our original localities.

In August 1948, we began praying and preaching the gospel in different brothers' homes every Lord's Day. By the Lord's arrangement, we built a three-room tiled house in the winter of 1948 and began regular meetings. We established the

Lord's table and had a baptism meeting on February 5 of this year. There were thirty-one people breaking bread to remember the Lord. Every Lord's Day we preach the gospel, edify the believers, fellowship, and break bread in four different meetings. There is a sisters' meeting and a prayer meeting on Thursday and Saturday.

Our reason for writing this letter is to have the fellowship in life with the churches in other localities and to ask the brothers and sisters to remember to pray for this young and weak church.

Yu Yien-chuan, Shao Bao-xin, Chen De-hui

May 21, 1950

Mailing Address: c/o Gao Chiao Post Office Box, Fu Yang, Chekiang

News from Hankow (Hupeh)

After I returned to Hankow, I consulted with Brother Liu Ai-wu by letter and made preparations to safely return the children who could be returned to their own homes in Hankow. He answered that there was no one who would be coming soon, and they could not send someone just for this purpose. Therefore, I can only wait. Life in the orphanage goes on as usual. There is enough food to last for the summer. Once there is someone to supervise the children, we will begin bringing groups of them to Hankow.

Brother Zhu Si-jin of southern Shantung province had tuberculosis for a long time and passed away on the sixth of this month! His widow and orphaned children are all at Chili. Fortunately, their uncle has a stationery store in Chili where he also does some farming. The brothers in Chili are all very poor. A certain brother and his family do not have the strength to hoe and have no way to make a living. What can we do?

Lan Tsi-yi

June 26, 1950

Mailing Address: 59 Xiao Dung Jia Alley 1, Hankow

(The Hebron Orphanage is in the remote locality of Chili, Hunan. There is a limit to what can be produced, and they cannot expand, so it must close its operations. According to the latest news, the children have already begun coming in groups to Hankow. Brother Lan Tsi-yi has already moved to Hankow for the gospel work.—Editor)

A Conference in Huaian (Kiangsu Province)

While I was staying in Zhenjiang, I received a letter from the brothers in Huaian in northern Kiangsu province, saying that they had several brothers with a heart to serve the Lord. They invited me to visit and give them instruction concerning the way to serve the Lord and the kind of responsibility they should bear. I mentioned their request to Brother Ji and elderly Brother Wu, and they also felt that I should see the situation of the brothers in northern Kiangsu. Therefore, I went to Kiangsu on July 2. When I arrived in Huaian, there were some brothers and sisters waiting for me.

God arranged all the circumstances, and the brothers in Huaian gathered all the brothers who had a heart and who were already bearing responsibility in the localities around Huaian. In the conference the brothers and sisters were stirred up to consecrate themselves to the Lord and to learn to serve. I will probably be able to return to Chenchiang on or around July 20.

Chiu Ri-jien

July 16

Mailing Address: 31 Sifu Street, Zhenjiang, Kiangsu

Praying for a Building (Nanchang, Kiangsi)

The brothers and sisters who migrated to Nanchang have all been well, and the Lord has really graced us.

Our meetings are free, and people get saved when we preach the gospel. More than ten have been saved this year, and many lost sheep have been brought home to rest. The rented meeting hall can seat only about ninety people; it cannot accommodate everyone. We are praying daily for a house.

It has been very difficult to find jobs for the brothers. But we are going on positively to find a solution. Our car's engine is being changed to a charcoal-burning engine, and we hope it can be finished soon. (It has been finished.—Editor) Our finances are very tight, but the Lord always gets us through the difficult situations. (According to the most recent news, many of these difficulties have already passed.—Editor)

Fan Chih-kuang

June 28, 1950

Mailing Address: 13 Loboshi, Nanchang

The Lord's Progressive Leading (Guling, Jiujiang)

You have no way of knowing our situation because communication is so difficult. We would like to tell you how the Lord has progressively led us.

We resumed meetings in July and August of 1948. At that time, Brother Rao Jun-ren and Brother Huang Deh-en from Nanchang and Brother Hsu Xu-guo from Nanking were all here. A newly saved brother, Wei Yan-bin, who was bearing responsibility with them, was also with them. (Brother Wei returned to Shanghai long ago.) By the Lord's arrangement we borrowed a hall at 15 He-Dong Road because of the needs of our meetings. Beginning in July, we began paying rent. Although the rent is not much, it makes our ground more solid. By the Lord's grace, we are learning to serve Him step by step and have been continually kept in His grace. Although we are in an isolated spot, the Lord has helped us to learn to trust Him.

The number in the meetings here varies according to the season and the environment. At the most we have around fifty or sixty, and at a minimum we have more than ten. The number of those who regularly attend the meetings is around thirty or forty. (There are about ten men and twenty women.) Five brothers and sisters were baptized on June 11.

In the beginning we only had meetings on the Lord's Day, but later we added the prayer service. Presently, we have four meetings a week: a message meeting on the Lord's Day morning at 9:00 (we preach the gospel on the first Lord's Day of every month), the Lord's table meeting at 11:00, a fellowship and Bible study meeting on Wednesday at Brother Hsu's home, and a prayer and Bible study meeting on Saturday.

We have a children's meeting every Lord's Day afternoon. There are almost one hundred children. Three young sisters bear the responsibility for this meeting.

We really need the supply for the children's meeting and the edification of a new believers' meeting. Please remember us much before the Lord.

The brothers in Guling,

Xiong Cheng-en, Yu Xin-liang, Hsu Xu-guo

July 28

Mailing Address: Wenhua House, Hsin 121 Bo-shu Road, Guling, Jiujiang

Repeated Cries

(Wanxian, Szechuan Province)

We recently read Brother Kuo Ben-biao's letter from Hankow. He met a certain Brother Ma Cheng-yen of Shanghai in Hankow who had gone to Chungking as a pioneer for groups migrating to Szechuan. According to his letter, two hundred thirty brothers and sisters in Shanghai have signed up for migration for the gospel. We were overjoyed when we heard this news. We saw that there is not

only the need in the remote places but also the response in the coastal centers. Therefore, we feel that we should bring our pressing needs to your attention at this time.

When we left Shanghai last spring, we remembered that Brother Witness Lee said in a meeting something to the effect that our returning to Szechuan might be for later migrations. We did not have such foresight then, but we really do have a heavy burden for the work in Szechuan.

We have been here for more than a year and have written to tell you about the condition of our gospel work. We already have begun the meetings. We have seen the Lord's support and blessing amidst all our weakness, immaturity, and pitifulness. We have given Brother Hsu Jung-jieh in Chungking detailed reports of the situation in Wanxian and have asked him frequently for advice. We recently received a letter from Brother Hsu saying that if the Lord allows, Sister Sia Xiu-lan may come to Wanxian to visit us.

We held our first baptism meeting last Lord's Day (June 18) and baptized a total of twenty-one brothers and sisters. The Lord was really with us. Thank the Lord!

With regard to brothers and sisters from Shanghai migrating to Wanxian, we have found a place that can accommodate from twenty to one hundred people. When the brothers arrive, there will be no problem finding them a place to stay. Regarding the problem of the brothers' occupations after coming to Wanxian, we have made the following preliminary investigations: 1) Farming. We have asked if fields would be available after the harvest next fall. If the brothers coming to Wanxian want to farm unused land, they will not be able to make a living, because there is not much unused land, and what there is is too difficult to till. If the brothers decide to farm here, we will do our best to find a way and tell you in another letter. 2) Industrial production would be easier to carry out. There is a very good building not far from the city that can hold over a hundred people. It is excellent for a factory. If the brothers can bring some means of production, and if they are able to engage in such work, this place can be a good production base for Wanxian. This is merely a suggestion. With regard to the details of the matter, you will need to make decisions about how many brothers and sisters are coming to Wanxian and what kind of product would be produced. If you have any questions, please write us, and we will carry out your instructions and decisions. This letter is merely to give you an introduction to our needs and the situation here for your consideration and decision. In conclusion, we are issuing a repeated call, and we ask that you not ignore it. In any event, you must

remember this lonely, weak, and pitiful flock of sheep in a remote mountain corner. Finally, we ask that you answer our letter, lest we worry! Oh, we rejoice so much when we receive a letter, a magazine, or a book from the brothers!

Chen Fa-guang, Chen Liu Shi-feng

June 23, 1950

Mailing Address: 120 Huan Cheng Road, Wanxian, Szechuan

Concerning the Condition of the Church in Wanxian

HISTORY: In the spring of 1949, Brother Chen Fa-guang and his wife returned from Shanghai to Szechuan after the church laid hands on them and prayed. They brought the fire of the gospel with them and scattered the seeds of the gospel all over Wanxian. After approximately one year of preaching the gospel once a week on the street corners and in buildings, the number of those who had signed their names as believers had reached more than three hundred. Beginning the third day of the Chinese New Year, gospel meetings were held every day for seven days, and fruit was gained officially. Thirty to forty people were raised up at once. A regular meeting place was found through the Lord's marvelous arrangement, and meetings officially began.

MEETING HALL ADDRESS: 274 Huan Cheng Road, Wanxian (Brother Lee Guang-min's house). It is in a good location.

CAPACITY: The room at the back can accommodate eighty or ninety people. The front room can also be used. In total there is capacity for more than one hundred people with appropriate ventilation and light.

CURRENT MEETINGS: Wednesday Prayer Meeting, Saturday Fellowship Meeting, Lord's Day Gospel Meetings

NUMBER IN THE MEETINGS: Usually around forty or fifty.

NUMBER BAPTIZED: The first baptism meeting was held outside the city on June 18, and twenty-one brothers and sisters were baptized.

THE LORD'S TABLE: We have not officially started breaking bread together.

NEARBY CHURCHES: Chungking is upstream. Hankow is downstream.

OTHER DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES: Episcopalian Church (including China Inland Mission), Gospel Church, Lutheran Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Catholic Church.

LOCATION OF WANXIAN: Wanxian is located on the north bank of the Yangtze River in the eastern region of Szechuan province. It is the largest city in eastern

Szechuan and is one of Szechuan's three largest cities: Ch'eng-tu, Chungking, and Wanxian. It is a large port for river traffic on the Yangtze and is the unloading point for goods destined for eastern Szechuan and western Hupeh. Szechuan province covers a large area, and if eastern Szechuan were a separate province, it would be larger than Chekiang province. For this reason, Wanxian can be considered the center of eastern Szechuan for the sake of the gospel.

POPULATION OF WANXIAN: The entire county has a population of 800,000, and 200,000 of them live in the city of Wanxian.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION: River Traffic: It takes two days traveling upstream to reach Chungking and one day traveling downstream to reach Yichang. Passing steamers regularly make stops here. Land Traffic: The Wanxian-Chungking Highway passes through Liangshan, Dazhu, and Daxian. An express bus can reach it in one day. The Wan-Kai (County) Highway is not open yet.

PRODUCTION: This area produces rice, tung-oil, hog's bristles, cow and sheep skins, tangerines, and oranges, but tung-oil is the largest industry. Presently, there is a large spinning factory and three small flour factories. The rest are all small industries. (For example: rice husking, machine repairs, tanning leather, and dying cloth.)

There Is a Way When We Meet the Lord (Ch'ang-ch'un)

Brother Zuo-xin and I have received some light; we are serving God in one accord with Brother Xun-tian and Brother Xi-nian, and there is not the slightest problem among us. The more we go on, the clearer the way becomes. The church in Ch'ang-ch'un has been blessed by the Lord more than we could ask or think. There have been a total of four weeks of message meetings with two breaks for days of prayer. The Lord's own word came upon us and resolved all kinds of problems. We saw some matters in the Word for the first time. Today is a great day because God is coming forth! He establishes what is of Himself, and He tears down what is not of Himself. He did not allow us to continue serving Him in the flesh. The day in which God speaks is the day in which His light shines. We can only worship Him and give ourselves more to Him while waiting for His cleansing. I am in more fear and trembling. We have such a great responsibility because we hold the spiritual future of so many brothers and sisters who are pursuing the Lord in our hands! I am so poor and weak in myself! After returning, I have had a time of prayer and spiritual pursuit with the brothers every morning.

On the one hand, I desire to be an unwavering and uncompromising person for the sake of the Lord's truth. But on the other hand, I want to pour myself out in loving the brothers. I want to be faithful, but I do not want to hurt others.

I deeply feel that all work begins from our service before the Lord. Once we meet the Lord we have the way, and once we meet Him we have the truth. Our plans are not the way, and our doctrines are not the truth. Indeed we do not move in ourselves, we can only move when He moves. I do not know how many tears I have shed while I have been looking to Him. We cannot make any more mistakes in the spiritual work in Manchuria. If we make another mistake, we may not have another opportunity to serve for the rest of our lives! Therefore, I am bringing my scars to the brothers. We wait on Him in fear and trembling concerning all matters. Hymn #188 has become our prayer for this fresh start.

Concerning the principle of Antioch, I have recently felt that Barnabas and Saul were sent out and the brothers commended Paul and Silas to the grace of God. The apostles were the sent ones of the church, so there should be a sending church, and they should go forth in the spirit of oneness. I really say "amen" to having no workers in the central church because the workers are always sent out and commended to the Lord's grace. The spiritual center chosen by God is the center of God's work, and the apostles are sent out in a spirit of oneness. I really feel that the Lord has prepared Ch'ang-ch'un in Manchuria. Therefore, the work in Manchuria as well as the work in Ch'ang-ch'un should proceed according to this principle. If it does not, there will not be much blessing or protection. This has been my main consideration, and I dare not be relaxed in this matter.

With regard to my occupation, chicken farming takes up too much of my time, and other occupations require too much thought. I want a job that does not require much thought. I want a change in occupation, one that exercises my physical body instead. There is a brother in Harbin who owns a bakery. I plan to go there for two or three months to learn how to make bread on the one hand and to serve the brothers and sisters on the other hand. Perhaps I will start a bakery in the future. Do you think it will be practical? I have already fellowshiped with the brothers, and everyone is seeking the Lord. Brother Zuo-xin also plans to go to Ch'ang-ch'un. In the ministry of the word, Brother Xi-nian is very strong. Brother Wang Xing-yu is bearing some responsibility for the edification of the new ones. There are a few brothers who are able to serve in the ministry of the word. This conference really showed us the right way, and the preaching of our

gospel is with more zeal now. Since I left Ch'ang-ch'un, the brothers are better able to carry out their functions.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Hua Tien-min

July 17, 1950

There are many matters related to the work in Manchuria, and we are waiting for your instructions and arrangement. We hope that you will come to Manchuria soon because there are some matters in which we cannot proceed with full assurance. In the Lord's work, I think that there must be a few praying in one accord before something spiritual can be realized. A small number of people have to wrestle in prayer, bring about some changes through prayer, and touch the things that the Lord wants to tear down and the things that He wants to establish, before they can say that they are co-laboring with Him. One must serve in prayer before he can serve in the ministry of the word. What a small number of people touch will spread to the many. If a small number purge themselves of all judgments, views, or decisions, and if they come before the Lord as empty vessels for Him to speak to, work on, and judge, there will not be any problems in the Lord's manifesting Himself. The Lord is desperate. The key matter is whether or not we will let Him come out. What the Lord wants to tear down in many must first be torn down in a few. What the Lord wants to judge in many must first be judged in a few. The service of the co-workers and the elders depends on this. If a few are willing to pursue the Lord, setting themselves aside to meet the Lord, we will know that everything is Christ. Authority, work, and position all belong to Christ. We are empty; we are nothing.

There are still problems in the service in Manchuria. When everyone comes before the Lord, there is still the lack of one accord. This is related to our background. When I was in Shanghai, I planned to fellowship openly with you, but I did not have the opportunity because the Lord's time had not yet come. It is very difficult to get through these matters without discussing them, and they are creating endless problems. In my private prayer, I beg the Lord to tear down all that is of our flesh and human opinion, and to establish what is of Himself. I am no longer silent, but am learning to stand firm with the Lord. I also deeply desire that I would have a right spirit, free from individual feelings, in opening the situation in Manchuria to you. Indeed, the service of some has posed a real problem. These are truly days for the Lord to cleanse His church. He will not let

our flesh go. We are waiting for reminders in fear and trembling. We want to repent while it is still today, lest we bring our mistakes to the judgment seat. I really do not want to pay attention to my slight pain. I only want to receive the cleansing judgment. If you cannot come to Manchuria soon, could I make a trip to Shanghai to receive your instructions? If I cannot do this, some matters will be left untouched, and the church will suffer real spiritual losses.

For many years, Brother Xun-tian and Brother Xi-nian have given up their money and time with sweat and blood for the Lord's testimony in Manchuria. During the Japanese occupation, they were put in jail for several months for the Lord's testimony, but they never renounced the Lord. They paid a price for the Lord's business in Ch'ang-ch'un. I deeply feel that we cannot ignore what they see before the Lord, so I hope you will fellowship with them.

With regard to the matter of the brothers' occupation in Ch'ang-ch'un, there is an oil factory (mechanically producing soy oil) that is completely run by the brothers. There is a newly established textile factory, but it is very small. Last year Brother Xun-tian started the Canaan Soy Sauce Factory, and the Lord has greatly blessed it. Recently, a large soy sauce factory was put up for sale. The lot is very large, and it can employ thirty to forty people. It will require a capital investment of seven hundred to eight hundred million yen. The brothers in Ch'ang-ch'un may be able to put the money together, and it will be managed by the Canaan Soy Sauce Factory. These brothers are all consecrated and have the heart to strive for the Lord's work. In this way, the brothers' occupations will be resolved.

Your little brother in the Lord,

Hua Tien-min

August 20, 1950

Mailing Address: 9 Tongxun Alley, West 4 Road, Ch'ang-ch'un

Huangtze Town (Dongshiang, Sheng County, Chekiang Province)

We, the meeting at Huangtze Town, have never belonged to any denomination, nor do we have much fellowship with brothers and sisters of other groups. Therefore, our spiritual life is very immature. Thank God for having mercy on us, His ignorant sheep, and for constantly giving us grace. We began to have His table in April of this year with a total of fifty-five people breaking bread together. Praise the Lord! Another thirteen brothers and sisters were baptized into the Lord recently...

Wu Huan-deh, Shen Jien-ding

August

Prayer and Consecration (Manila)

When I heard that the brothers and sisters in China were in a condition of serious poverty, my heart suffered greatly. The wisdom, skill, and money of the brothers and sisters from each locality should be combined to find ways for everybody to survive by establishing small industries. Those with skills should teach others. It would be good if classes to train people in the trades could be set up in a number of places. They could teach weaving, dying, chemistry, pharmacology, and even short-term training in medicine. Perhaps the training at Kuling could have a class in trade skills. I really hope this could happen.

I am praying about my future on the one hand and offering myself into the hands of the co-workers on the other hand. I am willing to submit to the decision of the co-workers concerning the aspect of the work that is most appropriate for me in order to serve God. I hope you will give me some directions.

May the Lord be with you, brothers!

Stephen Kaung

February 9

(Brother Kaung is in the process of applying to return to China. We hope we will be able to publish the fourth issue of The Gospel when he arrives in Shanghai.—Editor)

Longing and Hoping (Manila)

Although I have not written for a long time, I long for you in my heart and remember you often in my prayers. I have heard that the work of the gospel in China has been blessed by the Lord and that the number of saved ones has increased greatly. I really thank the Lord! I hope Brother Witness Lee will be able to come here soon to work. The application for entry into the Philippines is very strict, and it requires much prayer. May God have mercy on us believers here.

We really thank the Lord that Brother Stephen Kaung and his wife have come here. Brother Kaung helped the young brothers and sisters very much. It is now summer vacation, and he leads the young people in studying the Bible for one hour every morning. This is a great benefit to the young brothers and sisters.

Your sister in the Lord,

Lin Xue Yu-giang

April 16, 1950

Mailing Address: Mrs. Lin Yu-giang, 737 Reina Regente Street, Manila, P.I.

The Capital of Thailand

The church now has a home prayer meeting in the Tong-Ren Hospital every Saturday evening at 7:30 in addition to the prayer meeting at 10:00 on the Lord's Day morning. There are no other meetings. Since I came here, the brothers and sisters want me to take the opportunity to preach at the time of the prayer meeting. I just stand in my position as a brother and gradually speak what I have seen of the truth every Saturday and Lord's Day. The number in the meetings has increased from three to more than twenty. Two have signed up to be baptized. We are now looking to the Lord to see how He will work. We dare not run in front of Him, but only want to follow Him so that His will may be carried out. I deeply know that I am weak and cannot bear much. For the Lord's sake, please lead and instruct me so that I would not veer to the right or the left, but may be able to go on the straight way.

A weak member in the Lord,

Wu Chiu-jiang

October 31, 1949

Mailing Address: 279 Chang Fang Bridge, opposite the Central Post Office at Suriwong Road intersection, Bangkok, Thailand

Ceylon (Territory of India)

Brother Faithful Luk recently came from Singapore through India to Ceylon and stayed for three weeks. He labored diligently among the brothers and sisters, especially among the Chinese brothers and sisters. We were all greatly helped. Several men and women believed and were baptized as a result of his work. It really is a cause for rejoicing. Yesterday, Brother Luk took the Swiss ship Sumatra back to Singapore. Although we did not want him to leave us, his move was completely of God, and we dared not interfere.

Hsu Yun-ting

June 28, 1950

Mailing Address: 109 Chatham Street, Colombo, Ceylon

The Way of Migration—

Migration to Yiyang

I have wanted to write about how God led us to migrate from Chekiang to Kiangsi and something of what we learned before Him, in order to have fellowship with the brothers and sisters in the Lord, but I have not dared to write lightly. I only now dare to write a little bit.

In the summer of 1948, there were sudden, terrible landslides into the river in the region of Nansha, Xiaoshan in Chekiang province (including the localities of Jiazaowan, Shi-Er-Dai, Dangshanwan, Meilinwan, Sinwan, Toupeng, and Sanchadai. This is the region along the river in Nansha.) The areas worst hit were Shi-Er-Dai and Dangshanwan. In less than two months several thousand Chinese acres of land slid into the river. The homes of the brothers living on this land were carried away to the east. Some of these brothers had no place to live, and some were willing to submit to the authority of the church and wait for the church's arrangement. They dared not loosely seek their own way. With the exception of a small number who moved away, the rest were temporarily placed by the church in homes of the brothers whose houses had not slid into the river. At that time, it seemed outwardly that the church had met with a great difficulty, but this was really the beginning of God's move to carry out His plan.

One afternoon, I was talking with a brother when he suddenly said, "Let us move to Kiangsi." From that day God began to operate in us for His work because we were inexplicably caught by this idea. At first we did not want to tell anyone about this matter because we thought it was impossible. We thought it was nothing more than something we had talked and thought about. Later, we privately told a few brothers who pursued the Lord and who had learned lessons in the service about this constant inward burden. Who would have thought that once we mentioned it, they would receive the burden also? In this way, it spread from one to another until many brothers knew about this matter. Nevertheless, we dared not speak about it publicly because we were afraid of going contrary to God's will, not to mention that this was a very difficult proposition. However, the outward difficulties could not suppress the inward burden, and because we did not have the confirmation from the Word, we dared not hold on to the inward burden.

We were caught in a dilemma of not knowing what to do. During that time Brother Witness Lee held a ten-day conference in Hangchow (October 25 to November 3, 1948). We brought up this matter during one of the discussion meetings one day. Praise the Lord. Through the mouth of His apostle, the Lord publicly announced the message about migration for the gospel in the conference. Brother Lee also told us how the brothers in Chefoo had met with great suffering because they migrated too late. He told us clearly that the church had not progressed because a group of old Christians were unwilling to leave. They were occupying the place of others. As a result, for many years it was hard for newly saved ones to be added to the church. Today if God's children are willing to leave

their homes at all cost, God will immediately raise up a group of saved ones to fill the empty seats. The ones who go out will be able to raise up another group of people as well, so the church will be raised up everywhere, and God's will can be accomplished everywhere. God's requirement today is that His children go out. If the brothers from Shi-Er-Dai leave, perhaps the land will stop sliding into the river. (This word came to pass later.) Therefore, leave quickly! Brother Lee confirmed this word with the verse: "Go [migrate] into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all the creation" (Mark 16:15)....At this point, we could only believe, submit, and worship. We quickly made a long-distance phone call to the brothers in Shi-Er-Dai to tell them that migration was God's requirement. We asked them to wait in peace before God. (At that time the river banks were sliding terribly, and brothers' houses were dropping off one by one.) Praise the Lord! He prevailed in this step.

After the conference we hurried home and told the brothers the details of the message God had preached through His apostle. We also asked them to pray much for God to accomplish His desire. After awhile, we had them sign up to migrate on one Lord's Day afternoon. Praise the Lord! About twenty brothers (representing their families) signed up. The work of migration formally started that day. We felt that the first step should be to go to Kiangsi to see the situation, just as Moses sent twelve spies to spy out the land when the Israelites were about to enter Canaan (Num. 13:1-20). I invited five brothers to go with me. On the trip we paid attention to the hand of God to see if He would confirm His will for us to migrate to Kiangsi. We stayed in Brother Fan Chi-hung's home in Guali for the first night. (Brother Fan was one of the brothers who went along.) We prepared to get up at 11:00 in the night to hire a boat to take us to Xiaoshan to catch the early train. Before we slept, we prayed that the Lord would make us watchful so as to not waste His time. As we wakened from our sleep and were lying quietly in bed, we suddenly heard a clock clearly striking 11:00. We hurriedly got out of bed and dressed. Just as we were going out the door, we looked at the clock on the wall and were surprised to see that it had stopped at 9:00 at night. We marveled and rejoiced. Although the clock did not work, God did not sleep. Oh! He kept us from napping by day and sleeping at night. We could only fall down and worship Him.

The boat arrived in Xiaoshan around 5:00 in the morning. We walked to the train station and saw many passengers sleeping there. We walked into the station and

lined up at the ticket window. Soon the sleeping people woke up and were fighting for places in line after us; more and more people came to buy tickets, and the place was soon very crowded. When the time for ticket sales came, we saw a notice on the ticket window, saying, "Only ten tickets will be sold for today's train, half for soldiers and half for citizens." Oh! That was just the number we needed, not too many or too few. We heard many of the people behind us berating themselves for not being watchful, having spent the night in vain. We could only prostrate ourselves and worship the Lord in our spirit!

We arrived safely at the Yiyang Train Station on the second morning. We walked for fifteen miles from the station to the Yangshuchiaio Faith Cooperative Farm. (Brother Fan bought the land and cultivated it in 1942.) As we walked, we noticed that there are hills and mountains everywhere: the countryside is not flat like that of Chekiang. Villages are scattered among mountain ridges, and it is difficult to know where towns are unless one sees smoke from their fires. On the following day, we went out to see the fields on the neighboring hillsides. There are cultivated places and unfarmed land. The soil is yellow and sandy. It is much inferior to the soil in Chekiang, and we could imagine what the harvest would be like. We walked through several villages, and as we saw their broken down, neglected condition, it was as if buckets of cold water were quenching the ardor which was in us. We began to worry how we would make a living in this kind of place. Would we be in the same pitiful condition as the natives after being here for a few years? The brothers and sisters would never be able to stand this kind of hardship....Our faith was so oppressed by the physical environment that it was difficult to stand firm. But in our deepest part, we felt that this kind of thought was from the enemy and that we should not allow it to have a place. A fierce struggle began in our hearts.

When I arose on the morning of the third day, I saw a copy of Streams in the Desert on the table. I picked it up and opened it to one page. The main point was that God is like a locomotive. He is fully able to move all His children, but they must have the hook of faith to connect them to the locomotive....After reading this, God grasped me again. I saw the light inwardly and was moved to confess my weakness and lack of faith before God and to ask Him for mercy. Thank the Lord, my inner boldness was immediately rekindled. I originally planned to return home dejectedly that day, but decided to stay for one more day. We then went to another place—Zhaobintian. The fields there are much better than those at Yangshuchiaio. There is also a Christian in the denominations there (he is

already in fellowship with us now) who warmly welcomed us. Praise the Lord that we did not go in vain that day. We felt that our mission had been accomplished. We began our trip home the following day. We gathered the brothers and sisters who had signed up and told them everything that had happened. After listening, some became weak, while others became strong because they knew that this would be the way of suffering. At the same time God gave us a clear test because the landslides into the river had stopped within two weeks. Therefore, some became even weaker, but others became even stronger. We passed through three trials between the time everyone registered and the time we actually migrated. As a result, twenty-one households actually migrated, with a total of ninety-one people including children. (But we dare not say that all were those who had passed through trials.) The third step we took—since we have started counting the steps, the first step being the registration to migrate and the second step being the scouting out of the place—was to require all those migrating to fill out an announcement of their desire to migrate and to make a list of the possessions they were consecrating. They also had to first pass through consecration (the consecration of Romans 12). Based on their lists, we decided which ones would bear the responsibility for selling the possessions. About sixty to seventy percent of the possessions were sold within a month.

As the time to migrate came closer, things became more and more tense. The situation was pressing us to leave quickly. We did our best to consolidate our possessions on the one hand, and we asked the brothers to go to Xiaoshan to make arrangements for a train on the other hand, so that we would not have to make last-minute arrangements. The week before we left, we were busy packing our personal luggage and the things to take. When we finished packing, we gathered all the people and their belongings at the meeting hall (in Shi-Er-Dai) to wait for our departure. We also had a departure meeting for one day to serve as our spiritual food for the way. We left on the sixteenth day of the eleventh month of the lunar calendar. In the morning everyone fasted and prayed, asking the Lord to give us the inward and outward strength we would need along the way and to lead us as we began to go in the way before us. Everyone's heart was filled with anxiety. Perhaps, we were like the Israelites as they left Egypt. After praying, we took a picture of those migrating. The brothers and sisters and their friends and relatives all crowded into the meeting hall to say good-by to each other. Everyone's heart was filled with a mixture of joy and sadness. We were sad to be leaving our friends and relatives and could not help but feel privately

depressed. We were happy that we were doing God's will and were giving Him a way to go on. We believed that what we were giving up would become our reward in the future. As we thought of this, we became joyful again. We ate lunch early because we wanted to leave early. The church held a love feast for us to say good-by. Although the food was delicious, we had no heart to enjoy it. After lunch we went to the river's edge and boarded the boat. The banks on both sides of the river were filled with those sending us off. As we boarded the boat, we could not hold back the tears from our eyes. After we boarded the boat, I thanked those sending us off on behalf of the entire group and added a parting word of the gospel to those who had not yet believed in the Lord. After I finished speaking, the boat set sail, and a band began playing. We then said good-by to our hometown.

The boat sailed twenty miles to Dangshan. We planned to spend the night in the meeting hall there. After dinner, there was a night meeting. We had just gone to bed when a brother suddenly came from Shi-Er-Dai to tell us that there had been a phone call from Xiaoshan and the train was ready, so we had to start quickly. During the meeting on the evening of the fifteenth, we had received a call from Xiaoshan telling us that the train was broken down and had not come into the station. They told us not to leave yet. We felt that we should not wait any longer and that we could not look at our circumstances, so we left as planned. In our meeting at Dangshan, we had prayed desperately that God would prepare a train for us. Who would have guessed that before we had finished sleeping, a brother would come to quickly report the good news? We gathered together to praise God in surprise and joy. We quickly got up and went to the port. We got on the river boat and traveled by night to Xiaoshan. In the middle of that quiet night, there were songs of praise and shouts of joy issuing from the boat which broke the stillness of the night and startled many people sleeping in their warm homes. The boat arrived in Xiaoshan on the morning of the seventeenth. We learned that the train had still not come into the station, and we took the opportunity to put on our gospel robes and hold a gospel parade through the streets with the band leading us. We spent that night in Xiaoshan. God prepared a chance for us to rest.

On the eighteenth (Saturday) we learned that the train had come into the station, so we gathered our baggage and went as a group to the station. Although there were women and children, we went in good order. Outwardly we looked like

refugees, but we kept order like soldiers, which surprised those around us. After we arrived at the station, we sat and rested for a short while and then boarded our carriages. (We had two fifteen-ton, roofed railway coaches, one for baggage and one for passengers.) After loading, we waited to be hooked up. We were surprised to find that the trains coming from Hangchow were already filled to capacity. It is difficult to add on carriages at Xiaoshan unless it is for special military use. So we waited from morning to afternoon and from day until night. One train after another after another....Our carriages never moved an inch. Eighty or ninety people were crammed into one carriage like sardines. It began pouring rain in the night, and the roof of the carriage needed repairing. It leaked terribly, but there was no place to escape from the rain, and we were unable to sleep. The most difficult problem to deal with was the group of children who cried and screamed. We made it to dawn with great difficulty. On the second day, we went to the station master to request that he find a way to attach us to an engine, but every time a train came, the conductor disappointed us. Even though the trains were pulling so many carriages, they were all filled to the brim with passengers. Even the tops of the carriages were crammed with people. They did not care about the rain, they just held on to the tops for dear life. The station master always answered us with a disappointed tone of voice. Finally, he would not even consider our request and just told us that it was impossible! He told us not to bother him anymore! Finally, he moved our carriages from the first track to the second track, then to the third track, and then to the track for unused cars where we were left unattended.

The weather was still cloudy and rainy. It was stuffy being crammed inside the carriage, but when we left the carriage it was cold. We had not eaten or slept well. We went on this way day after day until the morning of the fourth day, when I saw that the faces of the brothers and sisters were pale and wan. Some were vomiting; others were dizzy. It was especially difficult for the sisters. One of my daughters was very sick; her breath was short, and her eyesight was hazy. I was even more worried for the two pregnant sisters who were close to their delivery dates. All these difficulties overshadowed us like thick clouds, and there was still no hope of a train. At this time it really seemed as if darkness had surrounded us, but even though the ark was surrounded by waves, there was still a place at the top for light to come in (Gen. 6:16). In this situation, what else could we do but pray to God through this skylight? We were really like widows and orphans without anyone to support us, but we poured out our problems to God. After our

prayer, my daughter's illness began to get better. Some time later, a sister who worked in the Railway Clinic came to tell us that she had already made arrangements concerning our carriages with the central station, and they had promised to hook up our carriages that night. It seemed as if a great burden was lifted from our hearts in that instant. We let out a sigh of relief, and all of the rain and clouds in our hearts disappeared! Oh! It was God's hand pressing us lightly for a moment. Our carriages left Xiaoshan around 5:00 that evening. We arrived safely in Yiyang around 2:00 on the afternoon of the twenty-second. After leaving the train, we walked to First Faith Farm. Praise the Lord for completing the second step of His work.

The almighty God used His great power along the way to sustain the two sisters who were about to have babies. It took exactly one week to travel from Shi-Er-Dai to First Faith Farm. Although we traveled on boats, on trains, and on foot, God gave us the strength we needed. But the event that caused us to marvel the most was that both sisters gave birth within two days of arriving in Yiyang. Both mothers and their babies are safe. This was an obvious miracle that proved God was with us. We could only prostrate ourselves in worship and give glory to Him!

We passed through the first two stages, but the third stage lay before us. Where should we settle? When we came to search out the area, it seemed that our goal should be Zhaobintien. On the third day, we went to Zhaobintien. But the fields there were few and very expensive; furthermore, the people there thought we were lawless refugees and were not willing to let us live there. God cut off the way for us to go to Zhaobintien. Where should we go? To Yangshuchiao? This was twice as close to Yiyang than Zhaobintien. If the goal of our gospel was Yiyang, then we should stay in a place closer to the city. Therefore, after we all prayed together in one accord, we felt that we should settle ourselves in Yangshuchiao. But the people there knew that we would eventually buy land, so they purposely did nothing and said nothing. We guessed that they were probably trying to push up the price of land. We went on in this way for one or two weeks. We began to be a little uneasy. What would we do if we could not buy fields?

Fortunately, God had showed us His love and power in many ways on the trip, so we dared not give way to anxiety. We just gave this matter to God. Oh! God seems to arrange all kinds of circumstances to win His children's prayer so that He will have a way to accomplish His will. A few days after our prayer, God

worked in the environment and caused the people to sell us the fields willingly, which they had wanted to sell to us in the first place. They were actually eager to sell their fields but were afraid that we would not buy them. Within two months, we had bought more than four hundred acres of land at a price that was just within our means. We built our huts on the side of a medium-sized mountain ridge. We moved into our new homes on January 5, 1949. Thus, in the wilderness of those mountains, God's children made their homes, and in places which had not heard voices of praise since the creation of the world (maybe we can say that) there are now the sounds of hymn-singing. We could not build enough huts because there was not enough time, and everyone had to crowd together. Three or four families must live in a small hut. There are no beds, so we pile hay on the floor and sleep there. Oh! the outward suffering (if I can call it that) makes things sweeter on the inside. This rustic life often causes us to go to God!

Before our migration, we had intended to continue living as individuals. God, however, did not want us to live in this way (this does not apply to everyone in general) because He wants to gain more glory through our living. Therefore, we inwardly felt that we should not continue to live as individuals. The fallen human nature is selfish. If we separated, we would inevitably care for ourselves and develop our own businesses. Perhaps we would have reached a point where we would not have been able to go on. Spontaneously, we formed one large household. God put us into this large household to learn the lesson of loving one another. It is an especially good place to have the flesh dealt with. We used to think that we had lost the flesh, but now we have discovered that we have not lost it, nor have we thoroughly dealt with it. We used to think that we could love the brothers and sisters, but now we find that we still cannot. We used to think that we knew the "self" and that we had experienced something of the lessons of the cross, but now the facts tell us that we are really not that clear. Oh! May God cause us to quickly finish our courses in this school.

On the other hand, however, because we work, eat, sleep, and live together, we are full of joy and do not feel that the burden is as heavy as it was when we lived as individuals. We rely on God, look to God, and trust in God together. God is the only Head of our household. This loving, almighty Head of the household has performed many miracles of love for His children. One day we did not have rice for lunch. After breakfast, we all prayed to Him, and around 11:00 someone came with seven carts of rice, wanting to trade them for some of our salt. Many

villagers have been kidnapped or even murdered, but at the most crucial times, He still protects His household. When we do not have enough money to buy food, He prepares rice that only costs us one or two dollars so that we do not have any lack. When we have a dangerous illness, He answers our cries that we be healed without medicine. Although He did not hear our prayers concerning one sister and took her home, He used this to raise up more of His children to be useful to Him and to come serve Him together with us. There have also been difficulties like storms and rains, which He has resolved for us one by one. Oh! Our God allows us to experience great difficulties in order to test, try, and edify us. We can only prostrate ourselves and worship Him.

Oh! Praise the Lord for causing us to practice the lessons of loving and serving one another in this large household. May God grant that we would thoroughly root out our selfishness and enter into the state of having all things in common, being free from the distinction of individual identities. To solve the problem of differences in clothing, we preached a message on thorough consecration. Praise the Lord! The brothers and sisters were happy and willing to offer up their extra clothes and cloth. Some only kept the clothes on their backs. May God raise up more brothers and sisters to migrate everywhere for the gospel that God's will may be done on earth.

Feng He-ren

April 3, 1950

Mailing Address: First Faith Farm, Yangshuchiaio, Yiyang, Kiangsi province

REVIEW OF SEEN AND HEARD (BIOGRAPHY NO. 1)

BY JAMES M'KENDRICK

In preaching the gospel, one needs to exercise the gifts; however, he also needs to exercise his spirit. This means that there is the gift of preaching the gospel and the spirit of preaching the gospel. One who has the spirit of the gospel preaches in season and out of season. Only a few people are raised up every ten to twenty years in the history of the church who have the gift of the gospel. These people are few and far between. But everyone who loves the Lord can and should have the spirit of preaching the gospel. It is not limited to special gift.

I have read the biographies of many evangelists, including Finney, Moody, and Stanley. They all had the spirit of preaching the gospel and the gift of preaching the gospel. Their biographies can encourage us, but we cannot imitate them, because we do not have as great a gift as they did.

I particularly love this book *Seen and Heard* because we can say that Brother James M'Kendrick did not have the gift of preaching the gospel, but only the spirit of preaching the gospel. He was an ordinary man just like us. There was nothing special about him, but his heart was melted by the Lord's love, and he was extremely anxious for the needs of sinners. He could love, and he could cry. He could pray, and he could shout. The Lord's love was so strong in him that he was not able to refrain himself. Man's need made him restless day and night. As I read about him, I was often forced to weep with him. While Brother Yu Cheng-hua was translating this book, many times he also wept with him. M'Kendrick became a fool for the Lord's sake. He was beside himself that the gospel could go forth. Not all young brothers have the gift of preaching the gospel, but we must not lack the spirit of preaching the gospel. May this fire burn in us until we can no longer control ourselves. May this fire, because it consumes us, also consume sinners until they have no ground to refuse the Lord. May the fire of the gospel be ignited in China, first burning God's children and then sinners. Sinners will be saved in great numbers. If this fire does not burn us, it will not burn those in the world. The church can become the hindrance to man's salvation. O Lord, have mercy on the church! May the Lord have a way in the church so that He can gain access to the world. Fire! Fire! Let the fire of the gospel glow—first kindling us, and then setting the church ablaze.—Watchman Nee

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TO READ THIS ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER

1) We hope to continue the publication of The Christian and The Present Testimony. (The Way will be merged with The Christian, and The Testimony will be merged with The Present Testimony.) However, The Christian and The Present Testimony will be published irregularly and at a floating price. (There are no stock copies of back issues of either The Christian or The Present Testimony.)

2) Because the editors of The Christian and The Present Testimony are out with the work, we will be late in publishing them. Please forgive us.

3) There are still copies of the third issue of The Ministers and the second through fourth issues of The Testimony. Those who want copies should send us a letter. We will limit it to one copy per person until all have been given out.

The Gospel Book Room, P. O. Box 5008, Shanghai

September 1950

ISSUE NO. 22

October 30, 1950

THE FLOW OF THE SPIRIT—

RECORD OF A FELLOWSHIP WITH CO-WORKERS

There is a flow. Before God, we call it the "flow of the Spirit." In every age God insures that this flow is not interrupted, that it is always progressing. The flow of the Spirit is progressing in the churches today. Some time ago I was reading a compilation of Wesley's messages. I thank God because I can see that the flow of the Spirit has moved onward today. If we look back and examine Wesley, on the one hand, we have to admit that his work before God was tremendous and that perhaps our living cannot match his. On the other hand, however, the flow of the Spirit is moving on progressively today.

Here is a basic principle: If we do what God wants to do in our generation, we will get the flow of the Spirit. If, however, we always hold on to our past and demand that God do according to what we rank as important and desirable, we will not

get the flow of the Spirit. It was all right to be a Martin Luther in the sixteenth century, but it would be insufficient just to be a Martin Luther in 1950. It was all right to be a Madame Guyon in the Medieval Age, but it would be insufficient just to be a Madame Guyon in 1950. It was all right to be a Wesley in the eighteenth century, but it is inadequate to be a Wesley in 1950. It was all right to be a Darby in 1828, but it is insufficient to be a Darby in 1950. God is ever pressing onward, and every instrumentality fulfills its function for the church. The flow of the Spirit in the church is always going forward.

Here many people have a basic weakness; that is, they do not recognize the flow of the Spirit in the church. In the church there have been many spiritual giants who have brought about many spiritual things. Today we are heirs to their riches. Saints like Martin Luther, Madame Guyon, John Nelson Darby, Evan Roberts, and Mrs. Penn-Lewis all left us with some spiritual wealth. We cannot thank and praise the Lord enough for this. Yet today even if we should succeed in being a Martin Luther, a Madame Guyon, a Darby, a Roberts, or a Mrs. Penn-Lewis, we would still be a failure because we would not have seen the central point—the flow of the Spirit.

Every age hinges upon a flow. We must admit that the whole trend of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is an onward trend. God has been revealed gradually and even progressively in age after age.

A brother in Hong Kong once asked me the significance of the book of Hebrews. I asked him, "What is the difference between the book of Acts and the book of Hebrews?" The book of Acts is a progressive book. When we get to chapter eight, we cannot go back to chapter two. The Lord had already gone to Samaria. If we go back to Jerusalem, how could we ever get to the uttermost part of the earth? Where the Lord is, there is the way. The Holy Spirit desired to go to Rome, and the Holy Spirit desired to go to the uttermost part of the earth. Going to Samaria was the first step; it was also a preparation for going to the uttermost part of the earth. Producing apostles among the Gentiles was a right and progressive thing to do. After the going out from Jerusalem, it would be wrong to have the desire to stay in Jerusalem. The apostles to the Gentiles kept going until they arrived at Rome.

The book of Hebrews shows us people with one of two identities—either Jew or Christian, but the book of Acts shows us people with double identities—they were both Jews and Christians. In Acts there was the record of the temple. At that time the Christians still visited the temple on the one hand and prayed in the meeting,

"Lord, I consecrate myself to You," on the other hand. When they realized they had sinned, they would seek help from the priest on the one hand and pray on the other hand. At that time Christians divided their time between being Jews and being Christians. There were two sacrifices, two pardons, and two sin offerings. There was the cross, and there was also an animal—the lamb. The book of Hebrews speaks to the Christians who had shrunk back to Judaism: "Are you going to be a Christian, or are you going to be a Jew?" In Acts one could be both a Christian and a Jew, but in Hebrews he could not be both. We must choose to be one of the two. There can be only one redeeming lamb, one priest, and one temple. Therefore, Hebrews 10 says to not abandon the assembling of ourselves together (v. 25). If we stop meeting in Christ, there will be no more sin offering (v. 26). Hence, there is only one basic thought regarding Hebrews; that is, it is progressive. We must advance. The flow of the Spirit is always going onward.

Since the flow of the Spirit is ever advancing, what was done in Jerusalem would not be sufficient to meet the need in Rome. What was accomplished in Caesarea would not be adequate for today. The advancement spoken of here relates to the entire flow of the Spirit. God let Titus destroy Jerusalem because He could only allow the existence of one Jerusalem. After the church was established on the earth, God destroyed the other Jerusalem. The destruction of Jerusalem brought an end to the sacrifices. Jews might still keep the Passover today, but there is no more lamb. This is progress. God destroyed the first one. In Acts, one could have two identities. But when we come to Hebrews, we can have only one. This is a very serious charge—there is no longer an animal offering for sin.

At the time of Acts, Paul still had a vow (18:18). Please do not measure someone in a particular age according to God's absolute revelation. Today we must follow the flow of the Spirit. Wherever the Spirit goes, we should follow. It was not wrong for Paul to cut his hair and go into the temple to purify himself (21:26), because the flow of the Spirit had reached only to that stage. However, the book of Hebrews tears down the entire Jewish religion. The book of Hebrews says that since that which is perfect has come, Moses is over. God is progressing—in teaching and in the flow of the Spirit.

During the two thousand years of church history, the Spirit of God has been progressing all the time. Even after Acts 28, the Spirit of God is still going onward; He has never stopped. Acts has no ending. We are foolish if we think that the Holy Spirit has left the church. Actually, in every age God has always raised up some people. In every age the church has been progressing. From

generation to generation, it is ever moving onward and ever progressing forward, even up to the present day.

Only those who walk according to God's heart are blessed with descendants. Michal bore no children (2 Sam. 6:23), yet Bath-sheba, the mother of Solomon, had sons (12:24). A descendant is the continuation of the line of the Holy Spirit—this is what I call the flow of the Spirit. We have inherited all the grace from our forefathers and ancestors; we receive our spiritual heritage from them. Is God's way an advancing way among us today, or is He moving through somebody else? This is what I call the authority of the Holy Spirit. Once we fail, the Holy Spirit will express Himself through somebody else. The authority of the Holy Spirit is like the trunk of a tree; it grows undeterred. Wherever the seal of the Spirit is, there God's way is.

What if this line is broken? We should study church history to observe God's footprints. Such footprints can be detected in history and in the church. When we look back to Martin Luther, we can see many weaknesses in him, but during his time, Luther's work was the peak of the work of the Holy Spirit. Today we are the fruit of Luther's work. None of us has a life that is long enough to manipulate this line.

Throughout the ages, the church has been like stepping stones in a stream. The work of the Holy Spirit on us is to make us stepping stones through which He can move. This is our greatest glory. If He cannot secure a way through us, He will choose another stone to step on. If He cannot be released through us, we will suffer the greatest loss. The seal of the Holy Spirit may be at a certain place at present, but where it will be ten years from now we cannot tell. Each day the Holy Spirit is bypassing men and setting them aside, group by group. Many people seem to have lost their usefulness. Therefore, we have to be on the path of the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit cannot accomplish anything through us, He must make a new start with somebody else. What a solemn matter this is!

We should always walk on the positive path. In the past twenty years, Brother T. Austin-Sparks has been concerned with the Body service. Some brought up this matter one hundred thirty years earlier, but there was no one walking on this path. The recovery of a certain truth is quite a different thing from actually walking on the path of that truth. It was not until the time of T. Austin-Sparks that this spiritual reality began to manifest itself. Now is the time for us to take the way of fully functioning in the Body service. Everything should be consecrated for the furtherance of the gospel. We attend school for the furtherance of the gospel,

and we work for the furtherance of the gospel. The recovery of the Lord in the church is reflected in other areas as well. When the Lord has a move in the church, He makes a corresponding move in the world. We must reach the stage in which the whole Body is coordinating together in the service and the stage in which everything is for the gospel. When the whole church is serving, the Lord's coming will be at hand. At that time not only will teaching be released, but the Holy Spirit will be released as well. The church moves because the Holy Spirit moves first. As soon as the Holy Spirit moves, all will say "Amen" to His move. The Holy Spirit has moved on ahead of us, and we are following Him in this flow. Our words and our spiritual senses should all be up-to-date with the flow of the Spirit.

Watchman Nee

April 4, 1950

GOD'S REVELATION BEING PROGRESSIVE

In reading the Bible, we find that God's revelation is always progressive and advancing. If we only pay attention to ultimate absolutes when reading the Bible and fail to see that revelation is progressive, we will not be able to keep up with God's way. God's revelation is progressive. The offerings in Genesis were less profound than the offerings in Exodus, while the offerings in Leviticus were deeper than those in Exodus. This is one example of progression. All the revelation in the Bible is progressive. If we put all the advancing stages together, we have a complete picture. The absolutes in the Bible are the sum totals of the individual advancements.—Excerpt

NEWS

The Boundaries Measured Out by the Lord (Kansu Province)

Our hearts are really full of joy to see that in these days God has gained people everywhere to speak for Him. Such speaking is like the flowing of a river. We only hope that He will be able to get through in Lingxia. We hope He would not just be in us through His indwelling, but that He would come in and go out among us, freely flowing out through us. Amen!

The message "Seizing the Opportunity" brought forth a deep responding "Amen" from our hearts! As we look back, we are filled with a sense of repentance! God was not short in granting us the grace, but we were ignorant of the times He was caring for us! We do not know what to say. We were too reserved in the past

because we wanted to protect ourselves. As a result, we damaged the future of the church of God! Now we can only weep and repent.

God has recently shown us that the only way to attain wealth is to borrow empty vessels from the neighbors. He says, "Borrow...and not just a few" (2 Kings 4:3). Whenever we say there are no empty vessels, the oil stops! Therefore, please send us a few extra copies of all your publications, perhaps twenty, but at least fifteen, because the number of people in our meetings has increased from ten to twenty-three. Furthermore, most of us came from denominations, and we especially need nurturing and training in the truth. There are also one or two brothers and sisters in other places who need to receive these supplies.

Please remember us in your prayers and in your move of gospel migrations. We would like to remind you that we are a gateway to the gospel work among Tibetans and Moslems. The Lord measured this area to you long ago, so you would not be overstepping your bounds to come here.

Please include us in your prayers that God would have much mercy on us!

A little member in the Lord,

Wang Guo-jing

October 3, 1950

Mailing Address: Jing-Yun Book Store, Lingxia, Kansu province

A Terrible Suffering Indeed!

Physically, I still need to rest another week, according to Brother Deh-bao's word; it is still too early to move around. If you think I need to go to Yungkang, I believe the Lord will protect and support me. I await your letter with instructions.

I do not know when you think it will be appropriate for me to return to Jinhua. I feel that my condition before the Lord is terrible both inwardly and outwardly! I believe that I have been going steadily downward on this trip from Jinhua to Hangchow. I feel a great darkness inwardly and outwardly. I cannot touch the Lord when I try to fellowship with Him. Sometimes I wonder if my spiritual pathway has reached its end. Do I still have a hope of rising up again? I do not know why I feel as if I have committed some great sin. The things which I thought were no longer with me (the things of the old creation) are still in me. The things which I thought I had (in the new creation) have completely disappeared. I do not know where they have gone. Sometimes I am so discouraged and disappointed that I hate myself. What kind of a person am I? I do not have any spiritual reality, and I have touched nothing of service. I can do nothing, but I am full of pride.

When others do something well, I am jealous. I cannot tolerate a single critical sentence or attitude from others. I am weak and pitiful inwardly. It is beyond me to describe my present condition! Sometimes I really cannot stand it, and my uneasiness all too clearly shows where I am! It is a terrible suffering indeed!

I have no words to pray to the Lord concerning this condition. I want to cry, but have no tears. Therefore, I am really afraid to return to Jinhua. I used to think that I could handle everything and that I could solve the brothers' and sisters' problems. Now I do not even know how to solve my own problems. But if I do not return to Jinhua, what is the use of my staying in Hangchow? Sometimes I think it is useless for me to be anywhere. I am like salt that has lost its flavor. Sometimes I tell myself, "It is futile to serve any longer!" But I am not willing to quit. In this kind of condition, I really cannot receive any leading. Perhaps I do not need to seek any leading by myself. Wherever you put me is fine. If you think I need to return to Jinhua, I will return to Jinhua. I feel that I can do nothing. If you want me to go back to Jinhua, please give me a little time to study more about optometry. What do you think about this?

Beginning Monday, a few brothers began praying together every morning. I believe Brother Chao has probably written to you about this. The first two times were very oppressive; we were not able to release ourselves; nor could we sense what to pray. We could only confess our sins and pray for our hopeless condition. We did not touch the spirit at all, nor did we rise up inwardly. Each of us was there looking at the pitiful condition of the self. The more we prayed like this, the lower we sank, and the more we were oppressed! By the third morning, there was almost no prayer. This continued until Brother Chao prayed a few words about faith. He prayed about coming before God by faith. When he touched this point, everybody opened up inwardly. We turned and began to lift our praises to Christ for all of His accomplishments. We stopped looking at ourselves. We looked at Christ! He is our everything! We are not accepted before God based on ourselves; nor do we boast about ourselves before the enemy. We do not overcome the flesh in ourselves. Here we touched some praise in the spirit. It is unfortunate that we had turned back to our "self." The Lord showed us once again that we are fallen, that our heart is wicked, and that we cannot be used by God. We asked the Lord to give us deeper dealings. Please remember us in prayer, and protect us with your prayers.

Sisters Wu and Kwei went to Changloh; they will return to Hangchow in twenty days. (They have already returned to Hangchow.—Editor)

Your brother in the Lord,
Jien-bang
September 28, 1950
Mailing Address: c/o 48 Gang-Er Alley, Hangchow

Young and Weak (Jiaxing)

Thank the Lord that the first baptism meeting in Jiaxing received the blessing of peace. There were seventeen brothers and sisters who were baptized into the Lord's church. God had mercy on me, one who is lazy, weak, and fearful, and who has unprofitably occupied a place in Jiaxing for many years. For this reason, I marvel and grieve all the more. I can only praise God with all my strength in tears. Thank God. On that day the whole church praised God with joy such as they had never experienced before!

We look to God to have mercy on us and to guide these newly baptized, fresh, and living brothers and sisters that they would go on in the way before them. We are young and weak, and we are prone to ruin things. We hope the elderly brothers can come to teach us often.

Your little brother in the Lord,
Wang Wen-jiang
August 28, 1950
Mailing Address: 40 Xian Chang Street, Jiaxing, Chekiang province

Edified First

I received the book you gave me for the edification of the new believers. Thank the Lord! The new brothers were not the only ones edified; I was edified first. Although I have believed in the Lord for many years, I am inwardly weak, poor, and pitiful! I lack basic training. I could never find this kind of light if I spent my entire life studying by myself. Thank the Lord for having mercy on me, even though I am so unworthy! I look forward to the beginning of the third training session at Kuling. I often kneel in prayer to ask for God's mercy! I will return to Shanba on the twenty-sixth. Brother Yu and Brother Chu left Sian on the twenty-fifth for Linjin, Zhengzhou, and Hsuzhou before returning to Shanghai.

Your brother in the Lord,
Chao Xu-dong
September 25, 1950
Mailing Address: 29 Jie-Fang Road, Shaba, Suiyuan province

(Brother Yu and Brother Chu received a desperate invitation from the church in Tsinan after they had arrived in Hsuzhou, so they went to Tsinan. On October 21 they returned safely to Shanghai from Tsinan. We hope these two brothers will fellowship more with us about their visit in the past two months to the churches in the Northwest and to the churches along the road between Tientsin and Shanghai.—Editor)

A Plea for Fellowship (Sheng County)

We have recently learned something about how to discern the Body of Christ. There are many brothers who have seen the importance of serving God, consecration, and the church preaching the gospel. We were lacking in the matter of the gospel in the past. We now are preparing to learn how to testify (to outsiders). We read the Bible and pray every day, and every Lord's Day we serve the Lord in different areas. Many brothers are willing to learn from the Lord's grace. Please pray that the brothers would be able to serve God faithfully. Please introduce us to the brothers in Hangchow so that we could have fellowship with them.

Your brothers in the Lord,

Yin Song-sheng, Yin Zong-ming

August 13, 1950

Mailing Address: Liban, Sheng county, Chekiang

By the Lord's arrangement, the church in Ningpo has rented a flat in a building on the 5th Floor, 14 Zhan-Chuan Street. When everything is fixed up, our meetings will move to that address. Please pray for us much before the Lord.

Chang He-nian, Wang Jian-jen

September 12, 1950

Mailing Address: 406 Hou Ma Road, Jiangbei Shore, Ningpo

Service at Kuling (Fukien Province)

Thank God for arranging for some of us to be at Kuling. Although there are only five (Brother Kuo Jian-liang, Brother Cheng Chiang, Sister Hai-jen, Sister Bi-xia, and myself), we are all in one accord for the gospel and the service. Although we are weak and immature, we are willing to give our all. We are really busy with the affairs of the clinic, the school, the church, and the Ministers' House. We have no free time from morning to night, but we all thank God and are very joyful. We all go out for the gospel, and we coordinate in the church service with the local responsible brothers. There are forty to fifty people here on the mountain. Most

are sick people, children, and elderly women. There are also a few brothers who did the heavy work in the Ministers' House. They now are coordinating together with us to serve God. They (voluntarily) decline wages and rejoice in serving here. We are the only ones bearing the responsibility. Please remember us often.

Your sister,

Zuo Fu-ru

September 24, 1950

Mailing Address: Kuling Ministers' House, c/o Xin 14 Hai-Guan-Xiang, Foochow

The Past Year and a Half (Yuyao)

We began to have prayer meetings in November 1948. We also had gospel meetings for a period of time. However, we were unable to start regular meetings because we did not have enough light. There was a long conference at Ninghai in December 1949, and one of the brothers among us attended. After he returned, we felt burdened to start meetings on the Lord's Day morning. By the Lord's mercy, we began on January 29, 1950. There were about twenty people in the meetings. Since then we have had two conferences by the brothers from Ningpo. More than thirty brothers and sisters were baptized. We started the Lord's table on June 18 (the Lord's Day) and began to break bread to remember the Lord.

As we look back on the past, we see that the Lord's mercy and leading have been with us until today. We must give honor and glory to our God! We truly feel weak and immature; indeed, we need the supply of prayers from the brothers and sisters in other places. We hope that we could be notified when the churches near us have conferences.

Mailing Address: Christian Meeting Hall, Xiao-An Street, Yuyao

Gradual Inward Enlightenment

The Lord has shown me much mercy during this past year as I have been learning to serve God in coordination with the church. I am still studying at Tsinghua University. The word I received at Kuling has given me gradual, inward enlightenment, and I have begun to have some experiences. As I consider this, I feel that it is the Lord's great mercy! There are now more than twenty brothers and sisters in school. We have prayer, fellowship, edification of new believers, and sporadic gospel meetings. Although there are many difficulties, they just bring in more of God's grace. Increasingly, we feel the importance of the edification of the new believers. If these basic matters are not learned well, these

new ones have no future. Therefore, the brothers and I are going over the lessons, and we are begging the Lord to bring us into the spiritual reality of these lessons. We have seen the Lord's blessing. After we spoke about rising early, I called the brothers the next morning and tried to get them up. Despite much encouragement, they could not do it. We prayed specifically about this matter in a prayer meeting and asked the Lord to save us. Everyone confessed, repented, and begged the Lord for mercy. The next day everyone made a turn and got up early. This really was the Lord's blessing.

Brother Caleb recently asked me to learn the science of farming and ranching, and to pick up some practical skills in preparation for migrating to the Northwest. If the Lord leads, I am willing to go to a spiritually strategic location with a large population where there is a future for the gospel. If I migrate, the edification of new believers will be an even more important subject in my service among the brothers and sisters. As long as a local church is able to, it should have such classes. I heard more than half of the messages concerning the edification of new believers at Kuling, and I was able to secure notes on the rest, but my notes are incomplete. Could you give me a printed copy of what was shared at Kuling?

A young member,

Sun Kai

August 3, 1950

Mailing Address: c/o 9 An Nei, Kuan Street, Peking

A Sincere, Fearful Request (Xinchang)

By the mercy of the God of love, we were introduced to the fellowship of two brothers from Sheng county, and we received help from them. Through God's marvelous leading, Brother Hua Tien-min and Brother She Fei-wu came to the city of Xinchang. (They were arrested while they were meeting in Fangkou and were brought to the jail here. When we heard this, we bailed them out on the same day.) These brothers supplied us with some truth. Then Brother Yu Cheng-hua came for several meetings and gave us much precious light. As a result of these meetings, we began to meet in the Lord's name in May and began to walk together with the children of God in the way of the service in His house. The Lord gave us special grace in July by sending Brother David Hsu to Xinchang for four days of fellowship, and the brothers and sisters were helped to see the Lord Himself. We started the table on the Lord's Day, September 24, and began to break bread to remember the Lord. There was a total of twenty-seven, including

nine brothers and sisters who had been newly baptized. (Several brothers and sisters gradually have been added.) Everything directs us to His presence and His glorious light, but we are so young and weak! For this reason we are sincerely and fearfully sending you this letter to plead with you, who have also received grace and are at the frontline of God's churches and saints, to uphold us with your prayers and to give us deep and long fellowship. We do this with the hope that we could be built up with you as God's dwelling place and as members one of another to manifest the testimony of the oneness of Christ's Body. Honor, glory, and authority to His name forever! Amen.

For the brothers in the church in Xinchang,
Wu Huan-ting, Yu Cheng-rong, Lu Ting-zhen

October 1, 1950

Mailing Address: Baoli Clinic, Xinchang

**Preaching the Gospel in One Accord
(Sheng County)**

Since you left Sheng county, those with a heart to serve God have been strengthened by the light they have seen. They are not as easily influenced and led astray as in the past. After we preached the gospel in one accord to the outsiders, the number of inquirers increased to more than twenty. More than ten will be baptized next Lord's Day. Some did not receive the light, but instead hated it; they have joined others in slandering us. Through the shining of the light, though some were stumbled, others were revived. This is just like the situation the Lord faced when He was on the earth. The brothers can only respond with silence. We hope that the number of saved ones increases.

In the future, we will tell you of our pitiful condition, and hope that you will give us the Lord's word in exhortation.

Your brother,

Chou En-ci

August 26

Mailing Address: Christian Meeting Hall, Si-Chien Street, Sheng county,
Chekiang province

THE WAY OF MIGRATION

**The Migration from Hsiaoshan, Chekiang
to Tungzhia, Yiyang, Kiangsi**

We would like to share a few things concerning how the Lord led us in the way of migration that we might participate in His grace.

Over one hundred brothers and sisters in Jiazaowan signed up to migrate and passed through the confirmation of the church. Later, the list was reduced to seventy. It was decided that there would only be twenty-three families with a total of seventy-three people, including adults and children. In the eleventh month of the last lunar calendar, we sold our goods and received forms permitting us to move. We asked Brother Feng to buy fields for us in Hufang. But as time went on, it became more and more difficult to sell our possessions, and the more we lowered the price, the less people wanted to buy them. The proceeds from selling our possessions was barely enough to cover our travel expenses. Nevertheless, our inward feeling pressed us more and more. If we worried about the future and calculated our budget, we would not be able to move. The brothers and sisters felt that they should go by faith because the migration was a move of faith anyway. Therefore, we prayed earnestly and asked the Lord to make arrangements. Later, it was easier to sell our possessions, but we did not get a very good price for them. Brother Feng sent us a letter telling us that he had bought fields in Hufang. We only had to wait for the moving permits.

Some of the brothers and sisters had even sold the huts in which they lived, but they were still waiting for the moving permits. The permits seemed to take forever, and we became a bit anxious. We fasted and prayed together in one accord for one morning, and the Lord revealed His word to a brother: "Fear ye not, stand still" (Exo. 14:13). We continued to pray earnestly with tears for our gospel migration. In the end, God's word came to us again, saying, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak thou unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (v. 15). We knew that He did not want us to pray any longer, but instead wanted us to move forward. Three or four brothers prayed and asked, "How do we move forward?" We wanted to obtain moving permits and go in a proper way. That afternoon someone came to help us. During the night of March 9, we received our moving permits. The next day we made arrangements for the boat, the train, and our baggage. We left in the middle of the night on the third day, and we arrived safely in Yiyang at 2:00 in the afternoon the following day.

After arriving in Yiyang, we learned that the sale of the fields in Hufang was not consummated because they belonged to landed gentry. Thank the Lord that He wanted us to learn a new lesson. We wanted to buy fields in a place where the harvests were better and where we were closer to the city. How could we have

guessed that He wanted us to wholly follow Him without relying on anything else and to wait for what He Himself had arranged? We were a large group, so we decided to go to the meeting hall at the First Farm to wait for God's arrangement. We prayed and waited for ten days before going to Tungzhia, Yiyang, to see if there was any place there to start a farm. When the brothers returned, they felt that there was sufficient land to start a farm. After praying and consulting with Brother Feng, we decided to first buy more than twenty Chinese acres. We sent brothers and sisters, who could do preliminary work, to the edge of the fields to build three small houses that would shelter us from rain and provide places to sleep at night. We did not realize that the first half of the year is very rainy. There were not even three or four days of clear weather. While the rain was heavy, we were alone in the mountain wilderness without any neighbors. Our beds on the floor got wet from the ground, and the roof leaked. All we had was the Lord's presence. Sometimes we sat under umbrellas for the whole night. It was really a new lesson to learn. When the brothers saw our condition, they worked hard at their tasks: cutting grass, sawing lumber, and building wood houses. Through the encouragement of the Lord's love and by His grace, we built five large houses. We crowded all the brothers and sisters in together to save money. We continued buying fields, building houses, plowing the fields, and ordering more materials. Presently, we have a good beginning.

The director of the Farmers' Cooperative, the mayor of the village, and the county executive all examined our moving permits and expressed satisfaction that we had gone through the required procedures correctly and thoroughly. They asked us to tell them of our qualifications. We told them that we believed in Jesus and that we were just poor farmers. They said that they believed us, and granted us permission to remain in this mountain wilderness.

We have had meetings here for two Lord's Days. In the morning there is a gospel meeting and a prayer meeting. In the afternoon, there is a meeting in which we sing hymns, pray, and sometimes the brothers share something. As a result of our gospel, thirteen families have received the Lord; six of them have had some background in the gospel, while the other seven are brand new in the faith. The Lord Himself must continue working among the natives of Kiangsi.

The schedule at the farm is as follows: We rise at 5:00 for a prayer meeting. We eat breakfast at 6:00. After breakfast, everyone goes about his own work. Some go to Yiyang to buy rice and other goods. Others engage in carpentry, plowing,

farming, or cattle raising. Others cut grass, carry wood, cook, or wash, etc. We eat lunch at 11:30 and dinner at 6:30.

Our budget has enough funds for another month or two. The brothers and sisters are doing their best to save money. We only eat dried vegetables, pickled rutabagas, and rice. We hope that by the Lord's grace this will be enough. Thank the Lord that the brothers' and sisters' appetites have increased for this kind of food. It has made us remember the word of the Scripture which says, "Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it/Than a house full of feasting with strife" (Prov. 17:1).

Regarding industrial production, we are presently very busy with our farming and do not have time for it. When we have time to plan for it, we will add this activity to our list.

For those who migrated to Tungzhia, Yiyang,
Chao Ji-tang, Nee Jia-li, Nee Lin-di
May 5, 1950

SOON TO BE PUBLISHED

Lessons on Crucial Truths

This book is a single volume with 251 pages. Price per volume: 13,500 yen. Postage is ten percent of the purchase price. There is an additional charge for registered delivery.

A Series of Fifty-two Lessons

Explanation

There are fifty-two lessons in this book. Lessons 1 through 16 cover the experience of a person from his beginning as a sinner through his knowledge of salvation. Lessons 17 through 26 cover matters that a believer should practice after he is saved. Lessons 27 through 52 cover things that a believer should know and pursue after he is saved.

For believers who are not clear about their salvation, the goal of studying these lessons is to know the Lord's salvation. For believers who are clear about their salvation, the goal is to provide them a foundation in all the basic matters of the Bible.

There is much light in these topics. (Some of it was not discovered by the editor, but was communicated through men whom God has used in the past, and subsequently became light to the editor.) All of these topics are very precious, and are desperately needed by many of God's children.

Witness Lee, Editor

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1) The Condition of Man, 2) God's Love, 3) The Redemption of Christ, 4) The Work of the Holy Spirit, 5) Repentance and Believing, 6) Forgiveness, 7) Cleansing, 8) Sanctification, 9) Justification, 10) Reconciliation with God, 11) Regeneration, 12) Eternal Life, 13) Release, 14) Salvation, 15) The Proof of Salvation, 16) The Assurance of Salvation, 17) Obeying the Sense of Life, 18) Living in the Fellowship of Life, 19) Consecration, 20) Dealing with Sin, 21) Guidance, 22) Obeying God's Will, 23) Being Filled with the Holy Spirit, 24) Preaching the Gospel, 25) Serving the Lord, 26) A Few Matters concerning the Believers' Living, 27) The Knowledge of God, 28) God's Faithfulness and His Righteousness, 29) God's Choosing and Predestination, 30) The Union of God and Man, 31) The Person of Christ, 32) The Precious Blood of Christ, 33) Law and Grace, 34) In Adam and in Christ, 35) The Believers' Two Natures, 36) Three Lives and Four Laws, 37) Union with Christ, 38) Service in the New Testament, 39) The Believers and Sin, 40) Reward, 41) Entering the Kingdom of the Heavens, 42) Sufferings, 43) The Church, 44) Angels, 45) The Devil, 46) The World, 47) Sin, 48) Death and Resurrection, 49) Judgment, 50) Heaven and Hell, 51) The Believers and the Rapture, 52) Christ's Second Coming. (There are three charts in the book.)

The Song of Songs

This book is being typeset now. There are 129 pages. Each copy will cost 6,500 yen. Postage is an additional ten percent. There is an additional charge for registered delivery.

ALREADY PUBLISHED

Seen and Heard

(Biography No. 2)

This book has a total of 114 pages. Each copy costs 5,600 yen. Postage is an additional ten percent. There is an additional charge for registered delivery.

The Gospel Book Room

P. O. Box 5008, Shanghai

October 30, 1950

Those who live in Shanghai can come to our store at 145 Nanyang Road to purchase these books. Those outside of Shanghai can wire money to purchase them. Please send your money to The Gospel Book Room. (Do not wire money

to an individual's name.) If you wire money through the post office, you must include the name of our branch office. Please mark: Jingan Temple.

INTRODUCING A NEW CALENDAR

**(Please order and purchase these
directly from Foochow)**

To whom it may concern:

We plan to print a 1951 Believers' Daily Calendar to meet the spiritual needs of the brothers and sisters everywhere. Although last year's calendar had many defects because of difficulties in the circumstances, we hope to do our best to improve and correct this year's efforts. We will do our best to make the price, wrapper, paper, shipping, and other matters up to our standard. This year we are asking the co-workers here, in other parts of China, and from overseas to supply us with the contents. We believe this will meet the needs of the brothers and sisters.

In addition to a daily calendar for the believers, we hope to print another yearly calendar.

The price for the Believers' Daily Calendar will be half a unit of the Foochow currency, including shipping. (According to the exchange rate at the time of printing, half a unit equals 3,000 yen.) We have calculated the price of the yearly calendar in yen. Each calendar will cost 300 yen including shipping. One is expensive, and the other is cheap. If the brothers and sisters in your locality want to order calendars, please send us a letter with your order by the end of October so that we will know how many have been pre-ordered. If you wire money through the post office, please mark it with the name of our branch office: "Nan Street Post Office." If the brothers and sisters around your area want to pre-order, please pass on this information to them also.

The Foochow Gospel Book Store

October 2, 1950

Mailing Address: Hsin 58 Jin-Men Road, Foochow

THE OPEN DOOR

(The Ministers is now combined into this paper)

NATURE: To show the way to serve, to help the serving ones and the churches in the different localities go on, and to solve problems related to the ministry.

FREQUENCY: We publish irregularly.

PRICES: We have no set price.

SUBSCRIPTION: All who wish to subscribe to this publication should clearly write their name, address, and number of copies and send it to Distribution Department, The Gospel Book Room, P. O. Box 5008, Shanghai.

ATTENTION: 1) When subscribing, please write neatly and make sure the address is clear. 2) We ask those subscribers from different provinces to please include the name of their province. 3) When changing your address, your name must be the same as when you first subscribed. It is best if you can also send us the number from the wrapper of your copy.

WIRING MONEY: If God's children could help with the costs of publication according to the amount God has given them, we would be happy to accept it. If you are wiring money, please wire it to Gospel Book Room Distribution Office, 145 Nanyang Road, Shanghai. If you are wiring money through the post office, you will need to write our branch name. Please mark: Jingan Temple.

**PLEASE SPEND A FEW MINUTES TO READ
THIS ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER**

1) We have explained the nature of this publication above. Many things in this publication are directed to brothers and sisters who are in fellowship with us and learning to serve together with us. There are many places with which we are not acquainted, but which have earnestly requested our publication. We feel we are obligated to share this publication with them. We hope you would do your best to understand what you are reading and try not to misunderstand. If you misunderstand, what benefit will you obtain?

2) The new issues of The Christian and The Present Testimony will be delayed. Please forgive us.

3) There are still some copies of the fourth issue of The Testimony. Those who want copies should send us a letter. We will limit it to one copy per person until all have been given out.

Distribution Department, The Gospel Book Room

October 1950

A NECESSARY WORD OF CLARIFICATION

Recently some outside publications have criticized our testimony and attacked our co-worker, Brother Watchman Nee. We have remained silent about these publications because we do not like to argue. On the one hand, we wanted to learn the lessons before the Lord, and on the other hand, we wanted to allow the Lord Himself to vindicate us. In the final analysis, the thoughts and desires of

everyone's heart will be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ. May the Lord have mercy on us so that we would always fear Him! With respect to the person of Brother Watchman Nee, however, we can testify in one accord before the Lord that he is one of God's faithful servants. Although he engages in some form of business, his goal has never been to gain anything for himself. We are all in one accord with him in the matter of the truth, in the matter of the service, and in the matter of his business. We respectfully announce this to all the brothers and sisters who care for us, and we ask you to pray for us.

Tang Shou-ling, Yu Cheng-hua, Chang Kuang-rong,
Stephen Kaung, Tu Tsong-chen, David Hsu, Chu Chen,
Chang Yu-zhi, Miao Yun-chun, Ruth Lee, Peace Wang,
Phoebe Chang

October 22, 1950

AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY TANG XING

The editor of the former Last Days Magazine (it is now called The Christian Digest) has always been a pastor in a denomination, so he naturally carries the tendencies of his background. He has maintained a great amount of communication with me, but he has never taken this way. The article entitled "Hastening the Lord's Coming," which appeared in the fourth issue of that magazine, was written by me as a favor to a friend. I had no other intention in writing it. Before publication of the article, I knew nothing about what he would write concerning me in the editor's introduction at the end of my article. I have always condemned sectarianism according to God's word. I am writing this explanation because the brothers and sisters from many places have written to inquire about the matter.

Tang Xing

October 18, 1950