

General Topics :: recovery version study Bible

recovery version study Bible, on: 2006/5/29 19:19

if anyone would like a free copy, you can get one at (www.biblesforamerica.com) www.biblesforamerica.com

just in case someone would be interested...

Re: recovery version study Bible - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/5/29 19:33

Here is some information on this translation and the reason behind it, the movement "LOCAL CHURCH" is the organisation that is running this website and other sites related to the recovery bible:

Quote:

-----Bible Translation

The Motive for Translation

The translation of the Bible is one of the greatest endeavors that Christians can set themselves to do, not only into those languages that lack a proper translation of the Scriptures, but even into those languages that already possess a number of good translations. Such an endeavor, far from evidencing a desire simply "to be different" or indicating disdain for what others have previously done, manifests a seriousness in Bible study and a love for God's Word that befits all believers. As disciples of the Lord, we should diligently study the Bible to the greatest degree possible, depending on what gifts God has graciously given us. If we are able to, we should even go so far as to translate the Scriptures on our own to better understand the text and to better apprehend the light in God's Word. If God has enabled us to delve into His Word this deeply, we do well to labor on His Word to this extent, for in translating from the original languages of the Bible, we so immerse ourselves in the text that we can only better perceive what the Spirit of God is saying to us in His Word. While some may ask us why we have translated the Bible when it has been done so many times and so ably by others, we should instead ask them why they have not. The Bible is the only book that deserves to be translated again and again, and each new translation affords the believers better access to the truth in His Word. In properly translating the Bible, we do not diminish its word or impact; rather, we glorify the Word of God and thus its Supreme Author.

The Need for Translation

The impetus for translating the Bible is almost as old as the Bible itself. In even as early a time as that of Nehemiah, translation of the Scriptures became necessary for the people of God, and the Bible itself records that Ezra the scribe, with many assistants, "read in the book, in the law of God, interpreting and giving the sense, so that understood the reading" (Neh. 8:8). We know that part of this "interpreting and giving the sense" was rendering the words of Scripture from Hebrew into Aramaic, the language of the returned exiles; hence, the Bible itself validates its need for translation. Later, after the Old Testament canon had been written and the Jews had dispersed throughout the Mediterranean lands, the first complete translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was executed by Jewish scholars in Greek between the mid-third and late second century BC. For the most part, Old Testament quotations contained in the New Testament are drawn from this translation, called the Septuagint, and by this again the Bible validates the need for its own translation.

The History of Translation

Even though the early church, existing in a predominately Greek-speaking world, did not generally require translation of the Greek New Testament, translation into a number of the other languages of the Roman Empire began early and was widespread. Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, and Armenian translations of the Scriptures were produced for the needs of the spreading church. And for the growing church in the West, a number of Latin translations, of varying quality, appeared. By the end of the fourth century, the need for a single, common translation into Latin motivated Jerome to bring forth his spectacular Vulgate, the translation of the Scriptures that sustained the church in the West for over a thousand years, well beyond the time of the Reformation. Even though we normally think of the Reformation as a period of blossoming for Bible translations, Jerome's Vulgate actually served as the Scriptural platform for the Lord's move at the time, since much of the polemical writing of this era is in Latin and depends on Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible. Further, many early translations of the Scriptures into English were made, not from Greek or Hebrew as might be expected, but from Jerome's monumental and classic work into Latin. For example, Wycliffe's translation of the Bible in the early 14th century, the first in Europe in nearly a thousand years, was based upon Jerome's Vulgate. But it is indeed the case that the Protestant Reformers, armed with a particular recovery of light and truth in the Scriptures, picked up the task of translating the Bible into the languages of the Europeans with full vigor. Luther, easily the most dominant figure of the Reformation, is also easily the most influential Bible translator of all time. His approach to other translations of the Bible into German, completed in 1534, influenced a number of translators in other languages, including William Tyndale, who, around the same time, was the first to translate the Bible into English entirely from its original languages. As the recovery of truth progressed across the centuries, serious students of the Bible each in turn took up the task of translating the Scriptures, either as personal exercises or as fully executed versions (e.g., J.N. Darby, Conybeare and Howson, Henry Alford, Kenneth Wuest). Their devotion to and love for the Bible made possible a broad range of good translations which have rendered immense help to those equally serious students who have not been able to translate the Scriptures on their own.

Material adapted from The New Testament Recovery Version, Witness Lee, �1985, 1991. Used by permission of Living Stream Ministry, Anaheim, CA. All rights reserved.

Re: recovery version study Bible - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/5/29 19:33

Love the Recovery version.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/5/29 19:39

Personally I think there are some good things to be gleaned in this translation of the bible especially the footnotes but I don't consider it to be the best or even the only translation to be used. I ordered a copy to be able to glean some things from it.

Re:, on: 2006/5/29 20:00

I absolutely agree that the recovery version is not the only translation to be used. To only use the recovery version would be to miss out on some real gems that are available, such as the Amplified Bible, the Darby translation, the American Standard (especially the one from 1901), and all or part of numerous other translations as well. I would say, though, that as far as I have seen and studied, the recovery version is the best one out there today. That is my opinion though, and that is speaking in terms of what I feel is the accuracy and propriety to be found in this translation. I also think there is a tremendous amount of light in the footnotes- though some may hold different doctrinal views on some of the points made - and there is no doubt a real supply of divine life available to all who read them.

Re:, on: 2006/5/30 22:10

sermonindex,

I am curious which translation of the Bible you consider to be the best and why? I am not asking this to start any sort of argument or debate- I would just like to know.

Also, if I may ask, on what topics are you looking to do your gleaning from the footnotes in the recovery version? I may be able to recommend a few accordingly.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/5/31 2:02

Quote:
-----I am curious which translation of the Bible you consider to be the best and why? I am not asking this to start any sort of argument or debate- I would just like to know.

The **KJV** version translation, no particular revision date because there have been a few. I just think that simply the quality of people involved in the translation is beyond what modern day scholarship and devotion to the living Christ affords. I have a 2 part teaching by Chuck Smith speaking of the people that were on the KJV translation staff, it is quite impressive to hear some of these historical backings behind this version. I am also using the NLT (New Living Translation) at times for a modern abridgement of the bible in modern day vernacular.

Quote:
-----Also, if I may ask, on what topics are you looking to do your gleaning from the footnotes in the recovery version? I may be able to recommend a few accordingly.

I probably wouldn't be able to answer this at all because I am quite ignorant of the footnotes in the recovery version translation. I will be interested to take a look at it as time permits.

Re: - posted by Combat_Chuck (), on: 2006/5/31 3:29

I have heard from several Christians whom I respect that Witness Lee is a heretic... So, be careful...

Re:, on: 2006/5/31 10:21

That rumor that Witness Lee is a heretic, and things of the like, have floated around for many years, but after extensive research into his books, and fellowship with co-workers of Witness Lee's (because he died around 10 years ago), some very notable sources have said quite the opposite about Witness Lee. Not only is he not heretical, but what he has to say is very beneficial and enlightening. The most noteworthy source is Fuller Seminary, which you probably know is one of the top seminaries in the country. Christianity Today has also put out an article on the same topic a few months ago, in which they include a quote from Fuller Seminary's statement. Hank Hanegraff (also known as "the Bible Answer Man"), of the Christian Research Institute, used to be very strong in saying Witness Lee teaches heresy, etc, but after doing more of his own research, rather than leaning on the words of others, he has taken a stand very similar to that of Fuller Seminary. He respects Witness Lee and the local churches very much, and he supports them. The list of very noteworthy supporters within the Christian community by no means stops there. While there are a number of opposers out there, if you get into the content of their argument, you will discover it very much lacks substance. Or, quite frankly, it consists of lies and slanders. As Dr. J. Gordon Melton (director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion and the pastor of the Emmaus United Methodist Church in Chicago) said, regarding one such opposing book, "the mistakes and misrepresentations in the book are so frequent and so consistent that it strains credulity to suggest that (it) is merely the product of poor scholarship."

I didn't really want to get into that though. Just wanted to let you all know you can get a free copy of the footnoted recovery version, which is an excellent offer.

Re: - posted by tacklebox (), on: 2006/5/31 10:25

I ordered a copy but never found time to really look into it, but my wife started reading it a lot. She liked the commentary in many parts, but when she began to ask me questions about some of the comments, I began to suspect that its doctrine was off some, mainly concerning the distinct differences in the Trinity. It seems that the commentary leans towards not separating the three into distinct persons but almost implies that when Jesus dies, He essentially became the Holy Spirit, at least that's what we thought it was suggesting. Needless to say, much of the commentary did seem helpful, but I would also suggest being watchful and discerning. :-)

Re: - posted by tacklebox (), on: 2006/5/31 10:29

Hank Hanegraff has also leaned towards (<http://www.alwaysbeready.com/pages/preterism.htm>) preterism in more recent times as well, hasn't he?

While I do think we should consider the suggestions of godly, disciplined men and women, the ultimate test is whether or not Witness Lee proclaims the same Gospel that Jesus and His Apostles did. The Bible is the Word of God, and no matter how many people recommend something, I won't accept it unless it agrees with the Bible.

Respectfully in Christ,
Chris :-)

Re: recovery version study Bible - posted by boomatt (), on: 2006/5/31 10:45

This is what I found on Witness Lee. I am not to sure if this is too credible, but this might help.

Overview

Founded by Witness Lee (1905-1997), the Local Church is known to insiders as "The Lord's Recovery." It's churches are usually called by the name of their cities (e.g. the Church in Los Angeles).

Theologically, the Local Church is considered by most Christian apologists and countercult professionals to be a cult of

Christianity. That is, in their opinion this movement's beliefs and practices seriously deviate from those of orthodox Christianity.

The Local Church, in turn, makes much of a stamp of approval it has received from J. Gordon Melton, a notorious cult apologist whose testimony in one of the movement's lawsuits is evaluated here.

The Local Church movement of Witness Lee, known by its adherents around the world as The Lord's Recovery, was imported from the Orient to America during the early sixties by Witness Lee (1905-1997), a former disciple and co-worker of the Chinese evangelist Watchman Nee (1903-1972). This movement claims to be the one true church, the sole expression of Christ, the sole move of God on earth, and the most orthodox of Christians. Witness Lee, until his death, had lead this movement of approximately 150,000 with unquestioned authority as the apostle of this age, God's deputy authority, and as the oracle of God. Witness Lee claimed to have been commissioned directly by the Lord and to have received revelations from the Lord, which formed the basis of the beliefs and practices of the Local Church movement. According to Witness Lee, Christianity is viewed as blind, fallen, poor, and degraded, and denominational groups are called harlot daughters of the Whore of Babylon (Rev. 17), the Roman Catholic Church. From A Brief History of the Local Church Movement, formerly posted at the late Jim Moran's Light of Truth Ministries site

Witness Lee's writings teach modalism instead of trinitarianism, support pray-reading as spiritually superior to normal prayer, criticize and castigate Christian churches which do not share his doctrinal views on "local ground", and teach that the Local Church movement is a necessary precondition for the return of Jesus Christ.
Source: Eric Pement, writing in alt.support.ex-cult , Sep. 3, 1998

Controversial movement begun in China in the early 1920s by Ni To-sheng (Watchman Nee). Growth and controversy developed during the administration of their second leader, the late Witness Lee, who moved to America in 1962 founding Living Stream Ministry. Among issues drawing criticism from evangelical Christians is the Local Church's use of the term "mingling" to describe the relationship between God and believers (i.e., Christians become both divine and human like Jesus). Some evangelicals have also charged that the church compromises the Trinity doctrine by confusing the Persons of the Holy Spirit and the Son in a way similar to modalism. The organization's exclusivity has also come under fire. According to Lee, each city can and should have only one church. Denominationalism is seen as of the Devil. According to critics, the effect is that Lee-led local churches, usually called by the name of their cities (e.g., the Church in Anaheim or the Church in Chicago), become the only true expressions of the Body of Christ. Thus, according to former members, all other churches or denominations are seen as being outside the will of God or not true churches at all. The Local Church has also gained a reputation for threatening legal action to prevent unfavorable public evaluation of its movement. Even Christian critics have been targeted, adding to the evidence that they do not consider believers outside their movement to be true or obedient Christians (1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
Source: Watchman Fellowship's 2001 Index of Cults and Religions

Related Organizations

The Local Church includes a number of organizations that not always clearly reveal their connection to the movement. These organizations include Living Stream Ministry (publishing arm), Sword Distributing, The Lord's Recovery, Church of Recovery, Bibles for America, Bibles for New Zealand, Christian Websites, Amana Christian Bookstore, Emanna (devotions).

The Local Church publishes the Recovery Version of the Bible.

Related web sites include, "Christian Websites," "Contending for the Faith," "Emanna"

The Recovery Version

Living Stream Ministry, the publishing arm of the Local Church, publishes the "Recovery Version" of the Bible:

The extensive footnotes written by Witness Lee and the Scripture text found in this edition are supportive of the beliefs and practices of the movement. Footnotes from the Book of Revelation state that denominational groups are spiritual fornicators for taking on names other than that of Christ (Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, etc), that Christianity is degraded for taking on these denominational names, that denominational groups are the harlot daughters of the Whore of Babylon, and that Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism have become an organization used by Satan as a tool to damage God's economy (a la Lee).

Source: China Vows to Prosecute Bible Detainee, news item formerly posted at the late Jim Moran's Light of Truth website, regarding The Shouters, China's version of The Local Church.

I pulled this off of www.apologeticsindex.com

Re:, on: 2006/5/31 10:59

"tacklebox," I agree. It's what the Bible says, not what man says that matters in the end.

Regarding the quotes by "boomatt," what you said may be the case at the beginning of what you wrote is so- that what you copied and pasted is not credible. The place where this-- "the mistakes and misrepresentations in the book are so frequent and so consistent that it strains credulity to suggest that (it) is merely the product of poor scholarship" -- happens the most is on the internet. It would take hours upon hours to show how thoroughly inaccurate and bordering on slanderous nearly every one of those statements are.

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/5/31 13:32

Quote:
-----It seems that the commentary leans towards not separating the three into distinct persons but almost implies that when Jesus dies, He essentially became the Holy Spirit, at least that's what we thought it was suggesting.

This is a point of confusion with many.

What is taught is that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God. In Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.

God is Triune, eternally existing as Father, Son, Holy Spirit, eternally distinct but not separate with no succession.

On the other hand, in incarnation, the Triune God entered into humanity and underwent a process. This process is taking on human nature, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection.

In resurrection, Christ's humanity was glorified with the Divine Nature and in His resurrection was declared to be the Son

of God in His humanity according to the Spirit of Holiness.
(Romans 1)

In 1 cor 15:45 it says that in resurrection "The last Adam (Christ) became a life giving Spirit.

That is until Christ was crucified and resurrected, the holy Spirit always existed. But in resurrection Christ humanity was glorified and now the Spirit includes His glorified humanity so that in resurrection Christ is able to impart Himself into man as the Life Giving Spirit.

This is why in the New Testament, the Spirit is referred to as the Holy Spirit, the life Giving Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and just plain "the Spirit.

The Spirit as He is revealed in the New Testament is not just the Eternal Divine Spirit of God but the Spirit of the resurrected God/Man. The Spirit of Jesus Christ.

John 7 says, "but this He spoke of the Spirit who was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified.

God has always been Triune. And the Spirit of God has eternally existed and was the agent of Creation. But as the Spirit of Christ in resurrection, He was not till Christ was glorified.

IN this context it is said that in incarnation, "The Word became flesh" and in resurrection, "the last Adam became a Life Giving Spirit".

These are two becomings, not referring to God's eternal immutable nature which does not change, but in relationship to His incarnation. The process is in Christ's humanity, not in His eternal Divine nature.

In Christ the Eternal Triune God became flesh. And in Resurrection Christ became a Life Giving Spirit inclusive of All God is in His Divinity and in His humanity.

This is typified in the Old Testament by the Holy Anointing Oil in Deuteronomy which is a compound of Oil which always signifies the Divine Spirit of God and 4 spices which signifies Christ in His humanity, His death, resurrection, and the effectiveness of these.

There is no suggestion of modalism in this and no suggestion of any change in the Godhead, or in God's eternal Triune being, But rather in regard to his economical process in time of becoming flesh and glorification in His humanity.

Andrew Murray in "The Spirit of Jesus Christ" says this:

"But now, Blessed be God ! Jesus has been glorified ; there is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus; the promise can now be fulfilled: He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living waters. The great transaction which took place when Jesus was glorified is now an eternal reality. When Christ had entered with our human nature, in our flesh, into the Holiest of all, there took place that of which Peter speaks, 'Being by the right hand of God exalted, He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost.' In our place, and on our behalf, as man and the Head of man, He was admitted into the full glory of the Divine, and His human nature constituted the receptacle and the dispenser of the Divine Spirit. And the Holy Spirit could come down as the Spirit of the God-man --most really the Spirit of God, and yet as truly the spirit of man. He could come down as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus to be in each one who believes in Jesus, the Spirit of His personal life and His personal presence, and at the same time the spirit of the personal life of the believer. Just as in Jesus the perfect union of God and man had been effected and finally completed when He sat down upon the throne, and He so entered on a new, stage of existence, a glory hitherto unknown, so too, now, a new era has commenced in the life and the work of the Spirit. He can now come down to witness of the perfect union of the Divine and the human, and in becoming our life, to make us partakers of it. There is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus: He hath poured Him forth; we have received Him to stream into us, to stream through us, and to stream forth from us in rivers of blessing.

The glorifying of Jesus and the streaming forth of His Spirit are intimately connected; in vital organic union the two are inseparably linked. If we would have, not only the Spirit of God, but this Spirit of Christ, which 'was not yet,' but now is, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, it is specially with the glorified Jesus we must believingly deal. We must not simply rest content with the faith that trusts in the cross and its pardon; we must seek to know the New Life, the Life of Glory and Power Divine in human nature, of which the Spirit of the glorified Jesus is meant to be the Witness and the Bearer. This is the

mystery which was hid from ages and generations, but is now made known by the Holy Spirit, Christ in us; how He really can live His Divine life in us who are in the flesh. We have the most intense personal interest in knowing and understanding what it means that Jesus is glorified, that human nature shares the life and glory of God, that the Spirit was not yet, as long as Jesus was not glorified. And that not only because we are one day to see Him in His glory, and to be with Him in it. No, but even now, day by day, we are to live in it. The Holy Spirit is able to be to us just as much as we are willing to have of Him, and of the life of the glorified Lord.

'This spake Jesus of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified.' God be praised! Jesus has been glorified: there is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus; we have received Him. In the Old Testament only the unity of God was revealed; when the Spirit was mentioned, it was always as His Spirit, the power by which God was working: in the New was not known on earth as a Person. In the New Testament the Trinity is revealed; with Pentecost - the Holy Spirit descended as a Person to dwell in us. This is the fruit of Jesus' work, that we now have the Personal Presence of the Holy Spirit on earth. Just as in Christ Jesus, the second Person, the Son, came to reveal the Father, and the Father dwelt and spoke in Him, even so the Spirit, the third Person, comes to reveal the Son, and in Him the Son dwells and works in us. This is the glory wherewith the Father glorified the Son of man, because the Son had glorified Him, that in His Name and through Him, the Holy Spirit descends as a Person to dwell in believers, and to make the glorified Jesus a Present Reality within them. This is it of which Jesus says, that whoso believeth in Him shall never thirst, but shall have rivers of waters flowing out of him. This alone it is that satisfies the soul's thirst, and makes it a fountain to quicken others; the Personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, revealing the Presence of the glorified Jesus."

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/5/31 13:41

I would add that Hank HAnagraph of the Christian research Institute upon study of the doctrine of the recovery and local churches and the teaching of Witness Lee and Watchman Nee, And through meeting with the leading brothers over several months, retracted all negative references to them from his web site, Admitted he had misunderstood and misjudged its doctrine and teaching and declared that he wished all Christians had such a clear understanding of the gospel.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/5/31 13:48

In "The Crucial Points of the Major Items of the Lord's Recovery Today" Witness Lee states the Following:

The Eternal Existence of the Divine Trinity:

We must be clear that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexist simultaneously from eternity to eternity. Undoubtedly, the Father is God (1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:17), the Son is God (Heb. 1:8; John 1:1; Rom. 9:5), and the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). They are not three Gods, but one. The Scriptures tell us clearly and definitely that God is only one (1 Cor. 8:4; Isa. 45:5; Psalms. 86:10), yet He is also three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. He is the Triune God.

The Father is eternal (Isa. 9:6), the Son is eternal (Heb. 1:12; 7:3), the Spirit is eternal (Heb. 9:14), and They coexist simultaneously. John 14:16-17 says, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of reality." In these two verses the Son says that He will pray to the Father that the Father may send the Spirit. Hence, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit exist together at the same time. In Ephesians 3:14-17 Paul prays that the Father would grant us to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into our inner man, that Christ may make His home in our hearts. In this passage we have the Father, the Spirit, and Christ the Son, showing again that all three exist together at the same time. We have already mentioned 2 Corinthians 13:14, which speaks of the grace of Christ the Son, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, showing the coexistence of the three of the Divine Trinity.

D. The Eternal Coinherence of the Divine Trinity

The relationship among the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is not only that They simultaneously coexist but also that They mutually indwell one another. The Father exists in the Son and the Spirit; the Son exists in the Father and the Spirit; and the Spirit exists in the Father and the Son. This mutual indwelling among the three of the Godhead is called coinherence. In John 14:10-11 the Lord Jesus said, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The word

s that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves." Here we have not only the coexistence of the Father and the Son but also Their coinherence. The three of the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—are both coexistent and coinherent.

E. The Essential Trinity

The essential Trinity refers to the essence of the Triune God for His existence. In His essence, God is one, the one unique God (Isa. 45:18b; 1 Cor. 8:6a). In the essential Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexist and coinhere at the same time and in the same way with no succession. There is no first, second, or third."

I would add that it is through this coinherence of the Three of the Divine Trinity that we say that Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God. The Father was in the Son and the Spirit was in the Son. Jesus said, "The Father who is in me, He does the Works. So that the Father sent the Son but the Father also was in the Son and the Son lived by the life of the Father.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/5/31 14:03

The difficulty today is the many have a very superficial understanding of the Trinity. Although the doctrine of the recovery is completely orthodox and witnessed to by the great theologians including Calvin, Berkoff, Strong, etc. Today it is most common to underscore the divine distinctions in the Godhead and disregard the singleness of the Divine Essence and the co-inherence (or mutual indwelling) of the Three of the Divine Trinity.

What is most common is a tritheistic view with is superficial seeing three God's, not one God.

Most Christians see the FATHER, the Son and the Spirit as three separate Persons sitting side by side just agreeing together on their plans and actions. This is Tritheism.

But the Lord Jesus said, "In that day, (when the Spirit comes) you shall know that I am in My Father and you are in Me and I am in you".

The Lord Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in the Son and the Father and the Son are in the Spirit. And today the Spirit is within us bringing the Triune God into us and making us one spirit with the Triune God.

The Father is the Fountain, the Son is the Spring, and the Spirit is the river of the Water of Life.

The Son is the expression of the Father and the Spirit is the application of the Father and the Son.

The Eternal Word is God declared and revealed, and the Spirit is the flowing out of the Godhead.

The three exists distinctly and eternally but not separately. They are never separate, but each mutually indwells the other and share one unique Divine Essence.

Graftedbranch

Re: The Heresy of Modalism - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/5/31 14:26

Regarding the heresy of Modalism, Witness Lee goes on in "The Crucial points of the Major Items of the Lord's Recovery today":

"Martin Luther warned us not to approach the matter of the Divine Trinity by our natural reasoning. He said that those who approach this matter with confidence in their own mental power are "the teachers of God, not His pupils." No human being can explain the Divine Trinity adequately. We should simply accept and say Amen to whatever is recorded in the pure Word of God. We can only present the divine facts from the New Testament concerning this great truth so that we may

be impressed that the Triune God is dispensing Himself into our being. Instead of exercising our mentality too much to try to figure out the Triune God, we should exercise our spirit to experience and enjoy the marvelous dispensing of the Triune God as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit within us.

Note—What is the heresy of modalism?

Modalism in the second and third centuries passed through several changes and then reached its clearest expression with Sabellius. Modalism teaches that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are not all eternal and do not all exist at the same time, but are merely three temporary manifestations of the one God. Modalism claims that the Father ended with the Son's coming and that the Son ceased with the Spirit's coming. The modalists say that the three of the Godhead exist respectively in three consecutive stages. They do not believe in the coexistence and coinherence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. This, of course, is a great heresy.

Unlike the modalists, we believe in the eternal coexistence and coinherence of the three of the Godhead; that is, we believe that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit all exist essentially at the same time and under the same conditions. However, in the divine economy, the three work and are manifested respectively in three consecutive stages. Yet even in Their economical works and manifestations, the three still remain essentially in Their coexistence and coinherence.

Note—What is the heresy of tritheism?

Modalism stresses the side of God being one to a heretical extreme by denying the coexistence and coinherence of the three of the Godhead. Tritheism, on the other hand, stresses the side of God being three to a heretical extreme by teaching that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three Gods. The Bible is not at either of these extremes; it stands in the center, testifying of the twofoldness of the truth of the Divine Trinity. Regarding the truth of the Triune God, we also should be balanced and avoid the heretical extremes of both modalism and tritheism.

It is a great heresy to say that there are three Gods. The Scriptures clearly, definitely, and repeatedly say that there is only one God (1 Cor. 8:4; Isa. 44:6, 8; 45:5-6, 21-22; 46:9; Psa. 86:10). The tritheists say, "If the Father, Son, and Spirit are not three Gods, then how can They be three persons?" Griffith Thomas in his book *The Principles of Theology* said concerning the Divine Trinity: "The term Person is also sometimes objected to. Like all human language, it is liable to be accused of inadequacy and even positive error. It certainly must not be pressed too far, or it will lead to Tritheism." Because the tritheists hold the side of the three and neglect the side of the one, they have no balance or safeguard.

Both modalism and tritheism go to an extreme, but we are in the middle and are balanced. When we say that the Son is the Father (Isa. 9:6) and the Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17), we are simply quoting the Bible. Those who deny this fact fall into the danger of being tritheistic. But as we have pointed out, we believe all the verses in the Bible which reveal the eternal coexistence and coinherence of the three of the Godhead. We condemn both modalism and tritheism as heresies. We believe that God is uniquely one for eternity, yet He is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Some may ask, "How can the Father, the Son, and the Spirit be three and at the same time still be one?" My answer is, "I do not know. I cannot tell you. If you try to understand this, you will be, in Martin Luther's terms, 'the teacher of God.'" The Divine Trinity is a mystery which far transcends our mental apprehension."

Graftedbranch

Search Witness Lee - posted by crschk (), on: 2006/5/31 15:34

There has been a great deal of past discussion about this and in all fairness and if one is so inclined, a search through the site will also bring forth some very troubling aspects as well.

Re: Search Witness Lee - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/1 7:32

Quote:
-----There has been a great deal of past discussion about this and in all fairness and if one is so inclined, a search through the site will also bring forth some very troubling aspects as well.

Witness Lee was surely not without controversy. And many are troubled by many things in his ministry.

But the bottom line in all things is whether or not they are born up by the Scriptures.

Some things I have observed are:

Those who are troubled by Witness Lee's ministry in general are also troubled by Watchman Nee's ministry which is the base of Lee's ministry.

Most of those who oppose the teachings in the "recovery" oppose the inner life all together. They oppose such things as "pray reading" the bible, Calling on the Lord, and the emphasis on the indwelling Spirit as our Life.

Most grab hold of a few statements taken out of context and run with it trying to fasten some heresy upon him.

What has brought the ministry into the most controversy, or rather, the reason for most of the controversy is the emphasis upon the Church and the Ground of the church.

What I have observed in all cases is that those who are opposing don't understand at all. In other words their accusations are superficial and don't reflect at all the teaching or the ministry of Lee, Nee, or the local churches.

They build up a straw man and then attack it.

But on the other hand, there is some validity to the fact that this ministry does differ from the traditional Christian view of the gospel and from what is most commonly held among Christians. And for this reason it is understandable why many are troubled by it.

It does not differ in essential matters of doctrine concerning Christ, His Person and Work, His deity, His atoning death, Salvation by faith apart from works, the Trinity, regeneration, the bible as the Word of God, and such essential matters. In these things there is nothing unorthodox at all and the ministry is one with all believers in this.

But if one were to sum up the major differences between the Lord's recovery and traditional Christianity, it would be concerning God's economy or Eternal Purpose.

In the recovery, the goal of the gospel is different from traditional Christianity. Traditional Christianity sees the goal of the gospel to save fallen sinners from hell to go to heaven to be with Christ and live in a heavenly mansion.

This is an oversimplification but it sums things up quite accurately.

Traditional theologies begin with the fall of man and end with redemption with the outcome, heaven.

The theology of the recovery begins with man's creation and God's purpose for man, and ends with the consummation and fulfillment of this purpose.

God's eternal purpose for man in creation was for God to be man's life and content represented by the Tree of Life. This is God's economy. To dispense Himself into man as life and in man to have His expression on the earth.

In the fall man became instead an independent self-sufficient being (as God, knowing good and evil), separated from the life of God and under condemnation.

In redemption Christ dealt with sin and reconciled man to God and in resurrection imparts His Life into man making him a child of God with His Life and His Nature to be His expression and to fulfill His eternal Purpose.

And the theology in the recovery recognizes from scripture that the end of this is not man in heaven, but the New Jerusalem, in the New Earth under the new heavens as the consummation of this purpose. That is, the New Jerusalem is the Wife of the Lamb, the tabernacle of God, the City of God, the expression of God having the glory of God and is God's dwelling place. The scriptures end not with man in heaven but with God dwelling in man upon the earth.

The theology of the recovery sees God's eternal purpose accomplished in Christ and consummated in the New Jerusalem. And that all the work of Christ in redemption and in regeneration, sanctification, renewal, transformation, conformation, and transfiguration to be the fulfillment of this purpose.

And it sees that today, God's work is to regenerate fallen man through the application by the Spirit of Christ's redeeming work, to produce the body of Christ, expressed in local churches, to be His testimony, His expression, on the earth, being built up, to be His perfected corporate Bride.

IT sees God's goal is to bring many sons to Glory having His Life and Nature through and in Christ, built up together, as His one body, as His one testimony to be His expression.

And in so doing God is constituting his redeemed with Himself as Life, and through the flow of the Divine Life received in regeneration, to constitute his believers with His Divine Nature making them the same as He is in Life and nature to be His many sons.

This of course has brought the recovery into much controversy as this is not the view of most Christians.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/6/1 7:54

1 Corinthians 1:2 "To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, which all those who call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours."

I will add one comment concerning the ground of the church.

What is alleged by many is that the 'ground of the church' is exclusive and that those in the local churches believe that they are the only true believers.

This on the one hand is false and nowhere to be found in any book, teaching or practice of the local churches.

But the reality is, as Watchman Nee saw, is that the ground of the church is in fact the oneness of all believers in Christ and that all believers are included in the body of Christ and it is for this reason that the ground of the church is the oneness of all believers.

It is on this basis that the recovery condemns denominationalism as divisive separating believers on the basis of this or that practice or particular view of this or that doctrine.

The ground of the church is the oneness of all believers and the local churches meet simply as "the church in" a location.

This is the view of the apostles and the new testament. "The church in" is the only expression found in the New Testament and no one can deny this (1 Cor. 1:2).

The local churches take no other name other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ. And meet simply as the church.

And they recognise that all believers in any given city are members of Christ and therefore members of the church in their city. Whether they choose to meet with us or not, they are members, not by joining the "recovery" or joining a local church, but by believing into the Lord Jesus Christ. This makes them members of His body and members of the church in their locality.

There is no membership in the local church. There is a membership only in Christ and those who are Christ's are already members of the church in their locality. If I move to another city, I meet with the church in that city. I don't transfer my membership or a "certificate of baptism". No, I just meet with the saints there.

And the local churches are made up of those who see this reality in the Bible, choose to come out of their denominational distinctions and meet simply as the church.

I have been meeting with the local church in my city for 4 years and never joined anything, never signed anything, never agreed to anything. But when the body of Christ sees you are a believer, they call you brother and you have the right hand of fellowship. And whatever you do, whatever you participate in, whatever service you render, is purely by the Lord's leading and not by any compulsion or coercion. The Lord's table is open to anyone and no one comes to your door to require anything of you.

If you draw a circle which is the body of Christ and call it the universal church, and within that circle draw many little circles which represent all the different denominations and divisions among believers. The local churches are merely those who have stepped out of the little circles to claim only the one circle which is all inclusive of all believers. They stand only in the big circle and deny the validity of all the little circles which deny the oneness of the body of Christ.

We say, there are no little circles in Christ. Only the one body of Christ and we meet on this ground. In our city there is only believers in Christ and therefore all believers should just meet as the church in their city. This is the ground of the church.

We do not deny the validity of the believers in those little circles, only the circles they are in. It is the circles which are un-biblical and contrary to Christ, not the believers who are in them.

Whatever your view of "prayreading the scriptures" is, I believe if you prayread 1 Corinthians 1:2 it's revelation will break forth and it's content and intent will become clear to any who have eyes to see.

And if you go on to Paul's own development of this verse in chapter 3 of 1 Corinthians, it is very clear. For when someone says "I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are you not men of flesh?"

We consider this one item of the Lord's recovery. The recovery of the ground of the church. And it is significant in the Lord's purpose to build up His church on the proper ground. That is the oneness of all believers. It is necessary for the Lord to obtain His purpose "that they may be perfected into one... that the world might know that Thou hast sent Me" John 17.

Ephesians 4:3-6, 13 "Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace; One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father who is over all and through all and in all... Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"

This diligence implies vigilance in rejecting any and everything which mitigates against the one Body of Christ and the one testimony of Christ. And one must admit, that denominationalism is flat contrary to the reality of this oneness.

Graftedbranch

Re: Regarding the Recovery Version and its footnotes - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/6/1 11:24

These views are expressed in the footnotes of the recovery version Bible. And the reason they are expressed is that that are the biblical exposition of the Scriptures themselves. And they are the aggregate of the 80 year ministries of both Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and the product of a 20 year book by book exposition of the scriptures from genesis to revelation. They reflect the views of the recovery which it is believed to be the most accurate, modern, and up to date exposition of the scriptures.

That modern Christianity and religion finds them troublesome can either be because they are not biblical, or because they are and cast a light on the situation among those in religion.

But in any event, the answer is not to take a superficial view but to seek the Lord and examine the scriptures to see if these things be so. IN this way we follow the noble Bereans.

I believe that the Spirit bears witness to the things there and in my 30 years as a believer, I have found no greater help in gaining a comprehensive view of the Divine Revelation than in this version with its footnotes and in the fellowship of the saints in the local churches.

I would add that I believe the Light and vision in the recovery is comprehensive of all that has gone before. The light of the reformation, and subsequent generations has not been negated nor set aside, but built upon. And it stands on the shoulders of all the great saints and their contribution to the building up of the body of Christ who have preceded.

One might ask, "how are you different?" are you not "of Witness Lee" or "of Watchman Nee?" Are you not following a man?

But the answer is no, not at all. These men followed what they saw as the vision in the bible. And only if we also see this same vision in the Bible do we follow the Lord in it. Either this ministry is of God or it is not. Either it is the Scriptures which bear it up, or it is not. If one embraces the things of the Lord's recovery because they are convinced by someone or because they follow this or that person, then it is a wrong basis.

But if one sees these things in the bible by the Spirit's Light, and chooses to go this way then it is wholly by the Lord's leading. And it is only as the Spirit enlightens us that we embrace anything.

Either this is the New Testament ministry of Christ or it is not. Either the scriptures support it, or they don't. Either the local churches are on the proper ground, or they are not.

If they are not then don't go this way. By all means go another way. If the theology is bad, reject it. If the practices are cultic, walk far away. And if you can find support for the divisions and denominations in the bible, then stay in them.

But by all means be open to the Lord and hold the scriptures to be the only and final authority. And call on the Lord to remove any veils of tradition or preconceived concepts. Don't follow a man, follow the clear vision of the Bible. And act according to the Spirit's leading.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/6/1 16:08

Another point of view

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id9074&forum31&post_id&refreshGo) T.Austin-Sparks (TAS) and Witness Lee (WL) - a short story - by Herald Hsu, student of Watchman Nee

Re: T. Austin Sparks and Herald Hsu. - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/6/1 18:43

In fairness, I think it would be good to hear Witness Lee's own testimony concerning this event spoken of by Herald Hsu and the controversy with T. Austin Sparks:

"One evening we had another fellowship with Brother Sparks. The atmosphere was a little tense, and no one knew what to say. We thought perhaps we would fellowship a little about something related to spiritual principles. Suddenly a brother asked, "Brother Sparks, suppose here in Taipei there are five assemblies that meet in the Lord's name, Please tell us which one is right and which one is wrong, or are they all right?" As soon as I heard this, something jumped up in alarm within me. I knew that this would lead to trouble. Yet I had to translate what he said.

Brother Sparks was well prepared for such a question. He said, "None is right and none is wrong; everything is relative." Another brother was quite stirred up, and he and the first brother together asked, "Relative to what?" Brother Sparks immediately answered, "Relative to the measure of Christ. Those who have a greater measure of Christ are more right; those who do not have any measure of Christ are not right." All the brothers became very agitated. I was the translator, but I had to somewhat calm them down.

The third time we gathered together with Brother Sparks, we are still on this subject. In the previous two meetings, I remained quite neutral and served only as the translator. This time I felt that I could not be neutral anymore. No one was speaking then, and I opened my mouth. I said, "For the last few times we were together we have been talking about the matter of the church and the church ground. Brother Sparks has told us that none is absolutely right, and none is absolutely wrong; how much one is right depends of the measure of Christ he has." I did not appear to be stirred up, but I turned to a brother from Denmark and said to him in a calm voice, "Brother, let me ask you a question. God ordained that the children of Israel would be taken captive in Babylon for seventy years, after which they would return to their homeland and would rebuild the temple upon its original foundation. Suppose a very influential prophet would rise up at that time and tell the people that it did not matter whether or not one returned to Jerusalem. Suppose he would say, "See? Daniel is such a spiritual person, but he did not return to Jerusalem. Therefore, it does not matter whether or not one returns, as long as he is spiritual." I would ask all of you here if this is right or wrong." Brother Sparks was an intelligent man. He knew that I was reacting to his word about the spiritual measure

I explained further: "Daniel had the greatest spiritual measure of his time; in today's terms, we would say that his measure of Christ was the highest. The reason why he did not return was that the time had not come for him to go. Around the time the Israelites were returning, he died. He could not go while he was living, yet his heart was toward Jerusalem. He knelt down three times a day and prayed with an open window toward Jerusalem. During his time with us here, at least a few times our Brother Sparks has highly recommended Dr. F. B. Meyer. I have read Dr. Meyer's books and have received some help from him. But all of us know that Brother Meyer is still in the denominations, that is, in the so-called organized Christianity, the very organization which Brother Sparks condemns, can we say that he is right in the matter of the church just because his spiritual stature is high?"

I continued, "For over three hundred years, all those who have sought after the inner life have received help from Madame Guyon. She should be regarded as a person with a great measure of Christ. As far as the spiritual stature of Christ is concerned, probably none among us can match hers. But Madame Guyon, a person with such a spiritual stature of Christ, still remained in Catholicism. Today any Christian who is enlightened at all would condemn Catholicism, yet Madame Guyon whom we respect so much never left the Catholic Church. We cannot say that just because her spiritual stature was high that she was right in the matter of the church".

Finally I said: "These examples prove to us that it is one thing to be spiritual and it is another thing to have the proper ground of the church. Spirituality has to do with our personal condition. The ground of the church, on the other hand, is a corporate ground; it is the corporate standing that we take. Not everyone who left Babylon to return to Jerusalem was a spiritual person. Neither was everyone who remained in Babylon necessarily unspiritual. In fact, among those who returned, we find many who were not that spiritual, because some had married Gentile wives. However, as far as their ground was concerned, they were approved by God. With such a ground they could build the temple. No matter how poor their situation was, their ground was still the right ground. When the temple was built, God's glory filled the house".

I then made the following conclusion: "Today in pursuing the Lord, we have to take care of both aspects. Spirituality has to do with our condition, while the ground has to do with our stand. A man cannot be right only in his condition; he must also be right in his stand and position. Whether or not a person has a justifiable position is based not so much on his condition as on the ground he takes. No matter how spiritual a person was, if he remained in Babylon and stood on the ground of captivity, he was wrong. On the other hand, no matter how poor and confused the returned captives were, they stood on the proper ground which God had ordained for them and which their forefathers had left to them. Their approval was based on their ground and not on their personal condition. Of course their confused situation did not please the Lord. This is why God raised up Ezra to teach them the law to enlighten and rebuke them; as a result, they wept, repented, and confessed their sins. At any rate, we cannot despise the returned captives' ground just because their spiritual condition was poor. Not can we justify the ground of those remaining in Babylon just because they were spiritual.

Witness Lee - The Vision of the Age - PP 72-73

Grafted Branch

Re:, on: 2006/6/1 23:16

I read Herald Hsu's testimony for the first time on this website- it was also the first time I had ever heard of him. Although he may have one side of the story, I'm not sure which side that is, because it represents neither Sparks' nor Lee's. For example, to look at one minor point, I have no idea who has referred to the ground of the church as "the locality law" besides Hsu himself. Lee did not, nor did Sparks, as far as I have seen. Sparks even taught on the ground of the church at one point- and used the term "the local church," speaking of it as "the practical expression of the church"- which one could find in the first edition of *The Stewardship of the Mystery* (the first edition, though, is hard to find for the time being), spoken in 1938, incidentally, during the same time when Watchman Nee was visiting with him.

As a bit of a side note, I might mention that Hsu does not hold Nee's views on too many matters either, the most obvious one being the very ground of the church, which brother Nee saw clearly in the Bible and spoke strongly on. Another such matter is that Hsu labeled himself a co-laborer with the "little flock," and speaks of the group of people he met with as "Watchman Nee's group," two concepts that Nee himself clearly did not hold to or appreciate, as one could find in the booklet "What are We," by Watchman Nee, as well as in other places.

I have the utmost respect for both brothers, Lee and Sparks, and I consider that each was a real profit to the other, as well as to the entire Body of Christ, and they certainly felt the same way about one another. After all, brother Sparks did invite brother Lee to Honor Oak to speak there in 1958, which is the very year after the incidents Hsu speaks of in Taiwan. So, the appreciation for one another did not stop after 1957. Preceding 1957, I assume you all know that Sparks had expressed much reverence towards the fruit of brother Lee's labor. On brother Lee's side, besides the one occasion in the book *The Vision of the Age*, he spoke very fondly and appreciatively of Sparks publically after 1957. One such example is in 1984 when Lee was giving messages now published under the title *God's New Testament Economy*. He expressed his great appreciation for Sparks' vision and understanding of the New Jerusalem, and essentially acknowledged that he was standing on Sparks' shoulders in that matter (and not to the exclusion of other matters). In addition to brothers Sparks and Lee holding a great appreciation for one another for years to come, I have personally met brothers who spent time with both Sparks and Lee on an individual basis- and spent time under both of their ministries- and they still appreciate them both tremendously today, and consider them to be very much in one spirit and in one flow regarding many matters, the one "glitch" being the ground of the church- though on other aspects of the church they are also very much one.

It is interesting, too, to note that Sparks himself told a co-worker of brother Lee's (I would rather not mention his name because he is alive today and I would need to ask permission first to do so, according to my feeling) in the 60's while Sparks and this co-worker were travelling together, "when I got on the plane to leave Taiwan in 1957, the flow left me and I never got it back." After brother Sparks' death, his wife told brother Lee that he said the same to her.

Anyway, this one point of disagreement on the ground of the church (and it does not seem to me that Hsu has grasped exactly where the two men saw things differently) has been blown way up and out of proportion. The fact that these two appreciated one another very much- before and after 1957- has been lost as a result. A consequence to that is people begin to think they have to cut off the ministry of one or the other brother. To miss either one of these brothers' ministries is to miss quite a portion of the riches of Christ.

I have to say, though, that I am a little (but not too) surprised that this discussion has wound up here, given that it started as a simple note letting everyone know they can get a footnoted and cross referenced recovery version for free (and again, this is the website: (www.biblesforamerica.com) www.biblesforamerica.com). But I am interested in this topic, so I suppose I don't mind that the discussion has changed. I would recommend again, though, the footnoted recovery version, because in the footnotes you will find a real portion of the riches of Christ! And it's a very good translation too.

Re: Recovery Bible - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/6/1 23:33

A couple of older threads in this regard.

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id8227&forum40&post_id&refreshGo) Warning: The local church

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id8066&forum36&post_id&refreshGo) "recovery version" of the bible

Re:, on: 2006/6/14 20:58

The following are quotes from a statement made by Fuller Theological Seminary (which, I assume you all know is one of the top seminaries in the country) dated January 5, 2006 concerning the Living Stream Ministry, Witness Lee, and the local churches:

"It is the conclusion of Fuller Theological Seminary that the teachings and practices of the local churches and its members represent the genuine, historical, biblical Christian faith in every essential aspect."

"We have found a great disparity between the perceptions that have been generated in some circles concerning the teachings of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and the actual teachings found in their writings. Particularly, the teachings of Witness Lee have been grossly misrepresented and therefore most frequently misunderstood in the general Christian community, especially among those who classify themselves as evangelicals... the actual teachings in question have significant biblical and historical credence... they deserve the attention and consideration of the entire Body of Christ."

"We are easily and comfortably able to receive them as genuine believers and fellow members of the Body of Christ, and we unreservedly recommend that all Christian believers likewise extend to them the right hand of fellowship."

It is probably fair for you all to consider these quotes- and I would especially emphasize the second. I would also recommend that you consider the sources who are saying the negative things (especially as quoted in the discussions linked by crsschk)- and compare their standing with that of Fuller Theological Seminary (by no means the only reputable source to express appreciation and support for the practices and teachings of the local churches, just the most recent.)

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/6/14 23:49

Quote:
-----It is probably fair for you all to consider these quotes- and I would especially emphasize the second. I would also recommend that you consider the sources who are saying the negative things (especially as quoted in the discussions linked by crsschk)- and compare their standing with that of Fuller Theological Seminary (by no means the only reputable source to express appreciation and support for the practices and teachings of the local churches, just the most recent.)

That's wonderful, but it's still defending and a disregard for those who have had some pretty terrible experiences. Perhaps it's the followers ...

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/6/15 5:26

Quote:
-----Witness Lee - The Vision of the Age

Grafted Branch's fuller quotation of the Witness Lee position is helpful. It ought to make it clear to all that a central proposition of Witness Lee's foundation is an eschatology. He believes (and I presume many of his companions) that we are now in the time of 'Recovery'. Things which may have been permitted in previous 'times' are now no longer acceptable in this time of 'Recovery'.

This cuts off the current generation from all its forebears. What may have been permissible to them is now no longer so. Whenever I hear this kind of language I inevitably remember Job's sarcastic remark 'no doubt ye are the people, and wisdom will die with you'. I do not commend his sarcasm but I understand his position.

There is an old traditional English cartoon of a troop of Boy Scouts crossing a bridge. A proud mother is watching the procession and exclaims 'My William, is the only one in step'.

Witness Lee's position is an extreme form of dispensationalism.

Re:, on: 2006/6/15 20:43

"A central proposition of Witness Lee's foundation is an eschatology"
"Witness Lee's position is an extreme form of dispensationalism."

I would never conclude such things based on one quote from one book, but maybe that's just me.

"Things which may have been permitted in previous 'times' are now no longer acceptable in this time of 'Recovery'."

That is not an accurate representation of what is said in that one book either. The concept of recovery is this: something has been damaged or lost and it needs to be recovered, and brought back to its original quality and purpose. In the New Testament age, God has been recovering Biblical truths and practices because they had been lost- nearly completely by the time of the dark ages. Through Luther, God recovered justification by faith. Through the brethren He recovered quite a lot, including the unveiling of many truths, such as revelations regarding the significance of many Old Testament types. An emphasis on the subjective experience of Christ as life was recovered through inner life teachers such as Penn-Lewis and Sparks. This is just to name a few instances of recovery. The point is, these matters were clearly in the Bible, but were veiled, even to many believers, for centuries. The question then is, has everything been unveiled today? Have all the truths concerning, and experiences of Christ- and the church- been seen and known, or, recovered? Do you think so? I surely don't. I believe that the Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth from His word, and there are vistas of the revelation and experience of God that have not been thoroughly entered into. The longing for recovery is based on the acknowledgement that there is yet more. Do you not believe that there is more? This is not to annul what has been seen. That would be silly! To say that what has already been recovered "is no longer acceptable" is to miss out on something of God in His Word. More than acceptable, such matters recovered in the past are appreciated to the uttermost, and also necessary. To "cut off the current generation from all its forebears" would be utterly foolish, and it is not what Witness Lee meant at all, nor is it what he practiced.

The idea behind the term "the vision of the age" is tied in with God's recovering. The vision of the age is simply what is currently being recovered. Justification by faith is not the vision of the age today, because it has been recovered. It was once the vision of an age, but who would say it is the vision of the age today? It is not ignored, but it has already been clearly revealed, so it is not considered the vision of the age today. You have to ask yourself, is God not living, moving and active today? If He is, then He must be speaking and recovering, and whatever He is speaking and recovering is the vision of the age for today. If you are a seeking Christian, surely you have such a longing for what God is doing today, not merely what God has done 100, 200, 300, etc years ago. Did God die 300 years ago? If not, He is still moving today. Our God is a moving God! He is a recovering God!

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/6/16 4:12

Quote:
-----"A central proposition of Witness Lee's foundation is an eschatology"
"Witness Lee's position is an extreme form of dispensationalism."

I would never conclude such things based on one quote from one book, but maybe that's just me.

Nor me, I have had a copy of the RcV for many years, and am pretty familiar with the author's thought patterns.

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/16 9:39

Quote:
-----This cuts off the current generation from all its forebears. What may have been permissible to them is now no longer so. Whenever I hear this kind of language I inevitably remember Job's sarcastic remark 'no doubt ye are the people, and wisdom will die with you'. I do not commend his sarcasm but I understand his position.

Surely Lee has a form of eschatology as we all do. But to suggest that the concept of "recovery" is based on eschatology is not accurate except as Revelation chapters 1-3 regarding the letters to the churches is concerned. And this is based in Watchman Nee's exposition as contained in "The Orthodoxy of the Church".

The concept of recovery is based on the principles of recovery as particularly seen in Ezra and Nehemia regarding the restoration of Israel to the land and the rebuilding of the temple which is God's dwelling place.

That the temple is a type first of Christ and then of the body of Christ in the New Testament is clear in the New Testament as the Lord referred to his own body as the temple ("tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it up"). This typology is not peculiar to Lee or the local churches.

And the fact of recovery is seen throughout church history. As the brother pointed out, recovery is a regaining of what was lost, neglected, set aside, replaced, or degraded. And that is simply what is found in the Bible. What was in the beginning and was lost and degraded into the dark ages.

But what I am perceiving here is that it is believed that somehow Lee and the local churches believe they are somehow a fulfillment of some prophetic eschatological view which is not the case at all.

The only prophetic statement which it is believed is being fulfilled is "upon this rock I will build My church" and the Lord's prayer that his believers "may be perfected into one..that the world may know that thou has sent Me" in John 17.

And it is believed that the Lord will have this for His return whether it be from us or from some other group of believers, and we give ourselves to the Lord for His Purpose and believe He is faithful to do as He has promised with us if we are faithful to Him. We are in fact conscious that He is doing this as we grow in Him and experience the reality of the body of Christ.

In other words, according to the Bible, the Lord is building His church, perfecting His Bride, and producing overcomers to end the age and to usher in His return. That we are at the end of this age is nothing peculiar to the recovery. But the realization that we are is due to the Lord's recovery of much dispensational and prophetic truth through the Brethren in the last 2 centuries.

The very fact that any Christian today holds any form of pre-millennialism, belief in rapture, the restoration of Israel to Palestine, end time prophecies, etc. is the product of the Vision of the Age in the 19th century. That is the light given to the Brethren. What you enjoy today is the product of the Recovery in both the reformation and the subsequent generations.

We simply believe God did not stop with the Brothers, but has continued on through the inner Life teachers, the Keswick teachers, and began a particular work in China with Watchman Nee in recovering much concerning Christ and the church and has continued on till today.

As to the Recovery's ties to past generations both pre reformation and post reformation, an overview can be found at:

<http://www.lordsrecovery.org/history/index.html>

Graftedbranch

Re:, on: 2006/6/16 9:45

I have had the recovery version for years as well, and from what I have read (and I've read in it alot), a central proposition of Witness Lee's foundation is God's economy, a word translated from the Greek word oikonomia. It has nothing to do with money. See 1 Timothy 1:4 for an example, and the note on the word economy.

You can read it online at online.recoveryversion.org

or get a hard copy at www.biblesforamerica.com

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/6/16 10:13

I would also add that Watchman Nee in "the Orthodoxy of the church" contended that the 7 churches in Revelation represent distinct periods in church History.

The first 3 run consecutively while the last 4 continue to run concurrently. This is based in the fact that only in the Last 4 does the Lord mention His coming.

According to Nee's view, Thyatira refers to the Roman Catholic church (the church in Apostasy), Sardis to the protestant church (the church in reformation), Philadelphia (the church in recovery) to first the Brethren in the 19th century and then the current recovery, and Laodicia (the recovered church in degradation) to the degraded brethren who finally divided and became ingrown and self absorbed, (you say 'I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing).

It is believed that what the Lord is recovering today is the continuation of "Philadelphia" or, "the church of brotherly love". A continuation of what the Lord recovered through the Brethren of the 19th century.

If you see that "recovery" does not refer to an organization or movement within Christendom, but rather just, "what the Lord is recovering" then you see that recovery intrinsically is not about this or that group or organization, but rather it is about believers as members of the body of Christ, by the Spirit's unveiling, seeing from the scriptures those things being recovered and acting and meeting on this basis, then it ceases to be an issue of this or that group or Christian leader vs another, but rather just the expression of what the Lord Himself as the Head of the Church is accomplishing based in the revelation in the Bible and His intention to build His church, perfect His Bride, produce the overcomers (Rev 1-3) and conclude the age.

In other words, the recovery is not an organization you join, a movement you get involved with, a church you join, but rather it is the reality of the body of Christ that you see from the scriptures by the Spirit's light and the way you take as a believer in living according to this light.

In other words, Like those in Ezra's time, the Lord stirred up the spirits of many (not all) to return to Jerusalem and rebuild God's dwelling place on the proper ground with the proper materials. This is the Lord's recovery.

In other words, when you see the Purpose of God in the Bible, you embrace it, when you see the ground of the church and the oneness of the body of Christ, you take that ground, when you find others meeting on this ground, you fellowship with them, when you find the "ministry of the age" which embraces and ministers the New Testament ministry inclusive of these things, you enjoy it.

Ephesians 2:20-22 "Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone; In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; In whom you also are being built up together into a dwelling place of God in spirit".

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/16 12:06

Quote:
-----That's wonderful, but it's still defending and a disregard for those who have had some pretty terrible experiences. Perhaps it's the fol
lows ...

I believe if we went through church history and even the early church we could find decenters and those who had bad ex
periences. Many have left Christianity all together because of this or that experience. Some have become budist and Hin
dus. Does this nulify Christ or Christianity?

But becasue a few have had issues, does it nulify the 10s of thousands, even millions today who actually enjoy this mini
stry and who meet as local churches?

Are there not over 3000 local churches worldwide? And are there not at least 2 million believers in Mainland China today
who embrace the ministries of Nee and Lee?

Can a case be built from the experiences of a few who had offenses, that nulify the testimony of thousands, the record o
f all the teaching in the publications which are available to all, the accounts, the histories, etc.

THis seems to be a bit lopsided don't you think?

I am not sure why "defending" is inappropriate. If alagations are made should they not be supported by more than just a
reference to others who hold a similar opinion? And if anyone here were to state or publish alagations or negative things
conserning Tozer, Sparks, Ravenhill, or any others, is it not met with defense by those who appreciate their ministries?

If one were to reference an "anti Tozer" or Anti Ravenhill site, what whoud the response be? And who cannot testify to a
nguish and torment from the writings of such as Finney, etc. Unstable souls who misread or misunderstand and have ba
d experiences. Some have enen sued ministers such as John McArther Jr. For preaching againt sin, etc and causing so
meone to commit suicide.

As Paul said conserning his ministry "to some a fragrance of life unto Life, to others of death unto death". Does the resp
onse and effect on individuals validate or invalidate the reality? Or can it be a testimony to the condition of the one offen
ded by it? Will we discredit Peter because of the death of Annanias and Saphira?

I was in a large meeting one time following a conference and the saints were standing and testifying and there was a gre
at sense of the Spirit's leading and Presence. One woman stood up who had come in off the street and began to speak.
She did not make a lot of sense but she was encouraged. But then she began to speak of Mary Magdalene and sex (thi
ngs from the Davince Code) and odd ball things that were inappropriate to the meeting and contrary to genuine faith and
was politely asked to sit down. She sat with an offended look on her face and finally got up and in a huff left the meeting
never to return.

I am sure she did not have a good experience and felt humiliated. It was no one's intention to humiliate her but even as s
he was speaking all the Saints began to call on the Lord in one accord spontaneously. Sometimes these people will get o
ffended and go off and write a book in their bitterness. When the book is analized it is in reality, "how my feelings got hur
t and now I want to retaliate".

The bible school I attended (not affiliated with Witness Lee or the local churches) was an excellent school in the line of T
ozer, and other inner life teachers. There was one who came to school there and became a sunday school teacher in th
e church there on campus.

But it was discovered by the faculty he was teaching contrary things and undermining the ministry at the school and he w
as removed from teaching.

This one went off and published a book in bitterness against the school, misrepresented the teaching and got hold of a d
atabase of all the contributors of the ministry and Bible School and sent his book to them charging the school with heres
y. A reading of his book showed unsupported clames, misrepresentations, misquotes, and bitter feelings.

Yet it had its effect and the school suffered greatly because of it. One man's bitterness can wreck a ministry.

This happens.

Graftedbranch

Re: Another angle - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/6/16 16:00

GB, Matt ...

Even after the last comment recognized the possible ways that could be interpreted, one of which it could be said by 'both sides' if you will. (Re: *the followers*)

I would agree it is lopsided in the easy dismissal, the lack of any consideration whatsoever other than a sense of pragmatism;

Quote:
-----Can a case be built from the experiences of a few who had offenses, that nullify the testimony of thousands, the record of all the teaching in the publications which are available to all, the accounts, the histories, etc.

Is all the questioning without warrant?

Quote:
-----Are there not over 3000 local churches worldwide? And are there not at least 2 million believers in Mainland China today who embrace the ministries of Nee and Lee?

Now hold on just a second ... "Which" "local" churches are you describing? The "local" but not "local" churches that no one seems to understand except those adhering to the "local ground" teaching? I am not trying to be uncharitable here brothers, nor do I harbor any bitterness whatsoever...

There is something somewhat intangible that is difficult to get around here with all this. I am afraid that Ron's illustration is correct, it gives off that air whether one likes it or not. It is not a '*take or leave it*' but '*protect and defend it to the hilt*' and that I just do not understand.

One of the problems with using a Tozer or a Ravenhill by way of comparison is that neither had a 'language' that was transferred by way of adherence to a teaching. To be honest it seems that even GB has backed out much of the catch words that are used since the days of first inceptions here. I am not presuming upon your intentions nor implying anything, just an observation.

Quote:
-----I am not sure why "defending" is inappropriate. If allegations are made should they not be supported by more than just a reference to others who hold a similar opinion? And if anyone here were to state or publish allegations or negative things concerning Tozer, Sparks, Ravenhill, or any others, is it not met with defense by those who appreciate their ministries?

Not of a mind that it is 'inappropriate', just disproportionate, it's constant and unbending to hear anything but it's own ma

ntra ... sorry. Again the difference in those mentioned is that the voices of dissent are only conspicuous by their absence

It seems by and large there is a matter of control hovering over this whole thing.

For others, a great deal of this is a rehashing of previously covered ground:

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id8066&forum36&post_id&refreshGo) "recovery version" of the bible

Brothers, I still have no animosity whatsoever.
Just the same concerns.

Edit Coming back to this later on today feel I owe an apology here to both Matt and GB as to anyone else happening up on this. Recognizing something that is questioning my own motives in reply here... A level of pride laced through that ruins any otherwise genuine concern that I might have had.*

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/17 11:40

Quote:
-----Now hold on just a second ... "Which" "local" churches are you describing? The "local" but not "local" churches that no one seems to understand except those adhering to the "local ground" teaching? I am not trying to be uncharitable here brothers, nor do I harbor any bitterness whatsoever...

I am speaking of the local churches resultant from the ministries of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and who today utilize the ministry of Living Stream. Those who would consider themselves as in the Lord's recovery and who meet as local churches as "the Church in ..."

The label "the local churches" or "local church movement" is one assigned by others. Those who meet as "local churches" use the term in its biblical sense. That is, believers who meet simply as the church in a given locality. Use of Living Stream ministry materials is a voluntary choice and no one is not regarded as a genuine "local church" if they choose not to, but as they are the fruit of this ministry, and don't despise the spicket from which the water flows, most do.

There are over 3000 such world wide. Over 300 in the US, and 11 Full time training centers in the following countries:

Anaheim, USA (1989)
Bangkok, Thailand
Hamilton, New Zealand (1993)
Jakarta, Indonesia (1995)
London, England (1997)
Malabon, Philippines (1986)
Malaysia (2000)
Mexico City, Mexico (2001)
Moscow, Russia (1992)
Seoul, Korea (1996)
Taipei, Taiwan (1986)

Following Watchman Nee's imprisonment and sending Witness Lee to Taipei, under Lee's ministry the church in Taipei grew in 5 years from 400 to over 15,000. Today the church in Taipei includes over 70,000.

Since 1962 over 300 churches have been established in the United States and altogether over 3000 world wide including Russia, Israel, England, Dublin, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, Eastern Europe, South Africa, and many African cities, The Philippines, and on and on.

The present recovery was born and nurtured in China, sent to Taiwan with the communist persecution, brought to the U

S in 1962, and from here has gone out to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In Russia there are over 200 local churches in the recovery and many sprang up spontaneously just by coming into contact with and reading the ministry materials and began to meet and after 1 or 2 years contacted the ministry seeking fellowship with other churches.

The recovery is not a small and isolated thing.

GraftedBranch

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/6/17 12:51

I am not overly familiar with the teachings of Witness Lee. Personally, I'm not sure I could stomach them after the distaste I had from Watchman Nee, and my brief encounter with the "local church" in Charlotte.

Outside of their ultra-dispensationalist tendencies, the local churches seem rather orthodox to all major historic Christian doctrines, such as the infallibility of Scripture, the incarnation, the atonement, the trinity, etc.

However, in my opinion what makes the local churches "heretical" is the schismatic nature of their sect and the frank hero worship that occurs. Paul spoke of the hero worship that went on in Corinth. Some saying they were of Paul, some of Cephas, some of Apollos, yet others saying they were of Christ.

Now, interestingly enough, I get this insight from Watchman Nee in one of the books he wrote, on how Christians were even being divisive in saying, "I am of Christ!" So, to put this in modern perspective, some say they are of the Baptist, others the Presbyterians, others are Methodist. Then comes the local churches that shame all modern denominations and say "We are of Christ!"

And this is what the local churches do in saying they are the only true church in any geographic location. Watchman Nee spoke on this in one book, saying the Christians ought not to divide over doctrine and such. Yet at the same time, he refused to interact with other denominations in China saying the only issue worth dividing over is meeting under the headship of Christ. And since none of the denominations meet under the headship of Christ, he therefore could not co-labor with them in areas concerning the gospel.

Or in other words, he decided others were of Paul, others of Cephas, others of Apollos, but the local churches were "of Christ!" Therefore, he created schism in the body of Christ by writing off the legitimacy of other churches whom he did not see as being "of Christ" and under his headship.

And while I agree that the modern denominational system, especially of the episcopal form, has in essence shut out Christ from being the head of the church when it comes to practical matters of church life, this still doesn't mean we cannot labor together for the sake of the kingdom. But Nee determined that the local churches could not be co-laborers with those in modern day denominationalism.

What I think Nee failed to realize that in essence he was creating his own denomination by teaching and practicing such things, and falling into the same trap of the Corinthians. If he was truly recognizing Christ as head of the church universal and local, he would have found that indeed, because Christ IS such, regardless of modern day protestant popes, that he could have fellowship and co-labor with those in other denominations.

And because of such, it is no surprise that Watchman Nee and Witness Lee seem to get an unhealthy amount of devotion. A close friend of mine went to a "local church" meeting once, not quite knowing what they were, and phoned me up afterwards to tell me of her experience. She was shocked how much literature of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee these people just had laying around everywhere. She was shocked how the conversations of the people centered very much around Nee and Lee. Their books were frequently consulted throughout the meeting, and the people really tried to push

Nee & Lee on to her, as if she needed to experience some sort of conversion by their teachings.

I have no problem with deep admiration and respect for various preachers. I am a big fan of John Wesley and Leonard Ravenhill. However, as much as I respect these men, I also have some disagreements with them over some issues. Frankly, they were wrong on some things. And so were Nee and Lee. Nee has some very insightful comments, but, ultimately is wrong on some things. Sometimes though, it seems the local churches would never really say that Nee and Lee were flat out wrong on some issues.

If it weren't for the fact that Nee clearly changed his doctrine some over time, I'd say the local churches would have canonized their works as inspired Scripture. Without a doubt though, some seem to unofficially exalt their teachings to such a level. And as much as denominations have tended to center around various superstar type preachers, I can't think of too many that seem to have gone as far as the local churches.

Just my personal and humble opinion...

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/17 16:31

This I believe is an honest view and I think expresses valid concerns.

But when you boil it down, what it comes to is basically a disagreement over the view of the ground of the church and "too much Nee and Lee".

What this poster misses especially with respect to Paul and the Corinthians, is that his solution to the "I am of Paul, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ" is solved by Paul by the ground of the oneness of all believers in Christ.

The difficulty with the "I am of Christ" sect in Corinth is that they did not include the rest in their position. They were exclusive. "I am of Christ" not "we are all of Christ". This is the difference. And the local churches do not say, "we are of Christ and you are not, but rather, we are all of Christ and therefore let's meet on this basis.

The ground of the church Paul establishes in the 1st Chapter is just this"

1 cor. 1:2 "To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours."

In His first verses he establishes the ground of the church. It is "of God" as to its source, and in Corinth as to its location. And it consists of "those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus", This is the makeup of the church, and they are "along with All who call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place. This is the Universal aspect of the Church.

In this one verse is the solution to the divisions in Corinth (and the divisions in today's Christianity), the ground of the Church, the nature of the church, the Source of the Church, and the universal and all inclusive aspect of the Church.

The difficulty with the divisions in Christianity is that everyone acknowledges they are unscriptural, but God forbid that any one should actually believe that there is a way back to the oneness in the beginning and a way for the Lord to have the oneness He prayed for in John 17. That they be perfected into one that the world might know that thou has sent Me (showing oneness is not just mystical but also practical).

It is true that no one can go in and tear down all the divisions. No one can make anyone be in one accord. No one can do anything to correct the situation.

What then can we do? We can simply take the right, the biblical, the scriptural position of the church and stand there. If others follow, amen. If not, then that is between them and their Lord.

But having seen the oneness of the body of Christ, having seen that divisions are unscriptural and deny this oneness, what can we do? We cannot any longer meet as a Baptist, as a Presbyterian, as a Methodist. We cannot meet on the ground of this or that division, method, preacher, etc. We will meet simply as the church. And we recognize that every believer in our locality is a member of the body of Christ and therefore a member of the church in our locality whether they see it, choose to meet with us or not.

Someone has to be the file leader and take the ground of the church. Someone, some believers must return to Jerusalem

em and rebuild God's dwelling place on the proper ground. If they don't, if they remain in Babylon which is division and confusion, it will not be built. It just won't happen.

Paul's solution to those who said, "we are of Christ" was not to go and join one of the other groups who said, "I am of Paul or I am of Appollos. That was not his solution.

He did not say, "just go along with the rest so as not to be divisive".

No, rather He brought them back to the reality. He brought them back to the true nature of the Church as the One body of the One Christ in the One Spirit. Did Paul die for you?

Paul's answer was to write from the position of the ground of the church (vs 1:2) and to bring them back to Christ, to show the all inclusive nature of the church and to bring them back to the oneness of all believers in Christ.

And this is what the Lord's recovery is and the position it takes. The true solution to the divisions in Christianity is the Spirit's unveiling of the reality of the body of Christ and the oneness of all believers and the Spirit's conviction to take this position and to stand in it.

With revelation comes the entry into the experience. When we see the reality of the body of Christ, when we see the One Body, one Spirit, One Lord Jesus, one baptism, One faith, One God and Father who is over all, through all and in all, we can take no other position, We cannot labor with those who seek to build up divisions, rather we can only labor with those who seek to build up the body of Christ on the ground of the oneness of all believers.

Paul's answer which is the whole epistle to the Corinthians was to remind them of the oneness of the body of Christ, to show them the futility and dishonoring of the Lord to be divided, to unveil the nature of the Lord's table as the Body of Christ of which they all share. Paul's solution was the Truth, the Reality, reminding them and instructing them as to the true nature of the church, our organic union with Christ, the Spirit as the uniting One in all believers. This was Paul's solution to the divisions and it is the Recovery's solution to the divisions which exists today.

We cannot undivide all the other Christians, but we can come out of division to the proper ground and position. We can just stand in the right spot. We can stand as the church in our city and include all believers as members as that one church. A church we did not create. A church we did not form, But a church which is made up of those born of the Spirit of God, regenerated in Christ's resurrection and partakers of His Divine Nature. We just stand as the local expression of the One body of Christ and invite all other believers to take that ground with us because it belongs to them.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/6/18 0:30

Grafted,

Quote:

The difficulty with the "I am of Christ" sect in Corinth is that they did not include the rest in their position. They were exclusive. "I am of Christ" not "we are all of Christ". This is the difference.

Indeed. However, this is exactly what I see Watchman Nee teaching in the local churches. His movement has become a denomination of "I am of Christ" and excluding others who are saying "I am Methodist" or "I am Baptist."

Quote:

In this one verse is the solution to the divisions in Corinth (and the divisions in today's Christianity), the ground of the Church, the nature of the church,

the Source of the Church, and the universal and all inclusive aspect of the Church.

Amen.

Quote:

Paul's solution to those who said, "we are of Christ" was not to go and join one of the other groups who said, "I am of Paul or I am of Appollos. That was not his solution.

He did not say, "just go along with the rest so as not to be divisive".

No, rather He brought them back to the reality. He brought them back to the true nature of the Church as the One body of the One Christ in the One Spirit. Did Paul die for you?

But Paul's solution of the exclusive "we are of Christ" group was not to continue in their exclusiveness. Rather he would say later of the sects that were forming in regard to even the Lord's Supper:

1 Cor 11:18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

"Those who are approved..." mingled amongst even the gathered sects. Those who are approved become evident "among" you. Those who are approved recognize that the REALITY of the unity of believers grounded in Christ transcends any divisions that men might erect, rather those other divisions recognize it or not.

Such is my personal case. Currently I fellowship at a Church of God (Cleveland, TN), which embraces an unbiblical episcopal form of church government. I don't agree with everything the denomination teaches or does. I don't agree with everything the pastor/elders teach or do. In fact, I have very strong disagreements on some issues.

However, at the same time I recognize the life of Christ flowing through so many in the congregation, as they bear fruit reflecting that divine life, especially in our elders who are elders indeed. And sensing the witness of the Spirit with them, and seeing Christ operate in their lives, I partake of their lives in Christ. And in Christ, I minister alongside of them for the sake of the kingdom of God.

The same goes with them in regard to me. Because I spend a lot of time with our churches pastor, I bounce a lot of ideas off him that I believe to be Scriptural, though he doesn't always agree. And he knows that I officially disagree, and on some matters very strongly, with not only him but also the rest of the denomination.

Take for instance the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Our denomination believes that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a subsequent event in the life of a believer whereby one is empowered for witnessing, and that the initial physical evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is speaking in unknown tongues. For the most part, I agree with this thought. However, I do not insist that a person who is baptized with the Spirit must speak in tongues. Indeed, I believe that somebody baptized in the Spirit may not speak in tongues at all.

Yet in spite of this major difference (in the eyes of our denomination it is major that is), my pastor has no problem with supporting the ministry God has given me. For he says he sees the hand of God very strongly in my personal life as well as a ministry, and believes that God has indeed called me into the ministry and equipped me with the gifts for it.

But then there is a problem with this. Though my pastor supports me very strongly, and though we labor side by side in building up the saints and ministering to the lost, the denomination we are part of will probably never officially recognize me with any sort of credentials in ministry because of my doctrinal disagreements. They are known to have made exceptions in the past, but those are very rare. Indeed, perhaps they will one day confer upon me a ministry license. But chances are slim (not that I really need one as it is).

But to me this is sad. It is sad because though my local church that I attend fully recognizes me as a saved born again Spirit-filled Christian, they are likely going to insert a wedge between myself and the rest of the denomination, by limiting what I'm "allowed" to do amongst "their" churches. It's sad they will probably refuse to ultimately acknowledge across their network of churches what Christ has made a reality concerning me in heaven.

Not that I care to seek such titles and letters and such. Those things mean little to me. I am what I am by the grace of God, no matter what they might say. In the eyes of Christ I am what He alone has made me. To me it is sad, not because in the long run they might officially reject my ministry, but because they are robbing themselves of the fulness of God's blessings. Yet, I labor amongst them anyway.

In all this, I recognize Christ as head. In all this, I recognize the Spirit as the source of unity. In all this I recognize love forms the bond of peace between us all. Such unity is not achieved through sectarian division, even in the name "of Christ."

As it stands, most of the "layity" don't really care if they are part of the denomination we are part of. Personally, I have found most in denominational churches today don't really care about the denomination all that much. About the only ones who care about it are those who have licenses from them!

Quote:

When we see the reality of the body of Christ

The only problem is that many people simply do not in anyway have a revelation on truths concerning things such as the local church and the headship of Jesus Christ. All they are going to see is another sect amongst many claiming to be the real church of Jesus Christ.

Quote:

We cannot labor with those who seek to build up divisions,

But in doing such, you are actually laboring with them in creating divisions. And this is the beef I personally have with Nee in this doctrine. To me, such is extremely short-sightedness.

To do such is to deny the reality of Christ in them, and the ministries He has given them. It would be like my denomination not giving me a license because of some of my doctrinal stances, nevermind that Christ is evident within my personal life and works through me with the power of the Spirit. If I see Christ alive in another person, and working through them, I as their united brother in Christ want to labor with them in the gospel, regardless of what name tag they might wear.

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/18 8:55

Quote:
-----The only problem is that many people simply do not in anyway have a revelation on truths concerning things such as the local church and the headship of Jesus Christ. All they are going to see is another sect amongst many claiming to be the real church of Jesus Christ.

It really does not matter what people see. People have their own concepts and will read them into everything. Some said the Lord was Elisha, some said, John the baptist, but Peter, who had revelation said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God".

We live unto God and not unto men. We don't live to please men or to conform to their concepts. The Lord Jesus said, "unless you eat My flesh and drink My Blood you have no life in yourself..." Many stumbled and ceased to walk with Him.

The "soulish" man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are discerned spiritually.

Our goal is not to maintain the status quo by not rocking the boat for fear of misunderstanding. But rather to live in the reality of the body of Christ no matter what the cost.

The reason there is so little revelation on these matters which are so plain in the New Testament is because they are veiled by tradition. They read from their traditional position and so there is no light.

But let them leave the traditional position and take the ground of the church and these things are opened up. They become clear, There is Life and there is Light.

Ephesians 4:13 "Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..."

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/6/18 14:56

Quote:

The reason there is so little revelation on these matters which are so plain in the New Testament is because they are veiled by tradition. They read from their traditional position and so there is no light.

But let them leave the traditional position and take the ground of the church and these things are opened up. They become clear, There is Life and there is Light.

Undoubtedly so. However, in doing what the local churches do, you are simply creating another denomination amongst many. And the only reason I bring up the perception of other denominations in this regard is because in fact you are seen as being schismatic "we are of Christ." Of course, even some well meaning theologians of the respective denominations would say of their group "we are of Christ."

Thus, the sectarian nature of your church will only further cause division to the body of Christ instead of bringing unity. Thus, you are only being counterproductive.

The more I reflect upon this, and knowing Nee's background and contact with the Brethren, I can see he seems to have inherited this sectarianism from Brethren leaders who used much of the same language Darby and the like used. Darby declared all churches apostate, and went around calling people to "come out of them," invoking Babylonian language about them, and to come to the sect he was starting that was pure. This frankly, is the way of all sectarians, and is not of God.

Sectarianism is condemned as being the fruit of the flesh, set in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:20. If we recognize somebody as genuinely saved and living their life faithfully for God, we are to embrace them as sons and daughters of God, and minister with them for the sake of the kingdom. A party spirit is not God's.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/6/20 13:41

Quote:
-----I would also add that Watchman Nee in "the Orthodoxy of the church" contended that the 7 churches in Revelation represent distinct periods in church History.

It is a view which was held by many Christian Brethren 150 years ago with the same sense of imminence. I think they were wrong then and I think Witness Lee is wrong now.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/6/20 14:58

Quote:

Quote:

Quote:

I would also add that Watchman Nee in "the Orthodoxy of the church" contended that the 7 churches in Revelation represent distinct periods in church History.

It is a view which was held by many Christian Brethren 150 years ago with the same sense of imminence. I think they were wrong then and I think Witness Lee is wrong now.

I agree, it is a poor interpretation of Rev 2-3. Those were seven historical churches that existed at that period of time, and, I believe one can make the case that they continue to exist up to the present.

Eschatologically speaking however, this interpretation feeds their claims that Christians ought to leave their lukewarm apostate Laodecian churches and come join theirs.

Re: Sects and being sectarian - posted by a_brother, on: 2006/6/20 19:54

From your post kingjimmy you seem to condemn sectarianism but reserve your strongest feeling against new sects. Before God what is the difference between remaining an old sect or leaving to form a new sect?

Since you recognize that denominationalism is sectarian and of the flesh, what would you suggest a believer to do?

You might consider the difference between oneness and unity.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/6/20 20:29

Quote:

From your post kingjimmy you seem to condemn sectarianism but reserve your strongest feeling against new sects. Before God what is the difference between remaining an old sect or leaving to form a new sect?

Since you recognize that denominationalism is sectarian and of the flesh, what would you suggest a believer to do?

Good question. I said the following earlier:

Quote:

1 Cor 11:18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

"Those who are approved..." mingled amongst even the gathered sects. Those who are approved become evident "among" you. Those who are approved recognize that the REALITY of the unity of believers grounded in Christ transcends any divisions that men might erect, rather those other divisions recognize it or not.

Paul approves of "those who are approved" mingling with currently existing sects, and disapproves of those who are forming new sects under the name "of Christ." Of course, those that fellowship with those in these other Christian sects ought to not adopt a party spirit. I guess one might say "in the party, but not of it."

The difference between fellowshipping with those in a sect vs. breaking away to start a new sect is night and day. The former actually is helping to restore unity across the body of Christ, the latter is actually only further dividing the body of Christ.

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2006/6/22 13:45

KingJimmy:

Quote:
-----And this is what the local churches do in saying they are the only true church in any geographic location. Watchman Nee spoke on this in one book, saying the Christians ought not to divide over doctrine and such. Yet at the same time, he refused to interact with other denominations in China saying the only issue worth dividing over is meeting under the headship of Christ. And since none of the denominations meet under the headship of Christ, he therefore could not co-labor with them in areas concerning the gospel....

...And while I agree that the modern denominational system, especially of the episcopal form, has in essence shut out Christ from being the head of the church when it comes to practical matters of church life, this still doesn't mean **we cannot labor together for the sake of the kingdom.**

Just some clarifications:

1. WN never claimed *his* church is the only one true church in a geographical location. What he actually said is, **all** regenerated believers within a city constitutes the local church. On another note, WN disliked people saying "Watchman Nee's church." He responded, "Cursed be the name of Watchman Nee. Blessed be the name of the Lord."
2. While WN denounced the denominational system, he did not thereby declare there could be no fellowship with other regenerated believers. He would have a problem working *formally* in cooperation with a denomination, but he would not have any problem fellowshipping with those from another denomination on an individual basis. He rejected the system, not the individuals.
3. That many from the LC movement might have wrongly engaged in "hero worship," does not mean **all** are doing so. I, for one, resent being labelled as such.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/6/23 14:31

Quote:

1. WN never claimed his church is the only one true church in a geographical location. What he actually said is, all regenerated believers within a city constitutes the local church. On another note, WN disliked people saying "Watchman Nee's church." He responded, "Cursed be the name of Watchman Nee. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Well, he would never claim it was "his" church to begin with. However, from my understanding of his teaching in the several books I have read of his, along with other discussions with folks in the local churches I've had on message boards over the years, he believes that all born again believers constitute the "local church" in each locale. However, he seems to believe that unless the various bodies that meet throughout town meet under the "headship" of Christ, and as "the local

I church," then they aren't legitimate as a church. Thus, he divides with them and won't do any "official" ministry with them.

Quote:

3. That many from the LC movement might have wrongly engaged in "hero worship," does not mean all are doing so. I, for one, resent being labelled as such.

I don't think I stated that all are doing such. No doubt, like many other Christians in many other denominations, who knowingly follow little to none of the leaders of their particular tradition, there are many that are not guilty of hero worship. However, there are those who do, and in my opinion from my encounter with those from the "local churches," hero worship seems to abound.

Re: - posted by boomatt (), on: 2006/6/23 15:41

I have just gotten my copy of the recovery version study new testament yesterday. I will check the teachings out myself to see what it is all about.

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2006/6/23 22:48

KingJimmy,

Quote:
-----However, from my understanding of his teaching in the several books I have read of his, along with other discussions with folks in the local churches I've had on message boards over the years, **he believes that all born again believers constitute the "local church" in each locale.**

He certainly receives all born-again believers. I can see you where the rest of your argument is coming from.

However, I had written primarily in response to what you have said earlier, "saying they are the **one true church** in any geographic location." I am certain this is not a claim WN would have made himself.

As for "hero worship," it certainly is a problem that has plagued this movement for some time, BUT -

Nevertheless, I have been to a public Christian forum before, where I was immediately dismissed by some participants once my church affiliation was known. They did not even hear what I have to say. Am I sectarian, or am I marginalized?

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/27 12:00

1 Corinthians 1:2 "To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who are theirs and ours."

The issue is really not what Watchman Nee taught, or Witness Lee, or the local churches believe. The real issue is what is the view of the New Testament. What does scripture say, what is the record of the New Testament, and what is the true ground of the church according to its revelation?

Watchman Nee's burden was the recovery of the New Testament church according to the New Testament revelation of the church. And the teaching regarding the practical expression of the church is based on the New Testament revelation of the origin of the church and the nature of the church.

According to Paul's view, which is the Spirit's view in the scriptures, the source of the Church is God. The Church is "of God". Its origination is from God, and its element is God Himself. The church is "of God" as its Divine source and also "of God" as a Cheese cake is a "cake of cheese." Its element is cheese.

When we see the revelation of the church in its essence, origin, and content, then the expression of the church becomes evident.

As Paul says to the Corinthians, the church is "of God" and it is "in Corinth" as to its location.

But as a local church, it is not isolated or exclusive, but is, "with all those who call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who are theirs and ours."

This opening word of Paul in 1 Corinthians lays the foundation and basis for his address concerning the divisions and sects which were emerging in Corinth. Paul opens his epistle with this salutation establishing in typical Pauline compression of thought and condensed "high revelation" in encapsulated form, the origin of the church, the nature of the church, the extent of the church and the expression of the church.

All that follows is based in this.

It is the ethos of modern Christian thought to simply accept the conditions existing in Christendom as inevitable. That is, the church is divided up into so many denominations, so many sects, based on this or that leader, this or that particular practice or teaching, etc.

Watchman Nee saw by the Spirit's Light the New Testament revelation of the church as the organism of the Triune God. He saw the church as the Bride of Christ, taken out from Christ of His Nature and substance, being built up with the materials of Christ to be His perfected Bride.

Watchman Nee saw the church as a practical expression of the Body of Christ which is His body by virtue of the Divine Life of Christ which indwells Her and animates her.

But, though Watchman Nee had much to say regarding the practical expression, His labor was to produce not a working model or shell, but rather to produce organically the church by the preaching of the cross and Christ as our indwelling Life. In this way the church is built up from the inside out. Not by way of outward constructs, but by way of the growth of the Life of God in those who have believed.

Rather than dealing first with the shell, the expression, one must begin with the innate reality, the very essence of the church, and the origin and the nature of the church. When we have a grasp of this by the Spirit's light, then what we do practically flows from the inner reality.

What we need is to lay aside our concepts, our traditional views and our opinions based on the conditions of today, and come back to the Divine Revelation in His Word, and seek the Spirit's understanding of His heart, His intent, and His eternal Purpose. And from this we enter into an understanding of God's intent for local churches.

1st Corinthians is a book dealing with this very matter. It lays the foundation which is Christ and it asserts in no uncertain terms that divisions and sects are products of the flesh. It states this on the basis of "is Christ divided?" It shows us the Lord's table in which we all partake of the One bread and we are all "one loaf".

The way to deal with all these issues is the way of the Cross, to deal with our natural life, to deal with the things of tradition, culture, and all the things which divide us and to bring us to Christ alone as our all sufficient, rich, and overcoming life.

The revelation in 1 Corinthians deals specifically and thoroughly with the whole basis of denominationism, of sectarianism, and all the things which divide us.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2006/6/27 13:13

Would any one like to help me understand Nee's teachings in regards to the Lord's Supper, in your understanding , not from his writings?

I'm baffled by two Nee followers I recently met.

They said that our emotional love at the Lord's supper is not appropriate, because our emotions for Christ are false, that we are only to conduct the breaking of bread strictly as an act of obedience, any emotional involvement would be considered offensive to HIM ???

mml

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/6/27 19:55

Quote:
-----They said that our emotional love at the Lord's supper is not appropriate, because our emotions for Christ are false, that we are only to conduct the breaking of bread strictly as an act of obedience, any emotional involvement would be considered offensive to HIM ???

This is surely either a misunderstanding or a misrepresentation of Watchman Nee.

Emotion, while not the spirit is the genuine vehicle or organ of expression of the Spirit in our spirit.

Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. Here Mary by the Spirit shows us the functions of both our soul and our spirit.

Our soul is the organ for the expression of our spirit. Our soul (our mind, will, and emotion) is the proper God created vehicle of the expression of the reality of the Spirit in our regenerated spirit.

Emotion alone is not acceptable to God. What is purely of an emotional stirring and has no basis or origin in our spirit has no spiritual value. But in exercising our spirit our emotion is involved and is the organ for expression of our love to Christ.

If we are without emotion we are dead in our soul. The proper function of emotion is to express God who is within our spirit.

Nee emphasised the need to exercise one's spirit at the Lord's table and not just emotion. But we are not to nullify our emotion, but rather express the feeling of the Spirit in our spirit in our human emotions.

Nee emphasise over and over the need for our soul to be in harmony with our spirit and that we need to have a delicate sense of the spirit and the more we are in our spirit, the more our emotion will express the delicate feeling of the Spirit.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2006/6/27 21:16

Graftedbranch,

Thanks for clarifying that for me, I thought so too. Godly emotions of believers are never downplayed in the Scripture.

It's just sad to see these brothers' extreme attachment and misunderstanding of Nee's teaching. They idolize him so.

I can only ask the Lord to help them see now.

thanks,mml

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/30 16:47

Quote:

-----I'm baffled by two Nee followers I recently met.

I am sure Nee would be greatly distressed at a "Nee follower" as He preached Christ as Lord and himself as a servant for Jesus sake.

But as to those who embrace his ministry and find in it the reality of the New Testament revelation, I will say I have been among them for 5 years and find that the centrality is upon Christ and not Nee or any servant of Christ which is the characteristic of Nee's ministry.

In other words Nee preached and taught the centrality of Christ and those who embrace his ministry do the same. What makes his ministry genuine and effective and enriching is his ministry of Christ. Not ministry of himself.

Of course the same can be said for Paul's ministry. Though the New Testament is 90% Pauline, its centrality is Christ, not Paul. And because Paul was a man who knew the Cross and took it daily to his natural life, He could minister Christ in purity and in the power of the Spirit. So it is with any genuine minister of Christ.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by y2daddy, on: 2006/7/2 19:39

I'm a little new to the dance here, but I have had 20 years of experience either in the "local church" (The Church In Elyria, The Church In Cleveland) or just fellowshiping with the saints in these fellowships, so I thought I would add my two cents.

I believe that the believers in the recovery are genuine Christians. Of that I have no doubt in my mind. And I also believe that Witness Lee has some rich portions in some of his writings. Some of the Life Studies are incredible to me. The Economy of God helped me to understand the Trinity somewhat, if such a mystery can possibly be understood at all.

I've enjoyed the fellowship of the brothers but one thing can't be denied- they are most definitely a denomination. No amount of spin can change the fact that they have a central headquarters (Living Stream Ministry in Anaheim), they used to have a Pope (Witness Lee), and now they have "the blended brothers" (Ron Kangas et al), they only use publications from Living Stream- see (<http://www.lsm.org/onepublication/>) One Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery for more information on that. That topic alone has led to a split between some of the churches in Ohio; they now don't fellowship with each other whereas before they were very close.

My last meeting was on Christmas Day when I enjoyed the Lord's Table with the Church In Elyria. During the testimony time I heard impassioned speeches about how degraded Christianity was for celebrating Christmas and how the local churches preached a higher truth. That was enough for me and I haven't been back.

I kept a blog for about a year where I wrote about Witness Lee several times. See the following entries:

(<http://seanmacnair.blogspot.com/2005/12/three-is-magic-number.html>) Three Is A Magic Number

(<http://seanmacnair.blogspot.com/2006/01/cult-is-cult-of-course-of-course.html>) A Cult Is A Cult, Of Course, Of Course

(<http://seanmacnair.blogspot.com/2006/01/joy-of-sects.html>) The Joy of Sects

And these entries where I described my disillusionment:

(<http://seanmacnair.blogspot.com/2006/04/why-i-am-not-now-and-likely-never-will.html>) Why I Am Not Now...a member of the Lord's Recovery

(<http://seanmacnair.blogspot.com/2006/04/chink-in-armor.html>) A Chink In The Armor

It was the last entry, A Chink In The Armor, where I quoted a troubling passage from the Life Study of Ephesians:

Quote:

-----"As the only begotten Son, Christ did not have human nature. He only had the divine nature. When He was incarnated, He put on h

uman nature. The thirty-three and a half years of His life on earth were a transitory state. On the one hand, He was still the only begotten Son of God; on the other hand, He had put on human nature. The divine nature within Him was the Son of God but the human nature was not. Therefore, during those thirty-three and a half years, Jesus was quite peculiar. He had the divine nature--that was the Son of God--but He also had on the human nature, and that was not the Son of God. That human nature had not been born of God. According to His divinity, His divine nature, He was the Son of God. But, before His resurrection, He had something that was not born of God-- the human nature. He needed to pass through death and resurrection in order for that human part to be born of God." (pg. 126)

And with that I made my departure. To say that Jesus was only part-Son of God is very troubling to me.

I am sorry for going on and on like this. I have no bitterness towards my brothers there, even though they pretty much dropped me from their list of friends when I left. I love them and will be happy to see them in heaven some day.

Peace,
Sean MacNair

Re: - posted by least, on: 2006/7/2 20:22

I just read through this forum and from the posts, you can easily tell who are in the local church (recovery version), or, Witness Lee's believing church.

May the Lord be merciful to those who are more faithful to man's teaching than to God's word.

Re: Recovery - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/7/2 22:14

Hi Sean,

Welcome to SermonIndex, hope you find much to glean through. Really appreciate your honesty and sharing your experience and concerns here.

Quote:
-----I am sorry for going on and on like this. I have no bitterness towards my brothers there, even though they pretty much dropped me from their list of friends when I left. I love them and will be happy to see them in heaven some day.

Feel free brother.

I share your sentiments here as well.

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/7/4 11:54

Quote:
-----And with that I made my departure. To say that Jesus was only part-Son of God is very troubling to me.

Genesis 3:16 "And Jehovah God said to the serpent... and I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her Seed: He will bruise you on the head, but you will bruise Him on the heel"

2 Sam. 7:12-14 "When your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. It is he who will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be His Father, and He will be My Son..."

Matt. 22:42-43 "Saying, What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He? They said to Him, 'David's'. He said to them, How then does David in spirit call Him Lord... If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?"

Revelation 22:16 "...I am the Root, the offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.

"Romans 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of Holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord".

2 John 7: "For many deceivers went out into the world, those who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist"

Though this concept is foreign to many Christians who never thought this through or who have never studied theology on the person of Christ, this is in no way unorthodox.

But as the Eternal Only Begotten Son of God, the Word who was with God and Was God from all eternity, and who "became flesh and dwelt among us, this humanity He put on, or "became" as in John 1 is created humanity.

That is the Lord was born out of the seed of David according to the flesh. His humanity was the "seed of David" (which will come forth from your body) It is the humanity derived from His mother Mary that makes Him human. He was not just materialized in the womb of Mary, but Mary, a descendant of David, was his mother.

The Lord's humanity was not God, It was not Divine. If His humanity was God, then He would not have been subject to death. But He died on the Cross as a Man. His humanity was not Immutable, unchanging, omniscient, or eternal. His humanity did not possess the divine attributes of God but He was weak, He grew, He was limited, He learned, he suffered, He died. His humanity was genuine created humanity. This is the Mystery of Christ, the Eternal Uncreated God united with His very creation, bringing God into man in incarnation.

Christ was indeed the Son of God and did not lay aside any of His Divine attributes in becoming man. But in becoming man He added humanity to His divinity. His divine attributes were expressed in His created human virtues. His was real humanity. Real created humanity. He was the union of the uncreated God with Created humanity.

But as created humanity, His humanity passed through death and resurrection to be glorified and uplifted and permeated with the Divine Life. In His resurrection He was designated the Son of God in His humanity and exalted to the right hand of God and received honor and glory as a Man. This glory He "ever had with the Father before the world was" as God (John 17) but as a man he must pass through death and resurrection to be glorified in his humanity.

This is basic Christian orthodoxy upheld by the Creeds of the ancient church, held by the church Fathers and acknowledged by every orthodox theology in church history, Christ is very God of Very God, but is also the Son of Man and very man of very man. He is the God/Man. He is not only the origin of all things, He is also the "first born of all creation.

He is both Creator and creature. He is God and Man. But now in His Humanity in resurrection He is the First born Son of God from among the Dead and in Him we also are made His many brothers sharing His Life.

This is just New Testament. This is the Bible. This is the Mystery of Christ. The incarnation of the eternal God in humanity. God manifest in the flesh, genuine human created flesh.

In fact, the very test of orthodoxy given to us in 1 John 4:2 is, "every spirit that denies Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist".

There were those who taught that flesh was created and therefore sinful (not sinful because of the fall, but sinful because of being created matter) and Christ was not really in the flesh but only appeared to be human. But John tells us this is the spirit of Antichrist which denies that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

Christ did not become flesh by transmuting into a physical form. He became flesh by incarnation. Born of a Woman of the Seed of David.

Footnote on 1 John 4:2: "This is the spirit of the errors of the Docetist (or Docetes). This name was derived from the Greek word meaning "to seem, to appear to be". The heretical view of the docetists was that Jesus Christ was not a real man but simply appeared to be; to them He was merely a phantasm. Docetism was intermixed with Gnosticism, which taught that all matter was essentially evil. Hence, the Docetists taught that since Christ is holy, He could never have had the defilement of human flesh. They taught that His body was not real flesh and blood but was merely a deceptive, transient phantom, and thus that He did not suffer, die, and resurrect. Such a heresy undermines not only the Lord's incarnation but also His redemption and resurrection. Docetism was a characteristic feature of the first antichristian errorists, whom John had in view here and in 2 John 7. The spirit of such errorists is surely not of God. This is the spirit of Antichrist."

I am saddened that someone would leave the fellowship of the saints in the Lord's recovery not because of error but because of one's own concept and a failure to seek the Lord and to research the doctrine to see if it be of God and Like the noble Bereans "to search the scriptures to see of these things be so".

This is not some strange doctrine that Witness Lee came up with. It is the historic, orthodox, biblical doctrine of the two natures of Christ, both human and Divine.

Many Christians just never put 2 and 2 together to realize that to be human is to be created. To be Divine is to Be God. To be Christ is to be both human and Divine with both natures. The One eternally derived from God, the other derived from Mary, his mother.

We superficially say, Jesus Christ is the Son of God and leave it at that. We fail to realize that He is also the Son of Man. A fact which the scriptures and orthodox theology affirm at every point.

Graftedbranch

Re:, on: 2006/7/14 23:32

Regarding this statement: "May the Lord be merciful to those who are more faithful to man's teaching than to God's word" I would like to say something.

As someone who accepts nothing out of man's mouth without confirming it in the Bible I take some offense to that assumption. Where do you get that assumption from? Thorough personal observation, or based on man's word? I have seen many accept man's word in the Christian world without checking it in the Bible- an all too common phrase is, "I'm going to ask my pastor." To the contrary of the statement in question, I have not seen or heard of someone who proved all of his words more thoroughly in the Bible, and encouraged more heavily those listening to his expositions to get into the Bible themselves and see for themselves what the Bible says, than Witness Lee (and as to whether or not everyone listening to his word did that, the answer is that most did, and do, and to say otherwise is to emphatically focus on a few negative cases, which are inevitable with any sizable group of people). If you can tell me of someone whose speaking is more biblically based and biblically balanced than Witness Lee's (or Watchman Nee's) I will be the first to read that person's books and listen to that person's speaking. I have not found any such person, and all such persons of the past were gladly received, and used as a base upon which to stand, by brothers Nee and Lee- including brothers alive at their time, to the extent to which those ones spoke with a basis in the word of God.

Secondly, there was some discussion earlier as to whether the teaching and practice of the local church is not just another division. Here is an interesting story from a book titled *The Practical Expression of the Church*, which is one of the books by Witness Lee that addresses this matter, the title of the book being drawn from a message T. Austin Sparks gave in 1938, and was published in the book *The Stewardship of the Mystery*, volume two, edition one (volume two of the second edition, which was printed twenty-five years later, is a completely different book, and is the one that is widely available today). If you are genuinely interested in seeing the biblical basis for the teaching and practice of the local church, you can read this book from which I am quoting for free online at: www.ministrybooks.org (under the category of "Selected Titles by Witness Lee" in the P's, for: Practical Expression of the Church, the)

Here is the quote, which is from the end of chapter twelve:

In 1937 in Chefoo, North China, I was invited to a dinner with some Christian leaders. Nearly all the leaders of the denominations of that city were there. After a time they said, "Brother Lee, we have heard you say that we all must be one. But the more you speak about oneness, the more you create division." Then I answered, "Brothers, we all know that the believers in Corinth were divided. Some said they were of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas, and some even of Christ. But all were rebuked by the Apostle Paul. In the light of this I would ask you if you think it is right for me to call myself a Presbyterian or a Lutheran or a Baptist?" They replied, "No, we would not ask you to do that." So I said, "What then shall I do? Since you do not ask me to be a Presbyterian, a Lutheran or a Baptist, what shall I do and where shall I go?" They could not answer me. I continued: "Since I love the Lord, I must preach the Gospel, and undoubtedly there will be some who will be saved through my preaching. Since you have said that I should not be in any denomination, should I send those who have been saved through me to a denomination which I cannot join?" Still they could not answer me. Then I boldly said, "So you see, we are forced to take the ground of unity so that we can meet together in a proper way

y. You say that we cause division, but who is responsible for the divisions? If all of you will promise me to drop all the denominational names and divisive elements and come together as the local church in the city, I will immediately ask the brothers to close our meeting hall. At this they shook their heads and said that this would be impossible. So I said very strongly, "Who then is responsible for the divisions?"

A number of Israelites did go back to Jerusalem. Apparently, they increased the number of groups. But actually, they did not bear the responsibility for divisions. It was those who insisted upon remaining in captivity and not obeying the command of the Lord to go back to Jerusalem who were responsible for the divisions among the Lord's people."

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/7/21 11:45

Quote:
-----A number of Israelites did go back to Jerusalem. Apparently, they increased the number of groups. But actually, they did not bear the responsibility for divisions. It was those who insisted upon remaining in captivity and not obeying the command of the Lord to go back to Jerusalem who were responsible for the divisions among the Lord's people."

"If all of you will promise me to drop all the denominational names and divisive elements and come together as the local church in the city, I will immediately ask the brothers to close our meeting hall. At this they shook their heads and said that this would be impossible. So I said very strongly, "Who then is responsible for the divisions?"

Amen.

It is a strange logic that says that to renounce and come out of divisions and meet on the ground of the oneness of all believers is divisive.

Rather it seems the logic is, "let us remain divided so that we can be unified in our divisions."

Or, "if we all agree to remain divided, then we have unity in our agreement."

Or, "Let us shake hands over our fences but let's dare not touch the fences. We all love our fences."

John 17:21,23 "That they all may be one; even as You Father are in Me and I in You, that they may be one in us: that the world may believe... I in them and YOU in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that YOU have sent me and have loved them even as You have loved Me."

Here the Lord prayed that we ALL would be perfected into one. And the basis of this oneness is our Union with the Triune God.

Can anyone really argue that divisions are the result of the work of the Holy Spirit? Is He the author of the divisions which exist?

Or are divisions as Paul says in 1 cor. 3 the product of the flesh? Is it not our natural preferences? Our cultural preferences, our personality preferences, our doctrinal view preferences, our traditional preferences? All of which the scriptures testify were put to death in Christ on the Cross and in the One New Man there can be no Jew or Greek, Slave or Free, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Holiness, Pentecostal, etc. There is just Christ and His body and local churches as local expressions of the one body of Christ.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by y2daddy, on: 2006/7/21 18:43

Quote:
-----It is a strange logic that says that to renounce and come out of divisions and meet on the ground of the oneness of all beliefs is divisive.

Rather it seems the logic is, "let us remain divided so that we can be unified in our divisions."

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Or, "Let us shake hands over our fences but let's dare not touch the fences. We all love our fences."

But the Recovery has fences too. I have Recovery fences in my own backyard, with the churches in Cleveland and Lorain on one side, and the churches in Elyria, Medina, and others on the other side. All of this over the matter of one publication.

I would still be meeting with the church in Elyria, if it wasn't for the fact that with all the preaching they do about the ground of oneness, what they really mean is "oneness with all those who meet in this meeting hall." I can't begin to count how many anti-testimonies I've heard, along the lines of "boy, I'm sure glad I'm not like them." That is not oneness! That is just another sect. Which is what the recovery has become- just another denomination.

Re:, on: 2006/7/21 23:26

If what you describe to be the case really is the case, then that description of oneness you heard is not my description of it, many others who meet on the ground of oneness' description of it, Brother Lee or Nee's description of it, or the Bible's description of it.

There are often some people that are too much and who don't understand things properly. That doesn't make the item that may be misunderstood any less valid or valuable.

Regarding "fences," someone can talk about recovery all they want, they might not be recovering what the Lord is recovering, and they can talk about the oneness all they want, it doesn't mean they hold the proper view, practice, or experience of the oneness, as many today *do* practice properly, as Brothers Lee and Nee have presented properly, and as the Bible prescribes properly. That's not so much a fence going down the middle of the oneness, it's, quite simply, a group of people leaving the oneness and putting a fence up around themselves.

edit: I assure you, if you travelled a bit in some other areas of the country and the world you would not get the flavor of a denomination *at all*. In a few rare cases there are some hints of it. In those sort of instances, they're not really fully in the Lord's recovery in its essence. The word recovery is not meant to be used as a name or title, it is meant to be used as an adjective, hence it is lower cased except when it is a part of the heading in a book or something of that nature (times when words that are not otherwise uppercase become that way). If someone is not recovering what the Lord is recovering, they're not really in the recovery.

Re: - posted by y2daddy, on: 2006/7/22 11:00

Quote:
-----There are often some people that are too much and who don't understand things properly. That doesn't make the item that may be misunderstood any less valid or valuable.

You're absolutely right, of course, and I apologize for assuming that northwest Ohio represents the recovery as a whole. It's just that what is going on out here is hard to deal with, which is why I just washed my hands of the whole thing.