

Fellowship

**Concerning Keeping
the *Oneness* with
*Fellow Believers***

“Being Diligent to Keep the Oneness of the Spirit
in the Uniting Bond of Peace”

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DCP is a project to defend and confirm the New Testament ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and the practice of the local churches.

Phil. 1:7 – Even as it is right for me to think this concerning you all because you have me in your heart, since both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all fellow partakers with me of grace.

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Introduction

In practicing the church life, our attitude toward fellow believers is an important matter. We believe that the Lord has called us to bear a testimony of the oneness of the Body of Christ by meeting in local churches as a practical expression of that oneness. Our standing as local churches should be inclusive, not exclusive. In other words, because we recognize all fellow believers as our fellow members of the Body of Christ, we should make no distinction or cause of stumbling in our fellowship with them but, in accord with the reality of our actual oneness, treat them just as we do those with whom we meet regularly. To aid the saints in understanding this matter more thoroughly, we offer the fellowship in this booklet, which is based on the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee.

The Body of Christ Being One Universally

In the entire universe there is one Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 2:16).

In the whole universe there is only one unique Body of Christ. There is not the Body of Christ in America and another Body of Christ in Japan. In all the places, the Body of Christ is uniquely one with the Triune God as its contents (vv. 4-6). (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997*, vol. 4, "The Divine and Mystical Realm," 159)

The unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ is rooted in the very being of the Triune God (4:3-6).

The Body of Christ is one unique Body with one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father of all (4:3-6). This one Body is the expression of the all-inclusive Christ (1:23). (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988*, vol. 3, "The Body of Christ," 406)

It is this unique oneness of the Body of Christ that the Lord prayed for (John 17:21, 23) and that the apostle Paul charged us to diligently keep (Eph. 4:2-6).

The Church Including All the Believers in Christ

The one universal Body of Christ, the church, includes all believers, without respect to time and space. This understanding was clearly articulated in Watchman Nee’s first major work concerning the practice of the church—*The Assembly Life*.

The Bible says that there is only one church. The church which Paul was in is the same church that we are in. The church that we are in is the same church that the apostle John, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and all regenerated persons are in. The church in the Bible is not separated by time, locality, or race. There is only one church, which exists at all times and in all places. There are not two churches. The Bible only recognizes one Body of Christ and never recognizes two, because there is only one Head. Although there are many members in the Body, the Body is singular. Therefore, all saved persons past and present, here and elsewhere constitute one church and one Body. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 22, “The Assembly Life,” 55)

We treasure very much the words in Romans 12 which say, “We who are many are one Body.” “We” includes all the believers. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 22, “The Assembly Life,” 56)

Witness Lee made the same point in the footnotes to the Recovery Version and throughout his ministry.

Here this book uses the term *church* for the first time, pointing out the main subject of this book. The Greek word for *church* is *ekklesia*, meaning *the called-out congregation*. This indicates that the church is a gathering of those who have been called out of the world by God. As such, the church is composed of all the believers in Christ. (Holy Bible Recovery Version, Ephesians 1:22, note 4)

The church is the Body of Christ. Every believer has a part in the church and is a member of the Body of Christ—the church. We, the many members added together, are the Body of Christ. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee*,

1932-1949, vol. 3, "Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures," 524-525)

Receiving All the Believers in Christ

Because we recognize all believers as ones for whom Christ died and whom Christ has regenerated to be members of His Body, we receive them as God in Christ has received them (Rom. 14:1, 3; 15:7).

We must receive the saints according to God's receiving of them. Whomever God has received, we are compelled to receive. We have no choice... Our heavenly Father has brought forth many children, many Christians, and He has received them all. Therefore, we also must receive them, not according to our tastes or preferences, but according to God's receiving. (Witness Lee, *Life-study of Romans*, 331)

God receives people according to His Son. As long as a person receives His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as his personal Savior, regardless of the concepts he holds regarding all other things, God receives him immediately. Since God receives people in this way, we too must receive people in the same way. Our receiving must be in accordance with God's receiving. If our receiving differs from His, it means that we are wrong: either we are more narrow or more broad than God. This will cause much trouble and damage to the church life.

God's receiving is based upon Christ's receiving, and Christ's receiving is in accordance with our faith in Him. Whoever believes in Him, He will receive. Whoever receives Him, He will never reject. He said, "Him who comes to Me I shall by no means cast out" (John 6:37). Since coming to Him, believing in Him, receiving Him, is the only condition for Christ's receiving, we must receive people upon the same basis with nothing added. As long as one believes in Christ our Lord, as long as he receives Him as his personal Savior, we must receive him with nothing else required. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1968, vol. 1, "The Practical Expression of the Church," 395)

We must receive whoever Christ has received. We must have such a proper receiving of all the saints so that we may keep the proper oneness; otherwise, we can never keep ourselves from being sectarian and causing much confusion and damage to the church life. To practice the church life by keeping the proper oneness, such a general receiving is necessary. May the Lord have mercy upon us. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1968*, vol. 1, "The Practical Expression of the Church," 395-396)

In the church life we must be general, able to receive all genuine believers. However, it is not easy to learn this lesson, because we all want others to be the same as we are. Let us not make demands of others or require that they change their way for our sake. Rather, let us have unity in variety and variety without conformity. Even though there may be such variety, we still are one in Christ. (Witness Lee, *Life-study of Romans*, 622)

In the local churches we attempt to follow the New Testament pattern of meeting as the church in a given city (Acts 8:1; 13:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:11). In Acts, wherever the apostles preached the gospel, those who believed began to meet together as the church in that city. While the universal church, the mystical Body of Christ, has no limitation of time and space, the practice of the church life must occur in time and space. The New Testament is consistent in presenting a pattern of local churches meeting city by city, that is, in the localities in which the believers lived. This we refer to as the ground of locality or the ground of oneness. The former term emphasizes that the church with its administration encompasses all believers in a locality. The latter term emphasizes that this divine arrangement is the practical expression of the oneness of the entire Body of Christ. In practice being a local church meeting on the ground of oneness means that we must be inclusive of all believers in that locality without discrimination.

This unique oneness should be the ground on which we are being built. We should not be sectarian; we should not be exclusive. We must be all-inclusive, open and

loving to all the dear saints. As long as they are Christians, they are our brothers. Our brothers have been scattered to many denominations. In spite of this, we still love them. We should not have an attitude or spirit of fighting, opposing, or debating. That is wrong. We should always hold a spirit and an attitude of loving all Christians. As long as they bear the name Christian and believe in the Lord Jesus, they are our brothers and sisters. In the local churches we do not have any wall. We have no fence. We consider all the dear Christians as our brothers. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1983, vol. 3, "The Basic Revelation in the Holy Scriptures,"* 438)

To practice what is revealed in Romans 12 concerning presenting our bodies to live the Body life, we must learn the practical lessons of receiving the believers, as revealed particularly in Romans 14:1—15:13, that the church life may be all-inclusive, able to include all kinds of genuine Christians.

Being Exceptionally General in Receiving the Believers to Live the Church Life

We need to be exceptionally general in receiving the believers to live the church life. To be general means that everyone is speaking and every home is doing the same thing; no one is particularly different.

According to God's Receiving

This generality must be according to God's receiving (14:1-23). God is very general; the most general one in the universe is God. Those whom God has received, we must receive; otherwise, our receiving is not general. We receive the believers according to God, not according to doctrinal views or religious practices.

According to Christ's Receiving

This generality must also be according to Christ's receiving (15:1-13). The most general ones in the universe are God and Christ. Therefore, remember these two statements: we must receive the believers according to God, and we must receive the believers according to Christ. As long as a person has God and Christ, we must

receive him. If we do not receive him, our receiving is a selective receiving; then we are sectarian and have become a denomination. Thus, we cannot maintain the oneness of the Body of Christ. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997*, vol. 5, "The Experience of God's Organic Salvation Equaling Reigning in Christ's Life," 507-508)

Not Sharing in Divisions but Loving the Believers

To maintain genuine fellowship in the one Body of Christ, our fellowship cannot be limited to only those who meet in the local churches. Rather, maintaining a testimony of oneness includes loving and having fellowship with all believers (John 13:34-35; 1 Thes. 4:9; 1 John 4:11, 21; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16; 1 John 1:7).

The oneness about which we are speaking is the universal oneness of the Body. We do not practice oneness simply among ourselves but with all believers. We love all believers in Christ, including those in the Catholic Church and in all the denominations and free groups. Although we love all Christians, we do not care to participate in their divisions. Whether or not they want to be one with us in the unique oneness depends on them. But even if they do not desire this, we still love them. We should not do anything that causes division. Rather, we would sacrifice anything and everything for the sake of keeping the unique oneness. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977*, vol. 2, "The Spirit and the Body," 291)

Of course, we cannot go along with any divisions. But that should not hinder our fellowship. Regardless of whether others are in the divisions or not, we must recognize that they are our brothers. This does not mean that we go along with their divisions. No, we cannot do this, but we must love all the saints, even those in the Roman Catholic Church. There are some real believers in the Roman Catholic Church, and they all have the same divine life as we. They may wear their clerical robes, but in redemption and in life we are all the same. (*The Collected*

Works of Witness Lee, 1968, vol. 1, "The Practical Expression of the Church," 428)

We must be clear concerning the distinction that the ministry makes between having no part in divisions in the Body of Christ and our attitude toward fellow believers.

In the state of confusion concerning the church today, we should have a proper attitude toward other Christian groups. First, we must acknowledge that all those who believe in the redemption of the Lord's precious blood and who have received the life of God are our brothers and sisters in the Lord, regardless of where they meet or the way that they take. We should never think that Christians who do not meet with us do not have the Lord's life, nor can we say that Christians who do not meet with us do not love the Lord. Neither of these concepts is correct. Apart from us, there are thousands upon thousands of saved ones, and among them there are many who genuinely love the Lord.

Second, we should have personal fellowship and contact with these brothers and sisters, but we should try to avoid having any relationship with their organizations. We associate with individuals because they are our brothers and sisters, not with the groups or organizations. However, our fellowship should have a twofold purpose. On one hand, we may receive some spiritual help from them; on the other hand, we may grant them some spiritual help. Except for these two reasons, fellowship would be unnecessary. We must learn to be upright and honest before the Lord. If others render us help, we should be humble to receive the help, and we must be willing to render help to others according to their needs. This is the greatest, even the unique, reason to contact other believers. If it is not for mutual supply, there is no need for fellowship. This should be our attitude toward other Christians. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1953, vol. 1, "Knowing Life and the Church," 365*)

The church is a great matter. If we are clear about this matter, the next matter, which concerns the attitude we

should have toward Christians outside our testimony, can be resolved easily. As long as a person is saved and has no apparent sins that should not be tolerated, such as idolatry, fornication, or teaching heresies, we must endeavor to help him. However, if he is in a denomination or a sect, we absolutely cannot acknowledge the ground on which he stands. He is truly a child of God and our brother, but he is standing on the wrong ground, which we can neither acknowledge nor participate in. If we were to stand on that ground, we would be violating the oneness of the church. However, we should not reject the person himself. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1953*, vol. 1, "The Bridge and Channel of God," 31)

Therefore, if we come to a place where Christ is not named, we must preach the gospel, win men to the Lord, and found a local church. If we come to a place where there are already Christians, but on various grounds these believers separate themselves into denominational "churches," our task is just the same as in the other place—we must preach the gospel, lead men to the Lord, and form them into a church on the scriptural ground of locality. All the while we must maintain an attitude of inclusiveness, not exclusiveness, towards those believers who are in different sects, for they, as we, are children of God, and they live in the same locality; therefore, they belong to the same church as we do. For ourselves, we cannot join any sect or remain in one, for our church connection can only be on local ground, but in regard to others we must not make leaving a sect the condition of fellowship with those believers who are in a sect. That will make undenominationalism our church ground, instead of locality. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 30, "The Normal Christian Church Life," 87)

Not Insisting That Others Meet with Us

When we interact with other believers, we should not have a motive to proselytize them so that they would meet with us. Rather, we should have fellowship with them in the Lord's truth in His Word and in the Lord's life, and we should leave

the matter of where they choose to meet to their own feeling and conscience before the Lord.

What then is right? All exclusiveness is wrong. All inclusiveness (of true children of God) is right. Denominations are not scriptural, and we ought to have no part in them, but if we adopt an attitude of criticism and think, "*They* are denominational; I am undenominational. *They* belong to sects; *I* belong to Christ alone"—such differentiating is definitely sectarian.

Yes, praise God I *am* of Christ, but my fellowship is not merely with those who *say*, "I am of Christ," but with all who *are* of Christ. What is of vital importance is not the confession, but the fact. Although these other believers *say* they are of Paul, of Cephas, and of Apollos, yet *in fact* they are of Christ. I do not so much mind what they *say*, but I very much mind what they *are*. I do not inquire whether they are denominational or undenominational, sectarian or unsectarian; I only inquire, "Are they of Christ?" If they are of Christ, then they are my brethren.

Our personal standing should be undenominational, but the basis of our fellowship is not undenominationalism. *We ourselves should be non-sectarian, but we dare not insist on non-sectarianism as a condition of fellowship. Our only ground of fellowship is Christ.* Our fellowship must be with *all the believers* in a locality, not merely with *all the unsectarian believers* in that locality. *They* may make denominational differences, but *we* must not make undenominational requirements. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 30, "The Normal Christian Church Life," 85-86)

I do not condone sectarianism, and I do not believe we should belong to any sect, but it is not our business to get people to leave them. If we make it our chief concern to lead people to a real knowledge of the Lord and the power of His cross, then they will gladly abandon themselves to Him, and will learn to walk in the Spirit, repudiating the things of the flesh. We shall find there will be no need to stress the question of denominations, for the Spirit Himself will enlighten them. If a believer has not learned the way of the cross and the walk in the Spirit, what is

gained by his coming out of a sect? (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 30, "The Normal Christian Church Life," 88)

We all need to have a clear view concerning the Lord's practice in His recovery. Then we can have a proper attitude. We should never be sectarian, and we should always be open to all people. We should not only be open to all the Christians but also be open to all the unbelievers. Because we have received the Lord's mercy and we are now a people bearing God's testimony in His truth and in His life, we must learn to be open at all times to every Christian, teaching the truth and ministering the life supply to them. When you meet other Christians, do not be bothered that they are Christians in the divisions. Do not change your attitude, but still be open to them. Present the truth and minister life to them. Try not to consider, think, or feel that they are different from the saints who are with us, because they also are our fellow believers in Christ.

Finally, we should never try to proselytize Christians from the divisions. We must always do our best, on the other hand, to preach the gospel, teach the truth, and minister life. Let other Christians have their own choice regarding the matter of the church. The Lord's testimony does not depend upon a big number but upon the reality of His life. Even though we may have a small number, if we live the reality of the life of Christ, this is the testimony of Jesus. Even if we had twenty million saints among us, without the reality of the life of Christ, there would be no testimony; this does not mean anything. This is why I feel that we should not pay that much attention to the numerical increase. I believe that if we really live a life of Christ as our reality, the increase will come. We should live such a testimony. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery," 472)

We stand before the Lord whom we serve, and we have no intention of drawing anyone to be with us. Such a goal

should be condemned; it is low and shameful. Since I have been in Taiwan, I have said, "You can meet wherever you choose as long as it is beneficial to you." As long as there is the fellowship of life, any gathering is suitable. If we bring people to our meetings but do not bring them into the fellowship of God's life, whatever we do is accursed. Many of us know each other in a deep way; if one among us takes a different way, I would be hurt in my emotions because I am a man. However, in my spirit, I would say, "Lord, although my brother is taking a different way, as long as he can gain something of You, I just worship You." I especially beseech the brothers never to say to anyone, "It is best that you come here to meet with us." This is foolishness. We should never play politics in our dealings with people; rather, we should exhort them to meet where they can receive help. Our hope should not be that people would come to our meetings; rather, our hope should be that we could touch the fellowship of life. We do not bring people to know us but to know the Lord. We do not bring people to enter into our meetings but to enter into the fellowship of life. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1956, vol. 2, "Three Aspects of the Church: The Course of the Church," 304-305*)

Where people meet and how they serve the Lord are entirely between them and the Lord; we cannot intervene in these things. In this age we must minister life to others. When people contact us, they should touch something in us that is unforgettable. The way they take or where they meet does not matter; we should not consider that our meetings are better than those in Christianity or that our meetings have the greatest number of people. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1956, vol. 2, "Three Aspects of the Church: The Course of the Church," 432*)

Not Interfering with Others' Work

In our service to the Lord, we should not interfere with the work of others.

Today there are four kinds of workers. First, there are co-workers who match the need of the ministry of God in

the present age. This is a small group of people who have been dealt with by the Lord and who are in one accord. Second, there are younger co-workers who are willing to receive direction and come under the coordination of the older co-workers. They are willing to follow and to learn in humility. Third, there are those who are unwilling to submit to the senior co-workers and who do not belong to the denominations, but who are happy to remain in fellowship with us. Fourth, there are preachers and free evangelists among the denominations. Today we need the first and second kind of co-workers.

When a co-worker is in a certain place, he has to cooperate with the local church there. The work and the church cannot be separated from each other. When a co-worker is working in a certain place, he is at the same time one of the local brothers. When the church assigns work to the saints, the co-workers should stand on the same ground as local brothers and should accept assignments in the same way.

Concerning the third and the fourth kind of co-workers, we can only let them choose their own pathway. God has not assigned some people to take the same way that we have, and we dare not say anything to them. Whatever the situation may be, we are here to do the work that God has committed to us. We cannot interfere with others' work, and we are not here to tear down others' work. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1932-1949*, vol. 2, "Messages Given During the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry," 242-243)

Not Arguing but Presenting the Truth

Moreover, we should not engage in arguments or debates with other believers but merely minister life and truth to them to the degree that they are open (2 Tim. 2:14, 24-25; Titus 3:2; 1 Pet. 3:16; cf., Matt. 12:19).

Any so-called campus-wide fellowship is a gospel organization formed by several groups that work together on the campuses. They send the students they gain to the denominations. We will not interfere with a believer who

joins such a campus-wide fellowship, because this will only give rise to criticism. However, we are led by the Lord to enter into the church life, and we believe that gradually all believers will know the truth concerning the church. When we contact students, we need to preach the gospel to them. Then we need to supply them with life. When the students begin to love and pursue the Lord, we can release the truth to them. We do not need to engage others in debates; we should only present the truth to them.

We do not criticize those who desire to meet in the Catholic Church or in the denominations. We leave this decision to them. It would be wonderful for others to be enlightened by our testimony and by the supply of the truth so that they would be unwilling to stay in any division but would rather take the way of the church and become a part of the testimony of oneness. Nevertheless, this choice is theirs, and we should not argue with them. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985, vol. 1, "Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 5: Concerning Various Aspects of Church Service," 235-236*)

When other Christians ask us where we fellowship, we should not pretend to be someone else. We should be frank and tell them what we are. Whether they would continue to be open to us or whether they would be closed to us is up to them. Regardless of their reaction, we still would love them and not argue with them. We must bear our responsibility. We must learn how to preach the gospel, present the truth, or minister life to them. If we would do these three things, the ones around us will receive something. We do not need to defend ourselves against negative speaking. It is better from the very beginning to let people know that you are meeting in a local church that is very much helped by the ministry of Witness Lee. If they would respond to you with something negative, do not argue with them. You need to present them a clear view of a biblical truth that the Lord has shown us. Maybe you would share John 3:14 with

them. You might tell them that the Lord Jesus applied the type of the bronze serpent to Himself, showing that when He was in the flesh, He was in “the likeness of the flesh of sin” (Rom. 8:3), which likeness was the form of the bronze serpent. Tell them that when Christ, our Redeemer, was on the cross, He was lifted up like the bronze serpent in the wilderness. Your presentation of this biblical truth will shock them. If you presented the truth in this way to your colleague every day, he would be subdued and enlightened. Eventually, he would be fully opened to the ministry you receive because he would realize that the truth is there. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters concerning the Practice of the Lord’s Recovery,” 473*)

If we are clear concerning the condition of Christianity, we will know the attitude that we should have before men when we touch the matter of the church. Our service is focused on positive things, not on negative things. We disapprove of the deformed matters in Christianity, but our service is not focused on opposing these matters. Our ministry is not to criticize and attack others’ mistakes. This is not the Lord’s purpose in raising us up. We were raised up by the Lord to give people proper things. The Lord did not send us to do a negative work but to do a positive work. The negative conditions that we have mentioned serve as a background that provides a contrast for the positive things. The examples that we have given are not meant to attack or oppose others. We do not want to argue with others but to firmly hold on to the light that we have received. It is useless to argue.

Instead of arguing with others concerning negative things, we should supply them with the positive things. When people see the proper condition, they will recognize the negative things. If such ones stubbornly remain in an erroneous condition, they will be accountable to the Lord. The condition in Christianity is one of confusion; thus, we cannot take care of too many things. We can only present the truth with the hope that all

erroneous and disorderly things will be corrected and restored. Our ministry is not to criticize, attack, or oppose. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1950-1951*, vol. 2, "Serving according to Revelation," 262)

Responding to Those Who Oppose

As ones seeking to bear the testimony of the Lord, our attitude should be proper even toward those who oppose us (2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:2; 1 Pet. 3:16).

As you face the opposers, do not argue and lose your temper. No matter how much others may accuse and oppose, do not be angry with them, but be pleasant and patient. Do not consider anyone an enemy or a hopeless case. Rather, do your best to help others understand what we are enjoying and leave the results to the Lord. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977*, vol. 2, "The Spirit and the Body," 477)

When you meet other Christians, it is better not to touch the issue of the Trinity. What should you do if they raise this question? First, do not argue with them. Listen to all their points, take them down, and ask them to explain the matters to you. The more they talk, the more they will be snared. Do not play politics and do not say a word in reply. Rather, you should say, "I will consider these matters. I certainly would like to study the truth with you. May we get together for this purpose? If what you have told me is right, I will take it. If what I have been taught is wrong, I will repent and give it up. I hope that, by the mercy and grace of God, you would have the same attitude. None of us should have the assurance that we are clear concerning such a thing as the Divine Trinity." Take all the points home with you, pray, fellowship with others, and seek the Lord's leading concerning how to contact them again.

When you see them again, do not argue over any points. Simply read to them certain verses or give them some of the booklets that are suitable. Sometimes you need to read certain paragraphs to them, perhaps even asking them to read. If they argue, do not argue back, but

say, "I would like to see what the pure word of the Bible says." If they continue to argue, then listen to their arguments. Take time and be patient. Perhaps during your next contact with them you will read Isaiah 9:6 or 1 Corinthians 15:45. Do not fight with them, but maintain the good attitude of a learner, of one who wants to study the pure revelation in the Bible. I believe that this will open the door and give an opportunity for the Lord to do something in their conscience. Of course, you need to pray a great deal about this. However, do not spend all your time with this kind of person. If you do that, you will be snared by the enemy. At most, you should only spend a fourth of your time with the opposers. All the rest of your time should be spent on the positive ones. Nevertheless, we would not give up the critical ones but patiently contact them again and again. As they consider the pure revelation concerning the Triune God, they may lose their peace and sense the need to reconsider their belief. Do not argue or fight with people, but have a good time with them. You need to pray much for them. If not many are convinced, at least a small number will be helped. They will at least begin to question the charge that we are heretical. They will no longer have the peace or assurance to say that we are heretics. You need to show them that although what we believe may be different and even against tradition, it is according to the pure word of the Bible. We all must conduct ourselves in this wise manner. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1975-1976, vol. 3, "Young People's Training," 389-390*)

Not Compromising the Truth

Though we should exercise generality to receive all believers and should allow each to follow the Lord according to his or her own conviction and conscience, we must nevertheless be vigilant to never compromise the truth the Lord has shown us from His Word.

If we are to please the Lord, we have to obey His truth in an absolute way. If Paul compromised a little with the Galatian believers, if he made some concessions and was

not absolute with the truth, and if he said a few ambiguous words, he could have won the favor of the Galatians. But Paul reckoned the cost. He would not please men at any cost; he would only please God. Otherwise, he would not be a servant of God. He would rather become their enemy than withhold the truth from them. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 37, "General Messages (1)," 254)

To exercise generality yet be absolute to uphold the truth requires that we deny ourselves.

All judgments are based on truth, not on individuals. Whenever the basis of judgment is shifted to an individual, we have compromised God's way and His truth. The basis of judgment is the Word of God; its foundation is the truth. We should act the same way, whether or not others treat us well. When we confront a situation, we should ask what God's truth is, not what our feelings are. Personal judgments and feelings should never come into play in God's work...

In order to uphold God's truth, our self must go; we must keep the self at bay. We all have our own temperament and feelings. We cannot alter God's truth because of our temperament and feelings. No minister of God can sacrifice or compromise His truth for his own comfort...

Truth is absolute. Out of the goodness of our hearts we may want to do something to uphold the truth, but truth requires no human hand to uphold it. It has its own standing, its own authority, and its own power, and it needs no human hand to uphold it. We do not have to lend truth a helping hand. We should not be afraid of anyone's rejection of the truth. We only need to learn to honor God's truth, to take the way of the truth, and to not compromise the truth in any way. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 52, "The Character of the Lord's Worker," 156, 157, 158)

We should not compromise the truth but be restricted by the sense of life and peace within.

We need to see that compromising is man's way of neutralizing things; man always likes to neutralize the truth. God's truth is absolute; if it is yes, it is yes, and if no, no. It should never be neutralized. Every compromise is a neutralization. Man thinks that it does not matter very much if the church has a name and that we do not need to be so particular as long as we are zealous for the Lord. This is wrong because the truth should never be compromised; the truth is always absolute.

Those who like to compromise are usually not very absolute. Those who like to compromise may have been touched by God, but they do not want to be absolute. An absolute person never compromises. It will be easy for us to compromise with others and not be absolute if we dismiss God's inward touching and are unwilling to obey and deal with Him. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee 1953*, vol. 1, "Knowing Life and the Church," 200)

Speaking in 1977, in the midst of fierce attacks upon his ministry based upon gross misrepresentations, Brother Lee spoke to those who were facing opposition on the college campuses concerning the need to uphold the truth absolutely yet love all men, even our opposers.

For the sake of the truth, we should be strong, but we should also love everyone, even the top opposers and evil persecutors. We should love them because the Lord Jesus tells us to love them and to pray for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44).

We should never compromise the truth, but we should exercise a universal love. We need a universal love, loving the Lord Jesus, loving all the saints, and loving all people, including the opposers. We have to consider that the opposers are lovable human beings. On the campuses we all must keep such an atmosphere. Do not give others the impression that we are fighting against everyone. No matter what someone says against us, we should not be offended. After they speak, we may tell them that we love them and that we would like to talk with them about the truth. If they would not talk to us, then we can tell them that we will pray for them.

We should be strong, be bold, and be steady in the truth. For the sake of the truth, we need to be strong and steady, but we also need to love everyone. The more that others oppose us, the more we should love them. We even have to thank the Lord for the opposition. The opposition has helped us a great deal. All the opposers have been for our perfection. If we realize this, we will have mercy upon them, love them, and pray for them. We must keep such an attitude. This will stop any fighting on the campuses between the saints and the opposers. Do not think that when we fight for the truth, we must also fight against people. We do not need to fight against people. Rather, we need to love everyone. In our preaching of the gospel we need a proper daily living and a universal love. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee 1977*, vol. 3, "Preaching the Gospel on the College Campuses," 38-39)

To faithfully testify to the Lord Jesus and to the truth of His Word, we must be willing to suffer reproach without becoming those who strive against other men (1 Pet. 2:12; 3:14-17).

Conclusion

As those who seek to testify that the oneness of the Body of Christ can be realized practically among believers, we bear a great responsibility to endeavor diligently to keep that oneness with all believers (Eph. 4:3). We should conduct ourselves in a way that gives no cause of stumbling (2 Cor. 6:3) and commends ourselves to every conscience of men before God (4:2). This means that we acknowledge all of our fellow believers as being members of the same one Body and receive them as God and Christ have received them. While we would not participate in divisions, we would nonetheless love all of our brothers in Christ no matter what their affiliation is. We would have fellowship with them in the Lord without any attempt to proselytize, without insisting that they meet with us, and without interfering with their work in any way. We would not engage in fruitless arguments (1 Tim. 6:20) but would seek only to minister life and truth. We would never

compromise the truth but would exercise a universal love, even toward those who oppose us. In this way, at least in the matter of testifying to the oneness of the Body, we can walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we were called (Eph. 4:1).