

## **Brother Lee's Spirit of Painful Repentance and Solemn Charge in His Final Public Message – Why did we totally miss the mark?**

During the Chinese New Year Conference in February of 1997, Brother Witness Lee made an open confession in his last public message. He was speaking in Chinese (Mandarin.) Some saints who sat near him said that his eyes were tearful as he made this confession. After that meeting, he never gave another message in a public meeting before he went to be with the Lord in June of 1997. Hence, his open confession proved to be his last public speaking to the churches and may be considered as his personal, concluding remarks of his ministry. Surely it is part of Brother Lee's "will." A literal translation of his words reads:

*"(Concerning the matter of receiving people according to God),...we co-workers in every place all need to learn, the responsible ones in every place all need to learn, the brothers and sisters in every place all need to learn..., too many things cause us to learn. We all made mistakes in this matter in the past, I myself included; I confess that, I had, for this matter and before the Lord, a very painful repentance. I am really sorry...toward the Body of Christ, also really sorry, not only toward the brothers and sisters among us, but even to those in the denominations, also really sorry toward them...(a long pause)*

*You must bring this message back, read it once, read it twice, and come together to fellowship with one another. Then you will see that, we, in the past, were wrong! Of course, denominations are wrong. The sectarianism is what God condemns the most. However, the Lord still hopes that all His children... do not have such condemnation. Such an understanding and analysis will require much effort. I say again, you must, some people, a few people, come together to read, pray, speak and say..."*

Those who know Mandarin Chinese could feel the pain in Brother Lee's heart and be touched by his genuine repentance. In addition to making a public repentance, Brother Lee made a solemn charge to his co-workers, the responsible brothers and the saints of local churches to learn from our past mistakes in the matter of receiving all believers in Christian denominations according to God and have no condemnation toward them. He charged us to study diligently and fellowship with one another about his last message in the light of his words of repentance. He repeated his charge, asking them to come together in large or small groups to read, pray and prophesy to each other.

If we take Brother Lee's final charge seriously, we should devote some quality time to get into his last message. The leading ones should study and analyze what were our mistakes in having a condemning spirit toward the denominational believers and our not receiving them according to God. We should read, pray and fellowship with one another about God's Word regarding this matter. We should study and analyze the reasons for these mistakes including our attitude, our spirit and our teachings. As Brother Lee said, it will require much effort to grasp the subtle difference between seeing denominations are wrong and condemned by God and rejecting denominational believers with a condemning spirit. With the mercy and the shining from the Lord, we may be able to see our past mistakes and we must repent for each of them. We should then adjust our

attitude, our spirit and, most importantly, the teachings that lead to this wrong attitude and wrong spirit. We should also help the saints to go through the same process, so that the churches in the recovery will not perpetuate the same mistakes we made in the past under Brother Lee's leadership.

## **A Neglected Word**

To my surprise, after Brother Lee made such a heartfelt repentance and solemn charge, there was very little mention of Brother Lee's repentance in the messages of the "seven annual feasts." There has also been virtually no reference at all to Brother Lee's charge to learn from our past mistakes. It seems that the "blended co-workers" did not get the message in Brother Lee's repentance. It seems that none of them dared to say that Brother Lee could have made any mistake; nor dared to remind us that we should study and analyze our teachings regarding receiving believers by comparing them with God's Words. Nobody dares to suggest that, if there is anything in Brother Lee's teachings that might have led to those mistakes, we should adjust it. On the contrary, what we have heard from the podium in the past nine years has been the absolute exaltation of Brother Lee's ministry and the repetition of Brother Lee's messages. Some of the teachings have even gone beyond Brother Lee's teachings and they contain an exclusive spirit that we should analyze and guard against according to Brother Lee's final charge. As a result, there has been no encouragement for us to learn from our past mistakes. Therefore we continue to repeat the same mistakes, and even commit more mistakes than we did under Brother Lee's leadership.

I began to ponder why the leading brothers in the recovery did not take heed to Brother Lee's words of painful repentance and his solemn final charge. Don't they consider themselves as the faithful followers of Brother Lee? How come they did not follow Brother Lee's crucial charge after he made his repentance? One day, I suggested to a brother that we should learn from Brother Lee's repentance and his mistakes. He immediately said that Brother Lee did not make any mistake, rather Brother Lee repented because the churches and the saints made mistakes. He condemned me for suggesting that Brother Lee ever repented for his mistakes. I was amazed by what I heard. Later, I realized why he said this when I found this opinion presented on the [www.AFaithfulWord.com](http://www.AFaithfulWord.com) website. The following is a direct quote from the web site: <http://www.afaithfulword.com/articles/Offending.html>

### **What Witness Lee Said**

What Brother Lee said in the Chinese-speaking conference was his observation and realization before the Lord that the churches receiving his ministry had at times failed in the past to live up to that standard:

We have much to learn concerning receiving people according to God and according to His Son. Because of our negligence in this matter in the past, we have offended the Body of Christ and many brothers and sisters in the Lord. For this reason, I had a deep repentance before the Lord. Brothers and sisters,

I hope that we can see our past mistakes by getting into this message through pray-reading, studying, reciting, and prophesying. Of course, sectarianism in the denominations is wrong; it is something very much condemned by God. Nevertheless, those who are genuinely saved in the denominations are children of God and have been received by God. Hence, we also should receive them, but we would never participate in the division in which they are. (*The Experience of God's Organic Salvation Equaling Reigning in Life*, p. 69)

The understanding of Brother Lee's repentance presented in the above quote is totally different from those who listened to Brother Lee's words in his original language – Mandarin Chinese. This writer changes the focus away from Brother Lee himself and asserts that it was "the churches receiving his ministry [which] had at times failed in the past..." I began to wonder how this could have happened. A careful study of the above printed version of Brother Lee's repentance (*The Experience of God's Organic Salvation Equaling Reigning in Life*, p. 69) shows that there is a significant difference between LSM's printed version and Brother Lee's original words. The LSM printed version has diluted Brother Lee's spirit of painful repentance and eliminated key words such as "*I myself included.*" A literal translation of Witness Lee's spoken words is: "*We all made mistakes in this matter in the past, I myself included.*" By omitting this, the printed version gives the readers a much different feeling about Brother Lee's original words and it gives room for further dilution or even wrong interpretation.

It is sad that the writer of the above quote chose to gloss over Brother Lee's spirit of painful repentance and claim that Brother Lee's words of repentance were "his observation and realization before the Lord that the churches receiving his ministry had at times failed in the past to live up to that standard," clearly implying that Brother Lee did not repent for his own mistakes; Yet, Brother Lee was not merely repenting on behalf of the local churches; He was repenting (perhaps more so) for his own past mistakes.

[www.AFaithfulWord.com](http://www.AFaithfulWord.com) is the official web site of the "blended brothers" or "blended co-workers" for them to address pressing issues in the recovery. The views expressed there should also represent the "blended co-workers" view. This probably explains why there was very little mention of Brother Lee's repentance in the messages of the "seven annual feasts" in the last nine years; and why there has also been virtually no mentioning at all about Brother Lee's charge to us to learn from our past mistakes.

## **Important Questions**

My question is: How could these "blended co-workers", who claim to be the absolute followers of Brother Lee and the continuation of his ministry totally miss his crucial charge at the end of his life? Many of them were in that final meeting with Brother Lee. Some of them can understand Brother Lee's Mandarin Chinese perfectly and the others heard the literal translation from the translator. There is no excuse that they did not know Brother Lee's spirit of painful repentance and his crucial charge to the co-workers, church leader and the saints in general. Yet these "blended co-workers"

evidently decided, not only to ignore Brother Lee's final crucial charge, but also dilute his spirit of repentance in printed version and then interpret the printed message quite contrary to what Brother Lee meant in his final public message. By doing so they have taken away an unique opportunity for many co-workers, many church leaders and many saints in the recovery to learn from our past mistakes, repent for them and make adjustments so that we will not repeat the same mistakes of offending the Body of Christ. It is ironic that the writer of [www.AFaithfulWord.com](http://www.AFaithfulWord.com), who has twisted Brother Lee's words to the opposite direction, placed his article under the group title: *A Pattern of Twisting* with an attempt to show how others have twisted Brother Lee's words. Having seen that these "blended co-workers" have ignored and misinterpreted Brother Lee's crucial words in his last public meeting, any saint may now ask: Have these "blended co-workers" ministered faithfully in the past years according to Brother Lee's main burden in his other messages?

By observing the messages given by these "blended co-workers" in the past two years, they have intensified their promotion of many things that are not items of the common faith, such as one publication, one unique "Minister of the Age", the "Acting God", one global company of workers...etc. These matters have caused arguments, problems and even divisions in many localities all over the world. It appears that we are not only repeating past mistakes in the matter of receiving believers according to God, we are intensifying these mistakes: We now reject not only the believers in the denominations, but also the believers in the recovery who do not take the same stand on items that are not in the common faith. Brother Lee said, "*We have much to learn.*" But, where is our learning? It seems we have learned the wrong things!

The Lord's recovery is at the verge of major divisions mainly caused by the "blended co-workers" promotion of some exclusive practices in their teachings at the "seven feasts" in the past few years. It is time for the church leaders and the saints to learn the facts and realize that -- first, as Brother Lee confessed, we, Brother Lee included, indeed have made many mistakes and offended the Body of Christ under Brother Lee's leadership; also Brother Lee assumed responsibility for those mistakes as he took the last opportunity of his life to make a public repentance. Second, we should take Brother Lee's final solemn charge seriously to study, pray, fellowship and analyze the reasons for those mistakes. We should then have the courage to adjust anything, including our attitude, our spirit and the teachings we received, that are not completely according to the Bible. With this understanding and determination, we may have an opportunity to avoid repeating the same mistakes as in the past; we may have the opportunity to recover the practices of the church life to be in line with the Scriptural truth of receiving one another according to God. May the Lord have mercy on us.

Sober Mind  
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