

Two Ways Among the Workers and the Churches - Part II

4. A Brief History In The Two Ways Among Workers and the Local Churches

In the first article an overview was provided on the way of Jerusalem and the way of Antioch among the workers and the local churches based on the Word, and key truths from Bro. Nee's ministry. In this second article a brief history is shown of how these two ways have been experienced and recovered among the workers and the local churches. The history starts from 1937, with Bro. Nee's release of the Normal Christian Churchlife messages, in Hankow, China, and briefly covers how the Lord has moved in these two ways among ministry workers and the local churches until the present.

4.1. A Brief History From 1937 to 1997

In 1937 China, W. Nee and his coworkers laboured to establish the local churches based upon the principles of way of Antioch, as covered in the Normal Christian Churchlife. Although there was much increase and a very fruitful beginning in China, yet by 1948 Bro. Nee realized that many problems had arisen because the churches had not been built up and established in the principles of the way of Jerusalem. This led him to redirect the workers into one central fellowship working out of Shanghai, China. The goal at that time was to establish and build-up the local churches in maturity. There was one ministry, released through one company of workers, working in one coordinating fellowship, all according to principles in the way of Jerusalem. In 1952 Bro. Nee was persecuted and thrown into prison and his public ministry ceased.

In the early 1950's the churches in Asia began in the way of Jerusalem which was initially very blessed especially in Taiwan. However from 1957 to 1961 problems arose among the workers initially around the acceptance of T. Austin Sparks' ministry and his rejection of "the local church ground". During this time some leading coworkers separated and some church divisions occurred (Manila, Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong), ref.[8]. One may surmise that by 1961, the way of Jerusalem had not been fully recovered among the coworkers and the local churches in Asia.

In 1962 the Spirit commissioned Bro. Lee to go out to the USA, in a small way. Shortly the Lord added coworkers, from which there was a coordinated fellowship, operating from one ministry center to recover the way of Jerusalem among the workers and the churches. The next years we see coworkers being raised-up and dispatched from the one coordinated fellowship as well as local churches being raised-up and established in North America. Eventually this ministry work flowed back to Asia. Overall this was truly a time of much blessing among the workers and the churches. I do believe at that time the way of Jerusalem was practically experienced and being testified among the workers and the churches.

By the early 1970's Bro. Lee had the strong burden and leading to minister on the need for migrations of saints. From this time some constituted brothers were led by the Spirit to start to go out in a small way, Bro. Dong to Brazil, and Bro. Titus Chu in the Great Lakes area. Over time the Lord increased the ministry work and supply among these brothers and added coworkers so that by 1985 the fruit of the ministry work from these centers had increased and was very blessed. During the 1970's the Spirit had initiated the way of Antioch among the Lord's recovery. During this time and throughout Bro. Lee's ministry, he expressed a caring and fatherly interest towards those brothers who were set apart by the Spirit's commission in the work. Brother Lee extended the right hand of fellowship to both Titus and Bro. Dong and their company of workers, always remaining open towards them to come and blend among his coworkers. As a spiritual father to many of the brothers Bro. Lee possessed a special relationship in life with the sent out ones. I do believe his mature stand in extending fellowship and openness in the ministry towards the distant companies of workers was blessed and supportive

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towards the Lord's move to initiate a practical recovery of the principles in way of Antioch.

Some very fruitful and blessed work has resulted from companies led to recover and practice in the way of Antioch such as Brazil and the Great Lakes area. In Brazil some 1800 local churches were raised up, Hallelujah!. Prior to the recent turmoil the largest local churches in North America (metro Cleveland and metro Toronto) were established in the Great Lakes area. The Lord blessed this new beginning among the workers and the churches.

4.2. Brother Lee's Ministry Principly Recovered the Way of Jerusalem

In general Bro. Lee's ministry in the subject area of interest was primarily consistent with Bro. Nee's charge to recover the way of Jerusalem among the workers and the local churches. As Bro. Nee was imprisoned in 1952, he was only able to recover the truths concerning the way of Jerusalem, it fell upon others that followed to recovery its practical experience and testimony. I do believe Bro. Lee's ministry was used by the Lord to recover the practical experience and testimony in the way of Jerusalem among the workers and the churches. We should praise the Lord for His marvellous recovery in the way of Jerusalem this was needful and used in the establishing of many local churches in Asia and the USA.

However Bro. Lee's ministry did not have the burden or direction to significantly recover or further advance the practical experience in the way of Antioch among the workers and the local churches. If we are discerning we will see that some fundamental principles in the way of Antioch were not significantly elaborated or advanced in his ministry. I site some examples:

- Bro. Lee did not minister on the Spirit commissioned way for the workers to be separated in the ministry work into companies.
- Bro. Lee did not minister on the Spirit's move branching into not one but two or possibly even 10,000 companies and centers in the work of the ministry.
- Bro. Lee did not emphasize how a company of ministry workers operating in another center may have their own special messages, supplies, and words in the ministry.
- Bro. Lee did not minister on the regional spheres of companies in the work. He did not emphasize that a ministry worker's authority and labour are bounded according to God's apportioned measure which did not extend into areas apportioned to others.
- Bro. Lee did not minister on the need to recognize the multiple companies on the ground of the Body, in the one work for the building-up of the Body.

One can debate some minor aspects however generally Bro. Lee's ministry does not mention the need or practice of "multiple companies of workers in the ministry work" hence it did not have the portion to recover or further advance "the principles of the way of Antioch" as a fundamental way and practical testimony among the workers and the churches. We surely can appreciate Brother Lee's ministry as the Lord used it to recover the principles of the way of Jerusalem among the workers and the local churches, which was necessary so that they could be established and matured. There are many other subject areas that Brother Lee's ministry advanced and elaborated upon which is left to the reader to experience and enjoy.

4.3.A Brief History From 1997 to 2007

Despite the blessings in Brazil and in the Great Lakes area, some since the passing of Bro. Lee in 1997 have criticized, opposed, and or quarantined ministry companies and local churches operating in the way of Antioch. Some oppose multiple companies in the ministry work and seek to purge any practical recovery of the principles in the way of Antioch from over the whole earth! These ones do not follow Bro. Lee's pattern and testimony of openness and extending the right hand in fellowship to

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distant brothers and their companies. The rejection of the Spirit's move in the way of Antioch has brought in confusion and strife among some workers, local churches, households, and even some marriages. This rejection does not value the principles in the way of Antioch as released in Bro. Nee's ministry.

The present rejection by some promotes one global administrative organization of ministry workers with representative authority over continents, countries, local churches, as well as direct authority, and warnings to each saint. They seek for all apostles and workers to be assembled into one global company. Any one who will not agree with the authority, administration, and organization of this one company may be attacked, or quarantined (shunned) from the work of the ministry and fellowship in the local churches. Likewise the churches and their elderships which do not agree and submit to the central authority and policies of the one global company similarly are attacked and their local church may be targeted to be torn down and terminated, ref.[12]. This section further dispels a few of the recent unscriptural teachings opposing the Lord's recovery of the way of Antioch among the workers and the churches. Note all section references refer to the previous article Part I.

4.4.Opposing the Spirit's Physical Ordering and Associations of Multiple Companies

"They have deviated from the central lane of the Lord's recovery and have withdrawn and distanced themselves from the fellowship of the co-workers who labour together to carry out the ministry in the Lord's recovery over the entire earth.", ref.[11].

Some are confused and reject the branching in the ministry work by the Spirit's setting apart and ordering the workers into different companies(see section 3.2). By recognizing only one global fellowship in the ministry work has resulted in the rejection of the Spirit's ordering and association among the workers into multiple companies with their own separate commissions.

4.5.Not Recognizing Different Companies of the One Ministry of the Body

"He has built up a different ministry alongside the one ministry in the recovery, he is doing a different work, which is actually his own work, within the unique work of the Lord's recovery, and, for all intents and purposes, he is carrying out a different "recovery" in the sphere of the Lord's recovery" ref.[11].

"Carrying out in the way of rivalry independent moves in the work in various continents through their own conferences, trainings, and publications", ref.[11].

By promoting only one work through one ministry company has led to the rejection of the Spirit led commissions among the multiple companies in their centers (see section 3.2). Not standing in the principle of the Body in the ministry work among the multiple companies and not recognizing their work in the principle of the Body has led some to see a distant company's work as a "rivalry" (see sections 3.4, 3.5). Apostle Paul rejected all claims of "rivalry" in the ministry work as "fleshy", and "immature"(1 Cor.3:1-4, Rom 13:13) . In the way of Antioch all are recognized as God's fellow workers and there should be no condemnation of a conference, training, publication or any work based upon which company does the work.

4.6.Opposing the Direct Leading of the Spirit in the Ministry Work Among Companies

"Asserting that there is no speaking of the Lord through the ministry to all the churches, thereby opening the door to different speakings, different teachings, and different leadings in the Lord's recovery" ref.[11].

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“Promoting their own publications to advance different teachings and interpretations, and bringing in confusion and division by so doing”, ref.[11].

Some oppose the seven branched move of the Spirit and seek to limit the Spirit's move in multiple companies. Some recognize the Spirit one dimensionally as practically being limited and bounded by their one flow within their own unique ministry of their own company. These ones do not clearly see that the separate commissions of the companies (see section 3.2) and that all work done by the companies is in done in the principle of the Body regardless which company does the work (see section 3.5).

4.7. Not Expressing Loving Support Towards Fellow Workers in Distant Companies

“We must overcome any personal affection and stand resolutely with the testimony of oneness in the Lord's unique recovery. We must also realize that being neutral out of a good heart in this matter does not build up but rather damages the Body of Christ. Again, we urge all the saints and all the churches everywhere to practice the truth by turning away from every factor and person that causes dissension and division in the Lord's recovery”, ref.[11].

If we only recognize a “unique” or exclusive oneness in the ministry then the other companies and their ministry workers will be seen as causes of “division”. In the way of Antioch each company needs an enlarged view to recognize all other workers in the Body of Christ, which is required to possess the one ministry for the building up of the Body (see section 3.4). Each company needs to recognize the ministry work of each company as done in the principle of the Body (see section 3.5). If we hold a unique or exclusive view of the ministry work then we will not show loving support to the fellow workers in distant companies (3 John 6-8). Bro. Lee's testimony and openness towards both Titus Chu and Bro. Dong and their coworkers stands in contrast to the overall sentiments and vision of the above writer.

4.8. Not Extending the Right of Fellowship to Resolve Contentious Teachings

“The spread of their different teachings and work has sown discord. They have deviated from the central lane of the Lord's recovery and have withdrawn and distanced themselves from the fellowship of the co-workers who labour together to carry out the ministry in the Lord's recovery over the entire earth”, ref.[11].

Today some contentious teachings have been propagated to many local churches such as “One Publication” (discussed in following section). A company affected by this teaching, the Great Lakes area, has repeatedly extended the right hand of fellowship seeking to hold an Acts 15 conference to fellowship over this teaching and others, only to be met with rejection. As a result discord, distance, and confusion remains among the workers and the churches. When companies do not extend the right hand of fellowship to establish oneness and accords this results in discord and harassment (see section 3.6).

4.9. Extending Control Over Companies In “The One Publication Review Authority”

The One Publication review authority teaching is not a practice specified or required by the bible. The practice of submitting written materials for a review was first observed during Bro. Nee's ministry. I do believe that this practice was done with the intent of establishing “one work” in the principles of the way of Jerusalem (see section 2). This practice aligns itself along the principles of one teaching of the apostles being propagated by one company to establish and build-up the local churches in the one ministry work. In the way of Jerusalem, in China in 1948, a publication review authority was blessed

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and likely needful for the Lord's move among those workers and at that time.

However today we have to consider is “one publication review authority” a practice observed in the way of Antioch? Is it a crucial practice for the Lord's global move today in the way of Antioch? The Word testifies repeatedly on the publication of the apostles serving in different companies. Firstly both Peter and Paul wrote overlapping epistles while serving in different companies (Gal. 2:7-9), yet no “one publication review authority” was required or mentioned in the Word. Paul's specific speaking on authority in the work was that his authority was bounded by God's apportioned measure, and did not extend to regions where others laboured, which negates any groups' claim of being a global review authority (see section 3.7). The only direct charge on publishing in the New Testament ministry is made by the Lord Jesus as the voice of the one trumpet in the ministry to apostle John, “What thou see write in a book and send it to the seven churches”, without any mention of a publication review (Rev 1:10-11).

In contrast some promote one publication review as being “crucial to the testimony of oneness in the Body” and “crucial to the practical oneness among the local churches”, ref.[10]. This is to elevate “One Publication review” as crucial to the oneness of the faith. These claims are not supported by the Word's revelation of the crucial items we need to diligently keep for the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (Eph 4:1-6).

4.10. A Prayer to Forsake the Way of Antioch Being One Global Company of Workers

“We pray that they will receive mercy from God to make a genuine turn from their error back to the one blending fellowship in the Lord's recovery, that is, to once again follow the footsteps of the flock.”, ref.[11].

The prayer of the writer is not according to God's economy. God's economy is that the sheep would know his voice, and follow Him (John 10:27), this is to follow the Spirit's as the Director in the work (see section 3.2). Yet the above prayer is to follow the footsteps of others. If we only follow others footsteps, we are like lemmings, which after one falls off a cliff all others follow likewise. Lemmings do not possess their own individual direct leading. To operate in a mature way, and not be carried off by every wind of teaching, we need to know His voice, and the Spirit's direct leading (John 3:6, Math 23:10), this is according to God's economy (Eph 4:14-15).

The prayer also opposes the Spirit's move in the multiple companies (see section 3.2). The above writer prays for the commissioned and set apart workers to forsake the Spirit's direction and to return to a “blending fellowship” which the signatory organization block implies is one global company of workers. This prayer encourages the workers to shrink backwards from the Lord's commission in the way of Antioch and be in one company of global workers expressing central authority which is in the way of Roman Catholicism with its potential evils (see section 3.7). Overall the above prayer is backwards, Romish, and lower than God's economy. Rather another prayer is offered.

We pray for each worker to know your voice and follow the Spirit's leading according to your economy. We pray for your oneness in the faith in each worker and within each company in the ministry work until we all arrive at a stature of maturity for the organic building up of the Body of Christ in love.

4.11. Summary

The Spirit has initiated and is recovering a testimony in the way of Acts among the workers and the local churches. If we recognize and identify with the multiple companies in the principles of the way of

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Antioch (see sections 3.x in Part I) then all claims of division, dissension, different teachings, and rivalry among fellow ministry workers would cease. The Lord has initiated this new way, and has started to recover the practical experience and testimony of the way of Antioch among the workers and the local churches. This way has not been recovered in full among the workers and all local churches as some in confusion reject this way and do not clearly see the oneness of the Body in this way (see section 3.8). If we are not the ones to recover this way, then the Lord may start another new beginning elsewhere with some who are willing to follow the Spirit's branched move. We all should aspire to be the overcomers who are following the overcoming Lamb, who is walking among the local churches with an individualized ministry speaking for each church, released through the apostles labouring in a regional yet bounded way in the work, all according to the direction and lead of the seven branched Spirit's move over the whole earth (Rev. 1:11,13; 5:6; 14:4).

Robert Shaw,
April, 2007

References:

Ref. [8] – The Testimony of God's Grace, Harold Hsu, Feb. 2004.

Ref.[10] - PUBLICATION WORK IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY, The Blended Co-Workers, June 20, 2005.

"The one publication is not only a testimony of our oneness in the Body but also a safeguard for the unique ministry in the Lord's recovery. Without one publication, there is no way to preserve the integrity of the Lord's ministry among us, which is crucial to the practical oneness among the local churches."

Ref.[11] - A WARNING TO ALL THE SAINTS AND ALL THE CHURCHES IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY CONCERNING TITUS CHU AND THOSE WHO PROMOTE AND DISSEMINATE HIS DIVISIVE TEACHINGS, PUBLICATIONS, PRACTICES, AND VIEWS, The Blended Co-Workers, October 1, 2006.

Ref.[12] – Open Letter to the Saints in the church in Toronto from brothers Steve Pritchard and Jonathan P'ng, March 3rd, 2007, (www.concernedbrothers.com/Current/Development/OpenLetterFromBrosStevePritchard_JonathanP_ngEV.pdf)

"The following statements were made by brother Minoru Chen at a (so-called) 'Shepherds Fellowship' meeting. These points were given me from notes taken by brother Benny Law of Mississauga. It should be understood that some of the language is in 'code' and we have added the uncoded explanation in italics.

- He cited Leviticus 14 as God's ordination of how to deal with leprosy (corporate sin) in a house (meaning the Church. Note:We disagree with this on the grounds that only the Lord has the authority to remove a lamp stand (Rev 2:5)).
- Both Toronto and Montreal were named, as well as London, Ontario.
- He said, The problem has to be brought to the priest (Christ and the coworkers).
- **"In some cases, the whole house has to be torn down and rebuilt."** (Indicating a local Church may be "terminated"- see below)
- We "Need a new beginning in Eastern Canada. Don't just fix the old things."

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- New stones are being raised up under the ministry's leading. (The 'old stones' are removed. This is related to workers etc being "kicked out")
- Need to do a lot of replastering.
- Eastern Canada is leading (in the new plastering); even the U.S. is behind.
- **"Some churches may need to be terminated." ("Toronto")**.