

## Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on "A Work Within the Work"

### **No Uncertain Sounding of the Trumpet in the Lord's Ministry**

Last November, an urgent meeting of some co-workers and elders of Metro Manila with Brother Liu Chi-cheng was held to resolve the discord brought about by a sister worker's dissension toward the leading brothers in the work and elders of the locality where she is serving.

Many of the problems issue out from a website that she publishes to advance her dissonant views and different teachings. In that meeting, together with the leading ones, Brother Liu charged the sister to close down her website on account of its being "*a work within the work*". While the sister strongly denied the harm and damage her website has caused, she nonetheless agreed and publicly announced that she will close down the website for the love of Brother Liu and as a repayment to his thirty years of faithful labor in the Lord among the churches in the Philippines.

But as it turned out, not only did the sister not close down the website, in the afternoon of the same day she posted an article entitled, "*A Misnomer – A Work within a Work*". Her article directly confutes Brother Liu and his desire, as the closing down of her website is his direct instruction made in front of the co-workers and elders, and its being *a work within the work* is the very reason he provided for its closing down. The sister was double-tongued, saying something in front of Brother Liu and doing the complete opposite afterwards. She even refuted Brother Liu's pronouncement of her website as "*a work within the work*", claiming it to be a *misnomer*, and has accelerated her pace in publishing more audacious articles of dissent and derision since then.

In her article, the sister made a short list of negative criteria to evaluate her own website if it "meets the description of a work within a work." The criteria she cited are: (1) *the souls gained for Christ be given to the service group of the web site*; (2) *the souls of the new believers be not delivered to the local churches*; and (3) *offerings be not given to the local churches but for a separate organization which has been raised up by the group serving in this web site*. Was she truthful to enumerate all the characteristics of what constitutes a work within a work? Or did she just narrowly list down a set of limited criteria so she can conveniently absolve herself from such an allegation?

It is therefore the burden of this article to look into the Word, as expounded to us by brothers Nee and Lee, to see (1) What is the work? What constitutes the unique work of the ministry? (2) What is a work within the work? What did brothers Nee and Lee say regarding ones who do their own work within the work? (3) What is the example given to us by the Lord Himself, the apostles, Brother Nee and Brother Lee? Was their work the work of the New Testament ministry or did they do their own work?

From the ministry we shall look into Brother Lee's five indicators to check if one is doing the unique work of the ministry and consider seventeen markers of one who is doing his own work within the work. Comparing the sister's work vis-à-vis excerpts from the ministry and the examples of the Lord and of His faithful servants, we shall see if "*a work within the work*" is a misnomer or in fact a fitting description of her work as reflected in the website.

## **The Work of the Ministry**

In Ephesians 4:12 the Apostle Paul says, “For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.” The four kinds of saints who are endowed with a special gift in verse 11 have only one ministry, that is, to minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ, the church. This is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy (2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12). The building up of the Body of Christ is the work of the ministry. Whatever the gifted persons do as the work of the ministry must be for the building up of the Body of Christ.

In the excerpts from the ministry that follows, we see the kind of work a worker does in doing the work of the ministry. He is one who (1) carries out God’s New Testament ministry; (2) carries out the work of the church; (3) works in the Body; (4) does only the work of the Lord’s recovery; and (5) builds up the Body of Christ:

### ***Carrying Out Gods’ New Testament Ministry***

“This is the section of the Lord Jesus in **God’s New Testament ministry**, and it is this that produces the church, edifies the saints, and builds up the Body. If you are short of these five points, whatever you do will be divisive and will cause division. Therefore, we need to see that there is a big difference with a terminated person who is not doing a work out of himself, **not doing his own work**, not speaking his own word, and who is not doing things by his own will and not seeking his own glory. This is not only a section of **God’s New Testament ministry**, but our pattern, a pattern of such a person with such a life. May the Lord make our vision clear concerning these matters.” (W. Lee, *Elders’ Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament, Chapter 3, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Carrying Out the Work of the Church***

“The gifted persons should help the work of the church to perfect the saints. **They should not build up their own work, but carry on the work of the church.**” (W. Lee, *Instruction and Exhortation to the Trainees, Chapter 2, Section 10, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Working in the Body***

“How then shall we work for the Lord? If we read Acts or the Epistles, we cannot find one reference to a person working independently for the Lord.... In the book of Acts, from the first chapter to the last chapter, we can say that **all the moves of the apostles were of the Body; there was no individual move....** Therefore, we can see that the Lord’s work is entrusted to many workers; however, these workers do not work individually but corporately. When they move, it is the move of the Body.” (W. Lee, *Dead to Law but Living to God, Chapter 7, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## ***Doing Only the Work of the Lord's Recovery***

“Anyone who has a vision today can be clear at a glance that neither Brother Nee nor I carried out our own personal work; **our work is the work of the Lord's recovery for the building of the Body of Christ.**” (W. Lee, *The Governing and Controlling Vision in the Bible, Chapter 2, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## ***Building Up the Body of Christ***

“We have to realize that when we serve the Lord, we are not doing our own work. Rather, **we are building up the Body of Christ.**” (W. Lee, *The Vision of the Divine Dispensing and Guidelines for the Practice of the New Way, Chapter 10, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Lastly, **our service must be for the building up of the Body of Christ and not for our own work.** Regardless of how long we have been serving in the Lord's recovery, we may not have rendered much building up to the Body of Christ. We all need to see these four principles of our spiritual service to God. Our service must be: in the Body, in our spirit and by the Holy Spirit, by life, and for the building up of the Body of Christ.” (W. Lee, *The Exercise and Practice of the God-Ordained Way, Chapter 1, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## **A Work within the Work**

In the succeeding excerpts from Brother Lee's ministry, we see the alarming indicators where he considers a worker, though remaining in the ministry and apparently doing the work of the ministry, has deviated from the central lane of God's New Testament economy and from the teaching and fellowship of the apostles to do his own work; hence, “a work within the work.” The co-worker who does his own work within the work is one who: (1) is not restricted in one publication; (2) leads the saints in a wrong direction; (3) teaches differently; (4) is opinionated; (5) does something the surrounding churches cannot take; (6) convinces the saints that his work is better than others; (7) claims that his way of practice is the best; (8) convinces others what he is doing is the best way; (9) expects others to be like him; (10) cares only for his own work; (11) makes his work his own work; (12) is anxious for success; (13) seeks credit; (14) attracts people to his place; (15) cares for numbers; (16) has ambition; and (17) has the feeling of accomplishment.

## ***Not Restricted in One Publication***

“**One thing that has caused the Lord's recovery trouble is the fact that we have different publications.** If we mean business for the Lord's recovery, we must avoid any kind of involvement in problems. When we were on mainland China, only Brother Nee had a publication, and the Gospel Room belonged solely and uniquely to him.... We only had one publication. Everything was published through Brother Nee's *Gospel Room because the publication is really the trumpeting. The sounding of our trumpet is not just in the verbal message but more in the publication....* I do not like to have another sounding. **Our sounding must be one, so we must be**

**restricted in one publication.”** (*W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move, pp. 161-163, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Leading the Saints in a Wrong Direction***

“We are here for the Lord’s recovery. I am not doing my own work, and you are not doing your own work. We all are bearing one testimony; we all have our shoulders under the ‘staves’ of the ‘ark.’ Since we are all bearing the one testimony, we all should speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10). But the speaking in certain places is leading the saints in the direction that is away from the Lord’s recovery. Such speaking may not be wrong or unscriptural. **It may be right and scriptural, but eventually it will lead the saints in a wrong direction.** If we go in a straight line, we shall reach a proper goal. But if our direction is off, eventually we shall reach a goal that is not the goal of the Lord’s recovery. Even after a short period of time, trouble may come to the recovery through your way of speaking scriptural things, that is, through your speaking of good messages. Although there is nothing wrong with your speaking, it may lead others in a wrong direction. If so, eventually that will become a problem to the whole recovery. The recovery is not merely a local matter. Although the recovery is in your local church, the recovery is universal. If you lead those in your locality in a direction that is off from the recovery, then there will be two directions—the direction in the recovery as a whole and the direction in your locality. If you teach in a way that leads others in a different direction, some may receive your teaching, but many of those in the Lord’s recovery will reject it. They will not ‘swallow’ your teaching.” (*W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, Chapter 12, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Teaching Differently***

“We may not think that this is serious, but actually it is more than serious. **It kills people to teach differently.** To teach differently tears down God’s building and annuls God’s entire economy. We all must realize that **even a small amount of teaching in a different way destroys the recovery.**” (*W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, p. 43, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“From experience we know that **the one who teaches differently is the first one to be sacrificed.** This means that if you teach differently, you run the risk not of sacrificing the recovery but of sacrificing yourself. We all need to practice Paul’s word to Timothy: ‘Even as I urged you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach differently’ (1 Tim. 1:3). Instead of teaching differently, we should all speak the same thing.” (*W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, Chapter 12, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Those who teach differently are not wise, **for they do not know the environment, situation, and condition of the Lord's recovery.**” (*W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, p. 130, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## ***Being Opinionated***

“Furthermore, **we take this one way for one goal without different teachings** (1 Tim. 1:3-4). We take only the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42) as the healthy words of the Lord Jesus (1 Tim. 6:3). First Timothy 1 speaks of the teaching concerning God's economy and chapter six speaks of the healthy words of the Lord Jesus. All the teachings of the apostles are for God's economy, and these teachings are the healthy words of the Lord Jesus. The apostles learned these words from the Lord and followed the Lord to teach the same thing that He did. The apostles' teaching is the teaching concerning God's economy. We must preach and teach concerning Christ's unsearchable riches and God's New Testament economy. In Ephesians 3:8 Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel and in verse 9 he speaks of God's eternal economy. We must preach and teach these two items. **May the Lord preserve us in the one way for one goal without opinion and without different teachings.**” (*W. Lee, The God-ordained Way to Practice the New Testament Economy, p. 147, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## ***Doing Something the Surrounding Churches Cannot Take***

“The third problem began from Brother Nee's time. A number of saints accept the recovery and come into the recovery, but they try to do their own work in the recovery. **One co-worker tried to promote, to push, his ministry, but the churches around him would not take it.** The leading ones there said that apparently the churches there were built up by that co-worker, but actually they were built up by the element of Brother Lee's ministry. I called a number of urgent elders' trainings because I realized that there was the tendency of division among us due to some who had the desire to do their own work within the recovery. They use the 'good will,' the advantages, of the recovery to do their own work.” (*W. Lee, The Problems Causing the Turmoil in the Church Life, Chapter 2, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## ***Convincing the Saints that His Work Being Better Than Others'***

“I have seen much in the way of serving the Lord during the past sixty years. Those who are unable to do something appear common, and those who can do something become proud.... **Once we become proud and despise others, considering our work better than others,** there will be a breach, and unnoticeably all the blessings that were brought in will leak away. I have said that we are not here to build up our own work. It is good to preach the gospel, to nourish the lambs, and to have group meetings. However, all these are but the means; they are not the work that we are building. The work that we are building is the Body of Christ.” (*W. Lee, The Vision of the Divine Dispensing and Guidelines for the Practice of the New Way, Chapter 10, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Claiming that His Way of Practice Being the Best***

**“Do not say your way or what you do is better, even if your way is the best.** I do not mean that you should not do things better.... This does not mean that you should not practice something better. Try to do something better as long as your doing does not damage the testimony of the Body. Your way might be improved, advanced, and better than all the other ways, yet you do not need to designate it as better, and you do not need to sell, promote, or talk about it. This always causes trouble. Do not say your way is improved and advanced. Do not say that others have deviated in a certain matter and that now you have an improved way. This kind of thing stirs troubling questions.” (W. Lee, *Elders’ Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord’s Recovery, Chapter 5, p. 62, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Convincing Others What He is Doing Being the Best Way***

"Do not try to convince others that your way is the best. This is similar to item number five which says not to say that your way is the right way. **Sometimes certain ones not only said that their way was the right or the best way, but tried to convince others of this.** This spontaneously and immediately caused a turmoil. This turmoil damaged them, damaged others, and eventually damaged the Lord’s recovery. I believe that we all love the Lord, and that we all love the Lord’s recovery.... This is the conclusion of my fellowship on these principles. Do not do anything or say anything that would damage the Lord’s recovery.” (W. Lee, *Elders’ Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord’s Recovery, Chapter 5, p. 69, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Expecting Others to be Like Him***

**“In our service we should not expect others to be like us,** nor should we expect to be like others.” (W. Lee, *The Administration of the Church and the Ministry of the Word, Chapter 2, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Caring Only for His Own Work***

“Real building depends on submission. To submit is to be in subjection to others. When we are willing to submit, there will be the building. Submission is not an issue if only one person is working. **But if we are working together, we must not simply care for our own work.**” (W. Lee, *The Administration of the Church and the Ministry of the Word, Chapter 3, Section, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Making the Work His Own Work***

**“Never make the work your own work.** We need the entire Body to work there and to learn there.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee (Set 3) Vol. 51: Church Affairs, Chapter 7, Section 7, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Being Anxious for Success***

**“When a person is doing his own work, he will be anxious for success,** but if he is doing the Lord’s work, he will not be anxious, because it is the Lord’s business. If we want to determine whether a person’s work is of God or of himself, we only need to see if he is anxious in the work. If a person’s work is according to God’s sending, the sent one will not be anxious, and there will not be many opinions.” (W. Lee, *Knowing Life and the Church*, Chapter 16, Section 4, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Seeking Credit***

“Besides this, **learn not to seek credit for the things you have done. Do not always seek to have a good record or to show that you have some merit...** [I]n the Lord’s recovery, **do not just do your own work.** We must see that we all are doing the same work.” (A message given by Brother Witness Lee in Taipei, Taiwan on April 19, 1988, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Attracting People to His Place***

**“Do not attract people to your place.** When you go out to minister, to speak, to visit, or to have fellowship, **do not exercise yourself in a way to attract people to you or to your place.** We all should attract people to the Lord’s recovery. We are not attracting people to our local church or to our work. **We do not have our work.** We only have the Lord’s work... **We are not here for our own work...** We are not attracting people to our own work, to our place, or even to ourselves.” (W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 04: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery*, Chapter 5, Section 3, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Caring for Numbers***

“In some places there is an effort being made to build up the numbers in attendance at the meetings. **I would ask you to check whether your concern is for the meetings to be in the focus of the Lord’s economy or whether it is for an increase in the number attending.** Even if you simply want to have a good meeting, this may cause you to miss the focus. The focus is to have the testimony of Jesus. ‘Lord, I don’t care merely for a good meeting. I don’t care merely for numbers. I don’t care merely for good attendance. Lord, I care for Your testimony.’ Brothers, if there has been an increase in attendance in your locality, that is really good. But I would check with you, what is the focus in your locality? What is the goal of your work? Is there a real lampstand, or just a Christian meeting?” (W. Lee, *Practical Talks to the Elders*, Chapter 1, Section 5, LSM) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Having Ambition***

“If we lose the oneness and the one accord, we are finished as far as the Lord’s move is concerned. I realized the danger of divisions among us over the

past ten years. This is why I called at least four urgent elders' meetings. I told the brothers that I realized there was the tendency among us toward divisions. This was because **some of the brothers wanted to have their own work within the unique work of the Lord's recovery.** Eventually, by 1987 my warning was fulfilled, and these divisions came to the surface. **The main cause of these divisions was ambition. Some desired to have their own work....**" (*W. Lee, The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move, Chapter 3, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### ***Having the Feeling of Accomplishment***

"I deeply believe that Paul's feeling, even his every cell, could testify that what he did was **not his own work** but was for the building up of the Body of Christ. I am afraid that this feeling of building up the Body of Christ had not penetrated Apollos as deeply. Nevertheless, he must have felt that he had accomplished a work. **If someone among us feels that he has accomplished a work, its value is questionable.** We should not have this kind of feeling. We should have a common, deep, and penetrating feeling that we are simply building up the Body of Christ, not that we are accomplishing some kind of work. The only work we should be accomplishing is the building up of the Body of Christ." (*W. Lee, Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 2: Leading the Saints to Practice the New Way Ordained by the Lord, Chapter 11, Section 6, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

### **Analysis and Application**

From the avalanche of materials cited and passages excerpted from the ministry, it is plain that Brother Lee taught widely about the work and the ministry, and the dangers of deviations from it. Positively, all the co-workers must carry out God's New Testament ministry, which is the work of the church, in the Body, doing only the work of the Lord's recovery, which builds up the Body of Christ by building with gold, silver, and precious stones. Negatively, every worker must strongly take heed to the admonition to beware of the seventeen markers of what makes one's work a work within the work, and continuously exercise the proper dealings in order to be saved from building with wood, grass or stubble.

Herein we see how the sister, who did not keep her standing in the divine administration,<sup>1</sup> had patently erred in confining what characterizes "a work within the work" as necessarily having only the three criteria she enumerated. A work within the work is deeper and more than just extrinsic indicators like gaining new ones for oneself and not delivering the fruits of one's labor to the churches, or the failure to remit offerings received to the churches. Analyzing the work of the sister worker by applying the items Brother Lee cautioned us against, we see that the sister's work palpably falls under every one of the seventeen indicators.

The sister's website clearly violates the principle of one publication work in the Lord's recovery and leads the saints in a wrong direction. Brothers Nee and Lee had always been specific particularly in the matter of one publication work, in order to keep the one speaking in the Body which is expressed by the one trumpeting in the work. The sister, while professing to be faithful in following the ministry of the age, has caused much

disharmony in the work because of her individualism now highlighted by the discordant publications she posted in her personal website. Aside from the obviously harmful contents, her website is superfluous because over the past decades, the work has already been publishing the *New Man*, its official publication to facilitate fellowship among and render supply to the churches in Northern Philippines. Content wise, it has been proven doubtless in previous articles of our series “*Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth*” that the many articles of the sister in her website contain much of her own erroneous interpretation of the Bible, overemphasis of certain practices in the Bible different from the God-ordained way taught by the ministry of the age, wanton disregard for authority and submission as revealed in the Bible,<sup>2</sup> and repeated shrill criticisms of the leading co-workers and elders, among others. Her publications represent the blowing of different trumpet sounds that mislead the saints to a different and wrong direction further and further away from the leading of the work. While the descriptive practice which she strongly advocates, teaches, and expects others to follow may be in the Bible, the Word is silent as to its attendant details, and her leading is not the blueprint of the God-ordained way as shown to us by Brother Lee through the balanced practice of gospel preaching, home meeting, group meeting, and district meeting for bread-breaking and prophesying.

The sister had repeatedly been shown to teach differently. Such deviations in truth and teaching are too conspicuous and glaring to go unnoticed. She incorrectly insists that the universal service in the church means that “*all the saints, both brothers and sisters, should take part in all the services in the church and in the Lord’s work*” [Emphasis Added]. To support her own interpretation of how house-to-house Lord’s table meeting should be practiced, she taught that “*in no section of the Holy Scriptures could we find breaking of the bread done in the “temple” or in big congregational meeting of the saints*”, disregarding I Corinthians 11:20. To prove her point that a house-to-house Lord’s table meeting only requires two or three gathered together, she misapplied the Lord’s breaking of bread with the two disciples going down to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-55) to be a Lord’s table meeting.<sup>3</sup> To project the image of being an Antipas, she erroneously alleged that “*Antipas will be the recipient of God’s blessing by way of much spiritual fruits for Christ’s multiplication and God’s glory*,”<sup>4</sup> in contrast to the biblical record in Revelation 2:12-17. In her writing that sows seeds of suspicion and dissent in the saints toward the elders, she added extra-biblical requirements for eldership such as “*residency in the locality of the church where the brother is an elder*” or “*an elder’s wife and children needing to love/live the church life*”, and other trivial yet overbearing allegations against the elders.<sup>5</sup> In making a point that an apostle is answerable only to the Holy Spirit, she propounded an unscriptural teaching that Barnabas was stripped of his apostleship in Acts 15, despite Paul’s reaffirmation of Barnabas’s apostleship in 1 Corinthians 9:6 which he recorded under divine inspiration after he and Barnabas had split up in the work. To promote her style of house-to-house Lord’s table meeting, she developed and elevated a practice into an absolute teaching and yoke that now threatens the Work and the churches. To justify her insubordination to the elders of the locality where she is serving, she teaches that as a “pioneer” of the church, she is exempt from submitting to the elders who came in after her. The list of different teachings and misaiming goes on and on.

The sister is also very opinionated. She freely expresses her views, many of which are dissenting, in private and in public, not just to the leading ones in the work or the elders in the locality where she serves, but also to younger co-workers, fulltime trainees, and saints in general. She has repeatedly criticized how the leading ones lead the work and the elders of the church where she meets and openly critiqued the conference messages given

by the brothers, some of whom are in the forefront of the ministry in the Lord's recovery. She selectively receives the words of the brothers, taking only what is beneficial to her and her work. She further incites the saints at large to be critical of conference speakers as well as the ones leading them, undermining the authority of the leading ones. By direct attribution or by innuendo she portrays herself as an Antipas, a budding rod, and a shining star,<sup>6</sup> while insinuating that the leading brothers in the work and elders among the churches are wandering stars and casting aspersion on the leading ones as those with a manner of life unworthy of the saints' emulation or submission. At the same time, she is calling on the younger co-workers and saints to be "*Jonathan's soldiers*" to defend her.

The sister insists on doing something the surrounding churches cannot take, specifically, the way she has taken a descriptive practice in the Bible and elevated it into a legalistic teaching and foisted it as a yoke upon the churches and the elders. She compels surrounding churches and even other districts of the locality she is serving to follow her practice through her yellow book and website, even going so far as to promote this abroad. She tried to convince others time and again that her work is better than that of others, claiming that her way of practice is the best. She frequently challenged leading brothers to show her a way that is better than her way before she will humble down to submit. She even went to the extent of saying that her way of practice is the "*optimum means of hastening the Lord's return*", a teaching that we do not see in the Scriptures or in the ministry of brothers Nee and Lee.<sup>7</sup>

The sister expects others to be like her and is intolerant of people who are not. On various occasions in her yellow book and in other writings, she labeled those who do not follow or support her *practice as being "counterproductive", "cowards", "blind", "unprincipled", "liar", "traitor", "not absolute", "deadened", "bribed", "devious", "inexperienced", "slothful in zeal", "not burning in spirit", "seeking the assent of man", "deceiving the rest of the co-workers", "poisoning the saints", "sowing confusion", "leading ones [who] are unwilling to inquire of the Lord through unceasing prayer", "leading ones [who] will not be one with others", "leading ones [who] fear to be bothered", "leading ones [who] never thought that the Lord's table meeting recorded in the Scriptures could really be practiced, "leading ones like Uzza who feared for the Ark of the Testimony", or even "allowing themselves to be used by Satan to frustrate [her style of practicing] the house-to-house Lord's table meeting".* Her way of publicly criticizing leading ones who do not support her teachings and practices and calling on the saints not to emulate or obey these leading ones is diametrically opposed to Brother Lee's, who charged returning fulltime trainees in 1989 not to promote the "new way", not to criticize their elders, not to force others to take the way they were taking, and not to condemn those who will not take the same way.

The sister cares only for her own work and makes her work her own work. She often uplifts her work at the expense of and by disparaging others' work. When confronted by the elders that her website is causing confusion and division, she claimed that all the contents therein as being her personal copyright – product of her thirty years coordination with Brother Liu, misappropriating the common heritage we have in the Lord's recovery to be her own private possession.

The sister, in various speaking and articles, shows anxiety for success and an unhealthy care for numbers. In one church service meeting, she reprimanded those in attendance, "*Work so that we will have new faces. What counts is the number of people; whatever*

*kind of dispensing is still useless.*” Every so often she would harp on the successes of her work in numbers, while challenging others if they have the same result. In writing to elders of various localities who were responding to her audacity in carrying out her own work and in her other posted writings, she is wont to parading her achievements while despising others, and quick to exposing perceived failures of others. Not the Lord or the apostles, or brothers Nee and Lee, ever blustered about the success they may have achieved. Brothers Nee and Lee, while leading us to pay attention to a healthy increase and propagation, periodically reminded us not to care only for a work or for numbers, but that we should be absolutely pure for the work of the Lord’s recovery.

The sister seeks credit for her thirty years of fulltime work in Northern Philippines, often reminding the brothers of how she gave up her profession to serve full time, and how this has resulted to so many saints and churches being raised up. As to attracting people to her place, she gloats on the accomplishments in her vineyard to attract people to follow her, often by exaggerating the degree and extent of the perceived successes while hiding the problems. She strongly promoted her style of house to house Lord’s table meeting when visiting a church abroad, asking the elders there to support the activities of a returning fulltime trainee sister from their locality who was going back and wanted to bring this practice back to her sending locality. When the elders replied that they wanted to seek confirmation from a certain leading co-worker, she was quite unhappy. Sometime later when saints from this church came to visit the Philippines, she warned them that if they do not support the returning fulltime trainee to practice her style of house-to-house Lord’s table meeting, she would get the sister back to the Philippines.

The sister visibly possesses the feeling of accomplishment, often enumerating her credentials in the Lord’s recovery with a history of over half a decade, and flaunting “work accomplishments” as her basis to claim superiority and authority over others, especially elders. She refuses to truly open up and coordinate with others. Her work cannot be touched by others, and she is unwilling to receive any help from others. When leading brothers from abroad who were invited to speak in our conferences insomuch as uttered a few words that may pertain to her work unfavorably, she was quick to denounce them and demanded that they not be invited to minister to the churches in northern Philippines again. All these would not be possible at all if she has had no expectation of being a prominent one in the work. Bound by a sense of entitlement, she periodically oversteps her position to indefatigably push her agenda which others must embrace or face relentless attacks from her – both spoken and written.

The sister has time and again told people that the reason she put up the website [www.seekersofgodsdesire.org](http://www.seekersofgodsdesire.org) was in keeping with the charge of Sister Liu before she passed on for her to chronicle the thirty years of labor Brother Liu spent in the Philippines, of which she was a witness and with whom she was a co-worker. However, a cursory reading of the website clearly shows that more than 80% of the website is occupied with promoting her own ministry and work, her different teachings and redefinitions of certain truths and practices by deforming the Word and misquoting the ministry, innuendoes and attacks against the elders and co-workers, and the posting of ministry materials without permission.

The words and actions of the sister worker also do not correspond to the professed lofty goals she stated for her work. After reading the many articles in her website, one perceives from her rhetoric an underlying theme of dissension from the leadership in the

work and a twofold aim of vilifying the leading brothers in the work and the elders among the churches. At the same time, she persisted in vindicating herself and justifying her separate work within the Lord's recovery that is not accountable to the Body and not consistent with the Body as the governing principle. In addition, in putting forth her dissenting thoughts, she ignored a critical principle by undercutting the oneness and the one accord in the Lord's recovery. Measured against the seventeen items Brother Lee warned us to beware of and guard against in the ministry, her work, particularly her opposing website, is clearly and unmistakably a dangerous "work within the work". The compelling reasons cited above make this conclusion unavoidable. It is *not* a misnomer, but is in fact a fitting description. Her website is indeed a work within the work – her own individualistic work within but separate from the unique work of the Lord's recovery.

## **Conclusion**

In the past there is the negligence of keeping the one accord in the Lord's recovery by some workers. One of the greatest failures in Christianity is the matter of "different ministries". Many workers, while raised up by God, either fail to see the all-inheriting vision of God's economy or refuse to be limited and governed by it. As a result, each one does that which is right in his own eyes like the Israelites did during the time of the Judges. This has resulted in many missions, works of faith, denominations and free groups. This has produced many different and competing ministries which bring about different practices and divisions. In the Lord's recovery, we should never relive this sad history again.

The first characteristic of the Lord's recovery is oneness. We have only one work, one ministry. The work of the New Testament ministry, like the Body, is uniquely one. The work, which maintains the one fellowship of the Body of Christ, is carried out under one leadership – the teaching and fellowship of the apostles. The ministry is like an army going into war. For this reason, oneness and one accord is most crucial. The work cannot afford to tolerate different teachings or accommodate deviational practices. Different teachings bring forth different practices that result in division.

The work is God's flowing throughout the ages. This flowing is the work of God in the sphere of the apostles' teaching and fellowship. Every worker must seek to know, touch, and follow the ministry of age. We are nourished and blessed by following the ministry. Though there may be many workers raised up with various functions, yet not one works independently. Every worker, while being answerable to the Lord, is also accountable to the work and other workers God has placed alongside him to work with. Each one, apart from taking the building of the Body as his unique goal in ministry, also takes the Body as the governing principle and limitation in his service.

The greatest indication that we see the Body is that we cannot be independent. If a worker cannot coordinate with others, then he is through in the ministry. The work of the ministry is to build up the Body of Christ. To build up is to mutually support and supply one another, and not criticize, tear down or undermine. Lack of coordination, whether willful or unintentional, produces criticism and disharmony. For this reason all the co-workers must endeavor to avoid any discord, separation, and division. Each must be concerned for the Lord's recovery and not his own work.

We must emphasize that in order to carry out the unique New Testament ministry, we need to do everything in a coordinated way (1 Cor. 1:10). There is just one flow from the throne and one blowing of the trumpet through one publication work. We must serve in the one flow of the Lord's move. This negatively keeps different teachings which bring in different practices out of the recovery while positively leads all the saints and churches to be the same in appearance, mind, speaking, and presentation. We will be one in teaching, bearing one testimony, and all will be speaking the same thing according to the taste of the Lord's recovery.

For this reason every co-worker of the Lord needs constant dealings. Each one must be dealt with in motive. Not one worker can function independently. There should be openness and mutual accountability in the work and among the churches. Each worker, while being directly responsible to God for His commission, is also answerable to the ministry and the company of workers God has placed him to work with. As in the church, we should learn submission to authority in the work. Obedience and listening to others bring in the blessing. There can be no building without submission. We build by submission. Our very submission to the divine ordination is our building.

Positively, we must see that the work is to do the particular work of God in every age, to do the work of the Lord's recovery, which is the work of the New Testament ministry, the work of the Body of Christ. For this work, all the workers need to be in one accord without any opinion.

Negatively, we ought to steer clear of all the NOTs in the work. We should not keep separate territories, not build fortresses and not be feudal princes on mountaintops, not work independently for the Lord, not do a tearing down work in the church service, not serve in the principle of Satan, not sow seeds of death and dissension, not label others, not practice legality, not even carry out a "work", be saved from not having one's work mingled with others' work, not desire to be the leader, not teach differently, not do our own work, not use the goodwill and advantages of the Lord's recovery to do one's own work, not have opinions, not envy, not credit ourselves, not attract people to our place, not have a work that turns others to us and not to the church, not build with wood, hay or stubble, not destroy the temple of God, and not consider ourselves or our work better than others'.

In his concluding word in chapter three of the book *A Word of Love to the Co-Workers, Elders, Lovers and Seekers of the Lord*, Brother Lee warns us to beware of ambition, pride, self-justification and exposing others' failures and defects, and not conforming to the death of Christ. There should be continuous dealing against ambition to be the leader, to get a place (even a district) for our work, or to captivate people to be our private co-workers. Concerning pride, we should be wary lest we boast in a hidden way of our spiritual capacity, exalt ourselves and despise others, or think of ourselves more highly than others (Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:3). Regarding self-justification and exposing others' failures and defects, we should be cautious not to justify ourselves and speak well of our success and merits while condemning others or exposing their failures and defects. Finally, on not conforming to the death of Christ, we should be careful lest we do not absolutely deny our self and bear the cross, not always crucifying our natural man, or not putting to death our disposition by birth.

The work of the ministry is most important, because it is by this work that we build up the Body of Christ. However, this building work, unlike anything in the world, is something organic. Only that which is of life issues in the building; only that which passes through the altar springs forth life. As Brother Watchman Nee once warned us, “God pays attention to what we are more than what we do. True work is the outflow of life. The service that is counted is always the living out of Christ. To offer oneself to God is not to work for God but to let God work. Those who cannot let God work cannot work for God.”

There is a divine order in the church, the Body, and the work. Those who cannot work submitting to God’s arranged order and ordination are disqualified from the ministry or service. No servant of the Lord can arrogate himself above the Body. All the gifts are given by the Lord to the Body. Not one gift is greater than the Body. All the gifts are given for the Body. As such, all ministries should be under the church. Each one must work not just for or unto the Body, but also within and through the Body. Our service must be for the building up of the Body of Christ and not for our own work. Neither the Lord nor the apostles or brothers Nee and Lee did their own work. If we are not careful, our work may become a “work within the work”. May the Lord be merciful to us that our work will not be “a work within the work”, and may He further grant us mercy that we may be able to distinguish these works and be saved from such counterfeits to the glorious building of God.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry**

### **Patterns of Those Who Did Not Do Their Own Work**

#### **The Lord Jesus Did Not Do His Own Work**

**“In the Gospels we cannot find one instance in which the Lord did something out of Himself as a Nazarene;** God was in Him in all things and did everything with Him. We can say that the Lord made every move with God; the life He lived was the living of the mingling of God with man and man with God.” *(W. Lee, The Church as the Body of Christ, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM)* [Emphasis Added]

“In carrying out God’s New Testament ministry, the Lord Jesus told us that He never did anything out of Himself (John 5:19), **He did not do His own work** (John 4:34; 17:4), He did not speak His own word (John 14:10, 24), He did everything not by His own will (John 5:30), and He did not seek His own glory (John 7:18).” *(W. Lee, Elders’ Training, Book 01: The Ministry of the New Testament, Chapter 3, Section 4, LSM)* [Emphasis Added]

“John 5:30 says, ‘I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My gave Him to complete.’ John 10:37 says, ‘If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me.’ This meant that **He always did the Father’s work. The Son never did His own work....** John 14:24 says, ‘He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.’ John 10:25 says, ‘Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe; the works which I do in the name of My Father, these testify concerning Me.’ Jesus not only came in the Father’s name but He also did His works in the Father’s name. John 7:18 says, ‘He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but He who seeks the

glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.’ This verse tells us that the Son was always seeking the Father's glory.” (W. Lee, *The Divine Economy, Chapter 6, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“In the Gospel of John we are told how the Son came with the Father (8:29) and in the Father's name (5:43). He was one with the Father (17:22). The Father was in Him and He was in the Father (14:10-11). He did not seek His own will but the Father's will (6:38). **He did not do His own work but the Father's work** (17:4). He did not speak His own word but the Father's word (14:24). He did not seek His own glory but the Father's glory (7:18). The Son came in the Father's name and lived by the Father, not by Himself (6:57). He acted, moved, and worked altogether by the Father. When the people saw the Son, they saw the Father (14:9). The Son and the Father are one (10:30).” (W. Lee, *The Divine Economy, Chapter 9, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“John's Gospel reveals that Christ lived God and did the Father's will. He lived a life which was God Himself. No one has ever seen God, but Christ as the Son of God expressed Him (John 1:18). Christ lived a life manifesting God the Father and making Him known (John 14:9). At the same time He did the Father's will (John 5:30b; 6:38). **He did not do His own work or accomplish His own intention but did the Father's will.**” (W. Lee, *The Secret of Experiencing Christ, Chapter 3, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“We need to be impressed with the fact that according to John 16:15 whatever the Father has is the Son's. The Son did not come in His own name; He came in the Father's name (John 5:43). The Son did not seek His own will but the Father's will (John 5:30). The Son did not speak His own word; He spoke the Father's word (John 14:24). **The Son did not do His own work but the Father's work** (John 4:34). Who, then, is this One? He is the Son with the Father. The Father was with the Son and gave everything to Him. Therefore, the Son is the expression of the Father.” (W. Lee, *The Conclusion of the New Testament (Msgs. 021-033), Chapter 2, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“The New Testament does not separate the Father and the Son. Especially in the Gospel of John we see that the Son is always one with the Father. The Son came in the name of the Father (John 5:43). Furthermore, **the Son did not do His own work and will**, He did not speak His own word, He did not seek His own glory, and He did not express Himself (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 7:18). Rather, He always did the Father's work and will, spoke the Father's word, sought the Father's glory, and expressed the Father. The Son was one with the Father and could not be separated from the Father, neither could the Father be separated from the Son.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude, Chapter 22, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“When the Son was on earth, He lived in the Father, and the Father lived in Him. The Son never spoke His own word; He spoke the Father's word. **The Son never did His own work; He did the Father's work.** The Son never sought His own glory; He sought the Father's glory. What we have in the Gospel of John, therefore, is a revelation of the Son with the Father.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude, Chapter 32, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Before the Lord Jesus went to the cross to die, He spoke to His disciples in this way: ‘All that the Father has is Mine; therefore I said that He receives of Mine and shall

disclose it to you' (John 16:15). This verse indicates that whatever the Father has is the Son's. The Son does not come in His own name; He comes in the Father's name (John 5:43). The Son does not seek His own will, but seeks the Father's will (John 5:30). He does not speak His own word; He speaks the Father's word (John 14:24), and He does the Father's work (John 4:34), **not His own work**. Who is He? He is the Son with the Father. The Father was with the Son, and the Father gave everything to the Son. Thus, the Father was embodied in the Son (Col. 2:9)." (*W. Lee, The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity, Chapter 11, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## **The Apostles Did Not Do Their Own Work**

"According to the New Testament, the **apostles did not carry out any work for their own ministry**. Whatever they did was for the building up of the local churches." (*W. Lee, The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ, Chapter 7, Section 3, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"In the same principle, the move of every apostle for the preaching of the gospel in Acts was the moving of God and man, the move of God mingled with man; God could not be separated from man's move. When Peter moved, God moved; when Paul moved, God moved; when Stephen moved, God also moved. We cannot separate the apostles from the Lord; **every aspect and detail of their move in the gospel and work were mingled with God**. When they stood up to speak, God was within them doing His works. This is similar to the experience of the Lord Jesus when He was on earth (John 6:57; 5:19). The apostles could say that their preaching of the gospel was **not their own work**; it was the work of the One who died, resurrected, and was living in them." (*W. Lee, The Church as the Body of Christ, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"I deeply believe that Paul's feeling, even his every cell, could testify that what **he did was not his own work but was for the building up of the Body of Christ....** The only work we should be accomplishing is the building up of the Body of Christ. We should have the feeling that we are only building up the Body of Christ with the other brothers and sisters." (*W. Lee, Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 2: Leading the Saints to Practice the New Way Ordained by the Lord, Chapter 11, Section 6, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

"The apostle Paul was sent from Antioch. Suppose he came to Ephesus and set up the Antioch Church in Ephesus. Suppose Peter, who also traveled much, came to Ephesus and saved fifty or one hundred people. Suppose he said, 'I will not put my people in Paul's Antioch Church. That church is not related to me. I am from Jerusalem, and I will call my church the Jerusalem Church in Ephesus.' Suppose Barnabas and Philip also arrived, did their own work, and established their own churches. **In this way different kinds of work would result in many divisions among the people**. God cannot tolerate this kind of situation." (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 2) Vol. 43: Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (3), Chapter 6, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

## Brothers Nee and Lee Did Not Do Their Own Work

“Anyone who has a vision today can be clear at a glance that **neither Brother Nee nor I carried out our own personal work**; our work is the work of the Lord’s recovery for the building of the Body of Christ. I say this with the hope that you will be influenced by me. I was greatly influenced by Brother Nee, and I hope that you will also be influenced by him.” (*W. Lee, The Governing and Controlling Vision in the Bible, Chapter 2, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“We are here for the Lord’s recovery. **I am not doing my own work**, and you are not doing your own work. We all are bearing one testimony.” (*W. Lee, Remaining in the Unique New Testament Ministry of God’s Economy under the Proper Leadership in His Move, Chapter 1, Section 2, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“We have learned this lesson in the past. For many years there were many prevailing co-workers with Brother Watchman Nee, but no divisions were formed among us because we all learned the lesson not to keep any work in our own hands. We do not work for our own work. There is no work that belongs to us. We work only for the local churches. I can testify from the depth of my heart that **Brother Nee kept nothing in his hand**. His work was wholly for the local churches.” (*W. Lee, The Vision, Practice, and Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ, Chapter 7, Section 4, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

“Third, Brother Nee truly knew Christ and the Body. His work was not for himself at all; he did not have his own work. He never put any church he established ‘in his pocket.’ Brother Nee was the pioneer, and I am a follower. Thank the Lord, he truly was an excellent pattern to me that enabled me to still be ministering here today.... **Neither Brother Nee nor I carried out our own work**; rather, we carried out the work of the Lord’s recovery. The Lord’s recovery is for the building of the Body of Christ.” (*W. Lee, The Governing and Controlling Vision in the Bible, Chapter 2, Section 5, LSM*) [Emphasis Added]

January 11, 2010

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<sup>1</sup> See “Women in the Divine Administration”, Bill Buntain & Dan Sady, DCP

<sup>2</sup> See “Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on 1 Corinthians 11:2-9: Is it Unscriptural for Sisters to Submit to Brothers?”, Literature Center

<sup>3</sup> See “Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on Luke 24:13-55: Was Jesus’ Breaking of Bread with the Two Disciples Going to Emmaus a Lord’s Table Meeting?”, Literature Center

<sup>4</sup> See “Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on Revelation 2: 12-17: What Really Was the Lord’s Blessing and Reward to Antipas?”, Literature Center

<sup>5</sup> See “Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on Hebrews 13: 7, 17, 24: Remember, Obey, and Greet the Ones Leading You”, Literature Center

<sup>6</sup> See “Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on Jude 12 & 13: Who are the Shining Stars and the Wandering Stars?”, Literature Center

<sup>7</sup> See “Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on ‘Hastening the Lord’s Return’: Is House-to-House Lord’s Table Meeting the Optimum Way of Hastening the Lord’s Return?”, Literature Center