

A Timeline of the Watchman Nee Era



“...like a bolt from the blue”

“For the last several years, consciously or not, I have heard much positive and negative information regarding the private life of Brother Nee. As I cannot figure out if it is true or not, I am not brave enough to follow either side, but only to pray and ponder. When will this puzzle be solved? Only for the sake of the name of the Lord, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will Christians who know the facts be willing to step forward bravely and speak out of a sense of justice. It would be helpful for the children of God to solve this puzzle. There would be no more sadness, anger, weakness and tears, for we would receive comfort from the Lord. In case of a similar situation happening in the future, we would not be shocked, like a bolt from the blue.” – Rev. Jonathan Wu

Preface

A well-documented and detailed book is now available giving a transparent rendering of the history of Watchman Nee and the local churches. *A Timeline of the Watchman Nee Era* is an extract from that book with its compelling source material supplied by author and former member, Lily Hsu, and those assisting her in writing *My Unforgettable Memories: Watchman Nee and Shanghai Local Church*.

Quotes from leaders or accounts about them and other noteworthy members combine in this controversial account of Watchman Nee and the local churches in China and the many who gave their all amid pressure and turmoil from within the church and severe persecution from without.

Dr. Yu Chenghua
Witness Lee
Peace Wang (Wang Peizhen)
Ruth Lee (Li Yuanru)
Watchman Nee
Zuo Furu
Stephen Kaung
Luan Feili (Philip Luan)
Zhang Guangrong
Lily Hsu
Zhang Yuzhi ...and many more

Endorsements help prepare the reader for important discovery of “uncharted territory” in the history of Watchman Nee and the local churches in China 1924-1957.

ENDORSEMENTS

“Thank the Lord for granting the author the wisdom and courage. My heart is extremely painful with feelings beyond words. This book has filled the blanks in history and solved some unsettled questions.” *Rev. Thomas Wang, Emeritus President, The Great Commission Center International, CA*

“Learning the lessons from the history and *holding the truth in love* for the unity of the church are what we Christians ought to do. Our entire ministry is pursuing for God’s kingdom and His righteousness.” (Matt 6:33.) *Minister of a Local Church, Mainland China*

“As a minister, I served in a ‘House Church’ in Mainland China for seven years. While preaching the gospel and teaching in many years, I met brothers and sisters of the Christian Assembly (The Little Flock) almost everywhere. As the founder of the Local Church, undoubtedly Watchman Nee was God’s important servant just like God’s important vessels Abraham, Moses and David. However, Brother Nee did have his weaknesses or sins that he had to face. Based on her personal experience, Sister Lily Hsu especially witnessed that God blessed many Christians as Nee spread the truth of salvation and lifted up Christ and His crucifixion. And she also exposed the issues in the church and her own struggle with tears and blood. Through her failures, painful experiences, and after years of pondering, she also writes down her historical reflections in order to witness the Biblical truth and the true history, to encourage us back to the Bible, to extinguish cult of personality and to look upon the mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord. Its significance is not substitutable. *Rev. Wang Zhiyong Grace Christian Church (PCA), Virginia*

Forward

This timeline of the Watchman Nee era shows Nee’s early work of establishing churches under the elders’ rule according to the Antioch principle of one church, one city; and then the dramatic shift that came later when the local churches “handed over” the reigns of leadership to an apostle, Nee. In a momentous gathering of regional coworkers in 1948, Nee released for the first time “*a message on the line of Jerusalem*, according to the principle of the leadership that came out from the apostles who were together in one place, Jerusalem. “*The word pulled out of him for over an hour. We sat there astonished.*” (W. Lee’s reflection)

Comparison of the Principles of Antioch and Jerusalem

<u>Antioch Principle (1924-45)</u>	<u>Jerusalem Principle (1948-52)</u>
Independence of local church	Local churches handed over to apostle(s)
Churches ruled by local elders	Apostle(s) rule over all churches & elders
Emphasis on deep spiritual matters	Work-centered and oriented
Emphasis on the growth of life	Emphasis on evangelism & Handing-Over
Emphasis on relationship with God	Emphasis on the entire Local Churches as one

“**In February 1948**, Witness Lee, accompanied by Peace Wang and Rachael Lee, arrived in Fuzhou.” Lee records, “*Following the conference in Foochow (Fuzhou), we stayed with Watchman another two weeks to fellowship with him that the recovery of his ministry must be sped up. When the other coworkers and leading ones heard about this fellowship, they also would not leave, but asked us to obtain permission from Watchman that they might also participate in the fellowship. At first he would not give his permission, but on further entreaty, he agreed for them to be present on the condition that they would sit a distance away from him in another section of his spacious living room. Only Peace Wang (Wang Peizhen), Rachael Lee (Li Lajie), and I sat together with him for fellowship. I opened the fellowship by asking him why all the churches in the provinces of Fukien and Kwantung were filled with confusion.*

*Immediately he responded by releasing a message on **the line of Jerusalem**. The word pulled out of him for over an hour. We sat there astonished. To our surprise a sister sitting among those far away burst out, “Why should we not do it right now according to Brother Nee’s message?” Brother Nee responded, “If you wish to do it, you must all hand yourself over to the work (the ministry). Sign a note indicating your consecration, and pass it on to Brother Lee.” This they all did. When the leading brothers of the church in Foochow heard about this, they came that evening and handed over both themselves and the church to the work. This stirred up all the saints in town, and Watchman decided to call a meeting of the whole church. All of us realized that this was the beginning of the recovery of his ministry. Hundreds of us rejoiced over this. These events transpired in March 1948.*” (W. Lee, *A Seer of the Divine Revelation*, Ch 33, Sect.2)

“According to Nee’s new theory of the Jerusalem Principle, all the Local Churches had to hand over their churches under the leadership of ‘the Work’. It contradicted his previous principle of the ‘independence of each Local Church’. He also discarded his viewpoint of the Local Church: One locality, one church.” (p. 13)

A Timeline of Watchman Nee Era (the English translation from Mandarin)

EXTRACT straight from Hsu's book

Born 1903 in Shantou, Guangdong Province but was a native of Fuzhou, Fujian Province. He was an outstanding student, intelligent, with an excellent memory. He inherited his mother's bold and resolute character, together with his father's gentle and cultivated demeanor.

1920s At age seventeen, Nee accepted the Lord as his Savior. He felt called to serve the Lord at the same time. He wholeheartedly dedicated himself to be God's servant. From that time on, he established a good habit of diligent Bible study.

1920s Not long after his conversion, Miss Margaret E. Barber, a British missionary trained him with a group of young Christians for more than a year. She loved the Lord deeply and was an inspirational teacher with keen spiritual insights. She practiced what she said. She helped Nee to establish a solid basis for his faith. Soon, Nee was faithfully living in a life of confession, spreading the gospel, studying the Bible, praying, and trusting in God's provision.

1920s Under Barber's guidance, Nee engaged in an extensive reading of Western spiritual books in Biblical exegesis, devotional works, hymnals, church history, and literature from the time of the Early Church to the modern works of Keswick theologians. He collected more than three thousand spiritual books and eagerly absorbed the essence of Western theology.

1920s+ Driven by his eagerness to explore and understand spiritual things his thinking sharpened. He was able to assimilate and systematize the thoughts of leading Bible teachers in Church history. He expressed the messages of others as if those were his own. The listeners and readers found this extraordinary. In this regard, he was outstanding among the ministers in China, and even abroad.

1920s+ Initially, Nee respected Miss Barber and admired how she patterned herself after Christ (2 Cor. 2:15). She was a modern puritan. Realizing that her own infant baptism was meaningless, she received baptism as an adult. This was considered a bold act at that time. Her courage displayed in breaking away from her own church tradition inspired Nee greatly.

1920s+ At the same time, Nee had a group of young, full-time ministers as friends and coworkers who all were influenced by Barber. The group leader was Leland Wang. All were enthusiastic and devoted. Nee certainly did not feel lonely. He had a good start in his spiritual walk with Christ, accompanied by a number of young companions.

1920s+ Because Nee and several other young preachers emphasized the true meaning of salvation, many believers meeting throughout China began to preach the doctrines of salvation and being born-again.

1920s+ From the very beginning, Nee emphasized the importance of knowing "Christ and His Crucifixion." Through many sermons (later published in his periodicals), he drew many Christians to walk on the pathway of the Cross. His messages on the Cross engaged others to seek its true meaning and walk on the pathway of Life. In this way Nee's teachings and influence went far beyond the circle of the Local Church.

1920s+ While Nee was influenced by Barber and the Plymouth Brethren, he broke away with many Christian traditions that he thought were inconsistent with the Bible, such as infant baptism, church membership, receiving Holy Communion by people without the born-again experience, and that only clergymen are qualified to lead worship services. He took the brave steps of advocating baptism by immersion, the “Breaking Bread” services only for true believers, and having meetings without the benefit of clergy. The Brethren in England inspired Nee to establish a new form of church in China.

1920s+ Not only had Nee brought up new ideas in the establishment of the Local Churches, but his actions had also challenged the traditional denominational churches and stimulated many Christian leaders to rethink their church life, personal spiritual fervor, while encouraging the involvement of all Christians to serve God in the New Testament priesthood of all believers.

1920s+ From the very beginning of Nee’s ministry, Nee realized the power of publication. He wrote gospel messages and published his own sermons. He also translated and published the works of some Western Christian leaders.

1920s+ His persistent effort to publish his periodicals ensured his messages reached a vast number of Christians in China. The periodicals were published under the name of The Gospel Room. Initially they were free. His novel and critical insights impressed Christians in many regions of China. Later Nee used his periodicals to spread his concept of the Local Church, drawing many Christians away from other mainline churches.

1920s+ His only written work was a three-volume masterpiece, *The Spiritual Man*. Most of its content was adopted from the writings of Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis and her magazine, *The Overcomer*. Within just a few years Nee’s messages had already become very popular among Christians in many areas of China. Many Western Christians also appreciated his works. His book *The Normal Christian Life* has been translated into many languages, explaining clearly the believer’s victory on the Cross, leading to further growth in Christian life.

He was most talented in assimilating and incorporating the writings of numerous Western spiritual giants as his own. His international prominence is unsurpassed among Chinese ministers.

1920s+ Nee loved Western hymnals especially those of the past several centuries, of extolling worship, suffering and submission, the way of the Cross and its victory, abiding in the Lord, and seeking growth in Christian Life. He began writing his own hymns expressing a deep love of the Lord with a fine poetic diction. Most of his poems were adapted from others, such as “Olives that have known no Pressure, “Let me Love and Not Be Respected,” “Has Thou No Scar?” “The Story of a Grapevine,”^{etc.} Only a few of his poems were original, such as “What Length, Breadth, Height and Depth,” and “If from the Right Course I Depart”. Many of those very touching hymns are still treasured among Christians and the members of the Local Church.

1921-1922 In 1921, shortly after being saved, Nee considered that his infant baptism by sprinkling was meaningless. Barber then baptized him again, together with his mother and his brother George. In 1922, he convinced his whole family to withdraw their membership from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Fuzhou.

1921-1923 From 1921 to 1923, the majority of Chinese Christian leaders eagerly led people to the Lord for salvation. Revival Meetings were everywhere. During this time Nee had added his

insight: Christians needed to establish the Local Churches. He said: *But God opened my eyes to see that His purpose requires that those who have been saved by grace stand upon the ground of oneness in local churches to represent and maintain God's testimony on earth. Some of my coworkers had different views of the truth concerning the church. But when I carefully studied the Book of Acts, I realized that God's wish is to establish local churches in every city . . . What the Lord revealed to me was extremely clear: Before long He would raise up local churches in various parts of China. Whenever I closed up my eyes, the vision of the birth of local churches appeared.*

1922+ In this, Nee acknowledged and incorporated the Plymouth Brethren and their doctrines. A couple of years after Nee was saved; he adopted their focus on “all believers are priests.” He walked one step further and developed his idea of the Local Church. The characteristics of the Local Churches were: 1) Breaking away from the denominational churches, 2) Every Christian must be involved in the priesthood ministry and strive to follow Biblical teachings strictly. Nee's unique view of the Local Church was “one locality, one church.”

According to him, there should only be one church in one place. A local church should follow the teachings in the Bible without any traditional influences from denominational churches. He further emphasized the reality of being a Christian is not only attending Sunday services; but also spreading the gospel, having personal devotions, an active church life of serving the Body of Christ, together with a living testimony that glorifies God. His teachings focus on the spiritual reality. Being a mere titular Christian is far from enough. The Bible and the Holy Spirit alone should lead the church. Under the guidance of Plymouth Brethren and the Keswick teachings, Nee thought his own spiritual attainment was above and beyond denominational influences.

1924 Six full-time young ministers, John Wang, Leland Wang, Faith Lu, Watchman Nee, Simon Meek and Leland's younger brother Wilson Wang established an assembly at Shi Er Jian Pai, Fuzhou. Others honored them as “The Fuzhou Six.” There were other young brothers and sisters in the group, such as Ding Suxin, Zhang Qichen and Zhang Shizhen, etc. They were very devoted to the Lord and all were under the training of Barber.

1924+ However, there were different opinions regarding church traditions: Was there a need to ordain ministers as pastors and give a name to their gatherings? Because there was no example in the Bible, Nee insisted they should not have any ordination of pastors. He also disagreed about having a name for their church because there was no appropriate name save the Bible use of locality, such as “the church in Corinth” etc. As a matter of fact, those questions were virtually nonexistent in other churches during those years. For these reasons, his coworkers parted company and let Nee have his own work.

1924+ During those years, Nee openly and aggressively criticized the denominational churches through his publications. His inspiring speech shocked the whole Chinese Christian world. He said: *From the above we can see that the Bible does not warrant such things as a church ordaining someone to do the work of preaching and teaching. This latter practice is but a different form of the Roman Catholic priesthood. Such a human invention and tradition is not found in the Bible.*

Since we cannot find in the Bible the teaching of ordination for the evangelists and the shepherds and teachers, we know that the system of denominations is a tradition of man and is of no effect to those Christians who faithfully love the Lord. (CWWN Vol. 4, Chap 5, Sect. 10)

1925-1926 Nee preached meticulously on Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 under the topic of “Meditations on Revelation.” Nee’s messages were in regard to what the Lord told John to write down in letters to the seven churches in Asia. There were three volumes on that single topic published in the periodical, *The Christian* (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Volume 3-5).

1925-1927 Widespread distribution of Nee’s periodicals enabled his work to become better known nationwide and contributed to the rapid development of the Local Church movement. From 1925-1927, prior to the establishment of Nee’s own church, there were quite a few local churches automatically sprouted over Subei (Northern Jiangsu Province), Southern Zhejiang Province, and Fujian Province.

1924+ At first, the establishment of a Local Church was quite automatic, without rules, regulations or even permission from Nee.

The process usually included three steps: 1) Some ministers and believers accepted Nee’s concept of Local Church and broke away from their original churches 2) They baptized new believers by immersion.3) Finally, the group started “Breaking Bread” (the Lord’s Table) every Sunday on their own. Every Local Church had several “responsible brothers” who dedicated themselves to the Lord in serving other brothers and sisters in Christ, without any compensation or ministerial title. They gathered at believers’ homes, without much expense.

After contacting Nee, the “responsible brothers” were invited to attend one of the “Overcomer Conferences” or regional coworker meetings in Shanghai. Then they became an official part of the Local Church led by Nee. Compared to the denominational churches, this simplistic and active way of establishing Local Churches proved more productive.

1926 In the later part of 1926, several sisters started “Breaking Bread” gatherings in Nanking (Nanjing) under the influence of Nee’s teachings. They were Ruth Lee (Li Yuanru), Miao Yunchun (Miao Yunchun), Phoebe Chang (Zhang Qinian), Peace Wang (Wang Peizhen) and a few other sisters. After a while, Watchman Nee went to Nanking and attended their meetings. In order to recuperate from tuberculosis and to write *The Spiritual Man*, Nee resided in Wuxi, a city close to Nanking.

1926-1927 By the end of 1926, Peace Wang’s family moved to Shanghai. In March 1927, Ruth Lee and other sisters also moved there. They resumed their gatherings at Wang’s house, including the “Breaking Bread.” In May 1927 Nee moved to Shanghai. They all gathered together to start the new church ministry.

1928 In January 1928, the Shanghai Christian Assembly (SCA) was officially established in a rented house at Wen-teh Lane, Hardoon Rd. Later, SCA was declared the flagship of the Local Churches in China. It was “the Church in Shanghai” according to Nee’s teaching, but also called “Wen-teh Lane Church,” and later to be “Nanyang Road Church” as the church moved to the new address on Nanyang Road.

1928+ From the beginning, Nee emphasized four areas of work: 1) publications, 2) the Overcomer Conferences for national or regional coworkers, 3) the development of the Local Churches, and 4) training young Christians. Through these strategies, Local Churches developed rapidly.

1928-1934 Shortly after the establishment of SCA, Nee started regional Overcomer Conferences. He gathered the Responsible Brothers of the Local Churches from different areas. The first conference was started on February 1st, 1928. There were ministers and brothers from autonomous churches of Wenzhou area, Zhejiang Province, Presbyterian churches of Subei area, and even some ministers and brothers from China Inland Mission (CIM.) About twenty to thirty attended that first conference. Afterward, they returned to their hometowns for further development of the Local Churches by encouraging believers to detach from denominational churches. Nee used these conferences as opportunities to meet others and share his concepts of the Local Church. Within seven years (1928-1934), the Overcomer Conferences became the preliminary approach in developing Local Churches. From 1929 to early 1930s, Local Churches were also established at Shaoxing and Xiaoshan areas in Zhejiang Province. Nee further went to the North China region and established the Local Churches in Beijing, Tianjin, and Jinan areas.

1928+ Nee strongly favored training through “Overcomer Conferences” and mass publications. These two approaches proved most effective.

1928-1942 In 1931, the SCA meeting place had to be expanded to accommodate 200 seats. During 1928 to 1942, Nee was in Shanghai. While the elders were in charge of SCA, Nee took charge of the Local Churches nationwide with the help of Ruth Lee, Peace Wang and Philip Luan

1928 His personal contact with his coworkers was formal, and rarely casual. He was always calm, resolute with very little emotional expression. In his daily contact with coworkers, his speech was precise and resolute, and did not appear to be arrogant. He neither joked nor smiled. Witness Lee wrote about Nee: “He never talked with me about vain things.” (*Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present*, Chapter 31, Sect. 5) Nee’s every sentence was justly ended with an unambiguous period.

He trained his major coworkers on the job and he might give them an opportunity to preach with a very short notification.

1926 Beginning in 1926 Nee made connections with the Plymouth Brethren by correspondence. He appreciated their insights and spiritual attainment. He followed their footsteps in advocating “All believers are priests,” the worship pattern of “The Lord’s Table,” and the “head-coverings for women during meetings.” From 1928 to 1942, Nee lived in Shanghai and applied the same principles in developing Local Churches in many areas in China.

1932 In the fall of 1932, the Exclusive (Plymouth) Brethren visited Shanghai Christian Assembly (SCA) and the Local Churches in Subei area. They were surprised by the similarities of beliefs of the Local Churches in China to theirs. Next year, Nee visited them in return. However, Nee and the SCA elders disagreed with the extremely exclusive viewpoint of the Brethren. The friendship between the Exclusive Brethren in England and the Local Church at SCA was formally severed July, 1935.

1938-1939 Nee visited T. Austin-Sparks in London and accompanied him to the Keswick Convention. Nee was also invited to other countries to preach. His speeches were well accepted abroad. However, his concept of Local Church convinced few.

1938 In 1938, while in London Nee decided to step into his brother’s business. George Nee owned a pharmaceutical company, China Biological and Chemical Laboratories (CBC). Nee took over the entire responsibility of the company in 1939. He spent so much time and effort that he

ultimately became entrapped in the tricks of running the business. His ministry for God became significantly limited and the expansion of the Local Church Movement slowed down. Nee did not discuss with his coworkers or the SCA elders about his decision to run the CBC operation. It was not until CBC expanded and moved into a new facility on Jiaozhou Rd (Fuzhou) that church leaders realized Nee's involvement in his brother's business. It was then too late to interfere.

1942 Management problems at CBC and other entanglements led to the suspension of Watchman Nee's ministry by SCA elders. After going back to Foochow (Fuzhou) for a while, he went to Chongqing, the "Inner Lands," a refuge from Japanese wartime occupation in Shanghai. Nee continued to run CBC in Chongqing, and provided little service to the Local Church there. His ministry did not resume until 1948. [The "other entanglements" that led to Nee's suspension are detailed in Lily Hsu's book, ch 14]

1937-1945 During the wartime, government organizations, many institutions, universities, and masses of people fled to the "Inner Land." A majority of senior coworkers at SCA also went there to serve Christians and churches. Those were extremely difficult days.

Nee went to Wuhan, Yunnan and Guizhou. Tang Shoulin went to Wuhan and Chongqing. Li Yuanru, Wang Peizhen, and Zhang Yuzhi went to Wuhan, Chongqing and Chengdu. Zuo Furu went to Changsha and Guilin, and Jiang Shoudao (Stephen Kaung) to Guangzhou, Hong Kong.

1945 The Anti-Japanese War ended in August 1945. Most of Nee's coworkers came back to Shanghai, including Li Yuanru, Wang Peizhen, Zhang Yuzhi, Tang Shoulin, and Zuo Furu.

1946 June 1946, Nee asked Witness Lee in Yantai (Chefoo), Shantung Province, to come to Shanghai for the ministry. Angus Kinnear said: "*Now in mid-1946, Watchman wrote from Foochow, presenting to him the needs of Shanghai and appealing to him to go to their aid.* (Kinnear, *Against the Tide*, p.177). Lee was also invited by Wang Peizhen and the "Responsible Brothers" at SCA. (Witness Lee, *Watchman Nee — A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age*, Chapter 14, Sect.8)

1945-1948 After Lee came to Shanghai, he and Peace Wang frequently invited Nee to visit SCA. Yet, after returning to Shanghai in 1945, Nee did not attend any SCA activities or meet with any other church leaders.

1946 In October 1946, Witness Lee and his family moved from Yantai to Nanjing. Because Nanjing was close to Shanghai, he was in charge of both Local Churches and went back and forth between the two cities. From that time on, Lee became the prime leader of SCA. The elders were mere figureheads.

1946-1949 Witness Lee was gifted with a zeal for the gospel. He also had administrative talents. In 1947, he increased the number of the "house meetings" to fifteen. The "Houses" were further increased to twenty-six for "Breaking Bread" on Sunday evenings and prayer meeting on Tuesday evenings. There were several dozen church members in each House. At the First House, more than a hundred members met at the Assembly Hall. Four to six deacons or deaconesses were in charge of each "House" with the team leaders under their lead. Each team leader cared for about ten believers with the same sex and called the roll for every house meeting. In 1948 I was assigned as a junior team leader.

In addition, Witness Lee and Peace Wang (Wang Peizhen) arranged dedicated believers into fifteen ministry teams for church office duty (mostly deacons and deaconesses), visiting, housekeeping, children's Sunday school, ushers, and bookkeeping, etc. Each of us was given clear-cut assignments and responsibilities. The ministry teams were under the umbrella titled as "Serve in Totality" and under the direct leadership of Lee.

After Witness Lee took charge of SCA in 1946, the attendees on Sundays increased to an average of 800-900. That proved to be the best growth period in SCA history.

1948 Nee returned to his post at SCA. After September 1948, the economic situation under KMT was in much turmoil, yet at SCA we were filled with hope and zeal. We dedicated ourselves and all our belongings to the Lord.

Renewal of Dedication

1947-1949 In April 1947, Witness Lee started many days of Special Meetings for the "Renewal of Dedication." He called on all the believers to have absolute dedication in serving God. According to Zhang Xikang's autobiography: *Reminiscence of Sixty Years*, the topics of Lee's speech were: "Dealing with Mammon and Serving God," "The Service of the Whole Body," and "The Occupation of Believers by the World and Mammon." A year later, Nee used exactly the same topics in his messages at the National Coworkers Meeting. Apparently Nee adopted the topics from Lee with his own elaboration.

The enthusiasm for the Lord at SCA heated up. Many confessed their failures and repented with tears. They turned their hearts to the Lord and wrote "Handing-Over notes." They dedicated themselves to the church together with all their possessions, their career, and their future. The congregation was greatly encouraged and the number attending SCA services soared.

"Handing-Over Movement"

1947-1949 At first, Witness Lee named the movement as "Renewal of Dedication," calling for all the church members to join in. It lasted from the beginning of 1947 until the first quarter of 1949, prior to his departure to Taiwan in April 1949. But in 1948, Nee called it "Handing-Over."

Young Christians were zealous for spreading the gospel. Dozens, sometimes more than a hundred of new believers were baptized each month. The assembly became packed. The growing numbers spilled into the office of the Gospel Room, and the parlors of five coworkers' homes in the alley shared by the Wen Te Li Meeting Hall. The homes were the residences of Zhang Guangrong, Li Yuanru, Wang Peizhen, and Zhang Yuzhi. Every stairway, courtyard and adjacent alley became packed.

1947-1949 Because of the urgent need to enlarge the capacity of the church, Lee suggested building a much larger assembly hall. Ren Zhongxiang wrote: *On the evening of August 30, 1947, Lee called for a "Special Meeting" of the congregation to promote the plan for building a new Assembly Hall. The believers were motivated to contribute huge amounts of cash, silver dollars, large and small gold bars, US currency, jewelries, antiques, even clothes, furniture, bicycles and daily necessities. From April 1947 to March 1948, the total contribution was equivalent to more than 100 strips of large gold bars. Each bar weighed ten ounces (old system.) Witness Lee taught "Handing-Over" movement at Yantai, Shandong, during the period of Anti-Japanese war. He brought it to Shanghai in 1947. Later on, it became the prelude for the "Handing-Over" Movement of both Watchman Nee and Witness Lee.*

Witness Lee was full of energy, but spent little time on devotional and spiritual dimensions of “abiding in God” or growing into the Life of Christ. His leadership style and focus were obviously different from **Yu Chenghua**. While Lee performed as the leader at SCA, Yu submissively kept quiet.

In 1936 W. Nee and Ruth Lee (Li Yuanru) invited Yu Cheng-hua (1901-1956) to come back to Shanghai from Changsha, Hunan, and be the elder of SCA once again. While serving as head elder, he continued his part-time medical practice as an ophthalmologist. He was quiet and humble, and did not emphasize authority. Yet the congregation revered him and followed his footsteps.

During **1937-1945**, Shanghai was under the cruel subjugation of Japanese military. Yu Chenghua, Du Zhong Chen, and Zhu Chen continued to serve God and the SCA congregation. All of them held secular jobs. **Yu** was the main preacher for the Sunday services. Zhu and Du were in charge of the administrative affairs of the church.

1937 Yu Chenghua translated *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence and *Sweet Smelling Myrrh* by Madame Guyon the following year. Those books greatly blessed the children of God in pursuing an intimate relationship with God, together with self-sacrifice. The two books have had a lasting influence among Chinese Christians to the present day, including ministers outside the Local Church. **Yu** not only persuasively preached “the Pathway of Life” and “Abiding in God,” but he also practiced it in his daily walk with God throughout his life. Since then, the growth in the inner life has been a goal for many Chinese Christians.

1939 Japanese Military Police Bureau in Shanghai promoted a united front of Chinese churches, the “East China Christian Mission,” under Japanese control. Every church had to join the Mission; no church activity outside the Mission was allowed. The coworkers and elders of SCA unanimously refused to join the Mission. Church activities at Hardoon Rd stopped. Yet Yu Chenghua had the courage to open his house underground for Breaking Bread services on Sunday nights. More than fifty Christians packed into his parlor every week. It continued for more than a year. Several more believers opened their homes for underground gatherings as well.

Resumption of Nee’s Ministry and National Coworkers’ Meetings

1945-1948 In August 1945, the Anti-Japanese War ended in victory. Nee promptly finished his profitable business at CBC, Chongqing, and went back and forth between Shanghai and Fuzhou. Although he was concerned about the future of the Local Churches, he did not attend any SCA activities. At Fuzhou, he remodeled the mansion inherited from his parents. He also purchased property at Guling (Kuling), a mountain region in the vicinity of Fuzhou. His purpose was to prepare training facilities for future use.

1942 Lee was unswervingly loyal to Nee. He realized there were bitter feelings toward Nee among SCA leaders because of the “SCA Storm in 1942.” Upon his arrival Nanjing and Shanghai, he talked to most of the senior coworkers, including Li Yuanru, Zhang Yuzhi, Xu Dawei (David Hsu), Du Zhongchen, and Yu Chenghua. He persuaded them by saying that the cause of their spiritual back-sliding was their focusing on “Was something truly wrong with Watchman Nee?” They forgot to show gratitude to Nee for his spiritual help. Also, he repeatedly

emphasized: “The issue is of the Tree of Knowledge versus the Tree of Life.” Kinnear writes: *Already in 1946 Witness Lee had challenged the Shanghai elders: “Were you in the Spirit when you made the decision to reject him? And what was the effect? Can you say it brought life?” “No,” they had replied sorrowfully to each question. (Angus Kinnear, Against the Tide, p. 182.)* The coworkers accepted Lee’s viewpoint of “considering ‘life’ not ‘the knowledge of good and evil.’” The previous critical problem was then resolved. (Lily Hsu’s book, chapter 14 on The Suspension of Watchman Nee from 1942 – 1948, gives a much fuller, authoritative presentation of the facts for Nee’s suspension.)

1948 Witness Lee and Wang Peizhen were eager to have Nee returning to his ministry. Lee said: *By being in Shanghai again, I had much opportunity to see Brother Nee after a separation of more than six years. . . . Also, at this time Peace Wang [Wang Peizhen] and I were concerned for the recovery of Watchman’s ministry. For this reason we both took every opportunity to have fellowship with him. . . . We presented to him the urgent need to resume his ministry because of the restoration of the church in Shanghai and the wide doors opened in new fields. I asked him to resume his ministry, but he told me that because of certain [brothers], his ministering spirit would not allow him to minister to the church in Shanghai. I realized from this that in order to recover his ministry, there was the crucial need of a revival among us. (Witness Lee, A Seer of the Divine Revelation, Chapter 33, Sect. 2)*

1948 In February 1948, Witness Lee, accompanied by Wang Peizhen and Li Lajie (Rachael Lee), arrived in Fuzhou. He had been invited to speak at the regional “special meetings” for the local coworkers. They had already planned to have fellowship with Nee afterward. At that time, there were twenty-seven local church leaders asking to join their fellowship with Nee. As Lee wrote: *Following the conference in Foochow (Fuzhou), we stayed with Watchman another two weeks to fellowship with him that the recovery of his ministry must be sped up. When the other coworkers and leading ones heard about this fellowship, they also would not leave, but asked us to obtain permission from Watchman that they might also participate in the fellowship. At first he would not give his permission, but on further entreaty, he agreed for them to be present on the condition that they would sit a distance away from him in another section of his spacious living room. Only Peace Wang (Wang Peizhen), Rachel Lee (Li Lajie), and I sat together with him for fellowship. I opened the fellowship by asking him why all the churches in the provinces of Fukien (Fujian) and Kwantung (Guangdong, Canton) were filled with confusion.*

Immediately he responded by releasing a message on the line of Jerusalem. The word pulled out of him for over an hour. We sat there astonished. To our surprise a sister sitting among those far away burst out, “Why should we not do it right now according to Brother Nee’s message?” Brother Nee responded, “If you wish to do it, you must all hand yourself over to the work (the ministry). Sign a note indicating your consecration, and pass it on to Brother Lee.” This they all did. When the leading brothers of the church in Foochow heard about this, they came that evening and handed over both themselves and the church to the work. This stirred up all the saints in town, and Watchman decided to call a meeting of the whole church. He asked me to speak at that meeting, but I told him strongly that if he would not go and speak, I would not even attend the meeting. He therefore took up the burden and spoke at that meeting. All of us realized that this was the beginning of the recovery of his ministry. Hundreds of us rejoiced over this. These events transpired in March 1948. (Witness Lee, A Seer of the Divine Revelation, Ch 33, Sect.2)

1948 For many years there had been two Local Churches in Fuzhou: one at Jinmen Road and the other at Qiuchang Hou. The leaders at Jinmen Road were willing to hand-over their church to

Nee and Lee. However, the leaders at Qiuchang Hou led by Zhang Qizhen had not been notified of the initial meetings at Nee's residence. After being told, Zhang preferred to hold on to Nee's original principle of "one place, one church" and firmly refused to hand-over. The two Local Churches in Fuzhou openly split.

1948 In response to the prompting of Witness Lee and Peace Wang, Nee came to Shanghai for the national Coworkers' Meetings. Although the meetings were arranged by SCA leaders, Nee totally took it over. From the very first day, with the assistance of Lee, he was the only one in charge. Except for some short talks and brief questions from attendees, he was the sole speaker. This was always his leading style at the Local Church meetings. He demonstrated an attitude of sole, unquestioned leadership in meetings, as if the suspension of his preaching ministry had never happened.

The Coworkers' Meetings at the Assembly Hall on Haroon Rd lasted for five weeks, from April 9th to May 15th 1948. The church leaders came from various areas throughout the country. The SCA elders, deacons, and a few college students also attended the meetings unofficially. Altogether, there were about two hundred people attending.

1948 The themes of Nee's speech during these important meetings were: *The Authority and Delegated Authority, the Testimony of the Body, the Jerusalem Principle, and "Handing-Over," etc.* He specifically emphasized that Christians must not serve Mammon, and all possessions should be voluntarily "Handed-Over" to the church for the gospel. This series of speeches together with his strategy of "Handing-over" were, in essence, adopted from Witness Lee's teachings in 1942. In addition, Nee exaggerated Delegated Authority and some new ideas, such as the Jerusalem Principle in support of his theories of Handing-Over, etc.

1948-1949 During the 1948 meetings, Lee reported the revival at Yantai in 1942-1943: *Since the end of 1942, I saw clearly that unless the problem with money is solved, there is no way for the gospel of God to go out effectively. . . . We saw that when money was not released by the brothers and sisters, there was no way for genuine revival to occur. . . . On December 13, 1942, the Lord did a work among us. That afternoon I was preparing to preach a message on life. We had been preaching messages on life for two or three years, but that afternoon my message took a turn. From that day forward, we saw that God's gospel can never be released as long as the problem with money is not settled. . . . In this way about six to seven hundred people all consecrated everything to the Lord.* (Witness Lee, "A Testimony of the Revival in the Church in Chefoo", in Nee: *The Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry*. CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 16, Sect. 5)

1948-1949 Nee repeated the same topics during the "Training of Coworkers in Guling" scheduled immediately after the Coworkers' Meetings. Through his eloquent and convincing speech, Nee easily took over the leadership of all the Local Churches. Nee and Lee became the two alleged apostles of the Local Churches. Once Lee left for Taiwan on April 30, 1949,⁽⁷⁾ Nee became the sole leader in Mainland China.

Things had certainly changed. Not long after the establishment of the Local Churches in 1928, Nee advocated "The Principle of the Separation of Work and Church." He took charge of "the Work," and the elders took charge of their Local Churches. He managed the national and regional ministries such as evangelical work, publication, special meetings and trainings, etc. **However, according to his new theory of "the Jerusalem Principle," all the Local Churches had to hand over their churches under the leadership of "the Work." It contradicted his previous principle of the "independence of each Local Church." He also discarded his viewpoint of the Local Church: "One locality, one church."**

Authority and Delegated Authority

1948-1949 In these meetings, Nee repetitively affirmed the authority of the church. He had always emphasized the church authority, but now he focused more on delegated authority. He said: *In the body the first thing we have to learn is to find those whom we have to submit ourselves to. We must know those who are ahead of us. All the authorities in the Bible are deputy authorities and not direct authorities* (Nee, “The Recovery of the Body and the Authority of the Ministry,” in *The Resumption of Watchman Nee’s Ministry*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 6, Sect. 3)

The head manifests itself as the head by its ideas and proposals. The meaning of submitting to the authority of the Head is that one does not need to make many proposals and will not have many ideas of his own. (Nee, “The Exercise of Authority in the Body and the Body-consciousness,” in *The Resumption of Watchman Nee’s Ministry*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 24, Sect. 2)

Ministry is authority. When the Lord gives a ministry to a person, He is giving authority to that person. Many people worry about many problems, but as a member we have to learn to remove our own heads. (Nee, “Voluntary Poverty and Submission to Authority,” in *The Resumption of Watchman Nee’s Ministry*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 24, Sect. 2.)

1948 Nee said: *Living the church life demands our very life. The first thing we have to do is **not to think, but to submit**. The saints should present all the problems to the elders, and the elders should present the problems before God. In this way the saints can come to God through the elders, and God’s authority can be realized among the saints.* (Nee, “The Whole Body Serving and the Recovery of Authority,” in *The Resumption of Watchman Nee’s Ministry*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 11, Sect. 4)

*We have to ask God to do one thing today: If a person rejects the leading in the Body, he will be deprived of all leadings. The Lord’s leading in the work is manifested in the Body. If we pay our attention to our individual ways, we will miss God’s leading. The principle of service in the church is that all the one-talented ones have to rise up. But as soon as they rise up, the flesh rises up also. Hence, in order for the church to become the church, all the one-talented ones have to rise up. However, in order to deal with the flesh, there must also be the exercise of authority. Here the only solution is for man to listen and obey. If you think that something is right, you should obey. **If you think that something is not right, you should nevertheless obey.** Everyone should rise up, and everyone should learn obedience.* (Nee, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 12, Sect. 4)

The Jerusalem Principle

1948 Nee broke away from the denominational churches in 1922. The next year, he established the Local Church with his colleagues in Shi Er Jian Pai, Fuzhou. He claimed that in order to follow the Bible, he had to avoid old church traditions. From 1924 to 1936, Nee developed more than two hundred Local Churches.⁽²³⁾ He called his concept of the Local Churches as the Antioch Principle. What was the Antioch Principle? He defined it in **1938**: *The church in Antioch is the model church shown us in God’s Word, because it was the first to come into being after the founding of the churches connected with the Jews and the Gentiles. . . . Since the first recorded sending out of apostles by the Holy Spirit was from Antioch, we shall do well to look carefully into its details.*

Before they (apostles) left a place where a church had been founded and some building work was done, they appointed elders to bear responsibility there (14:23). In the Bible, there is never an apostle who stayed in one place and managed the church too long. Elders should take care of the local church, but not the apostles. (Nee, *ibid*, CWWN Vol. 30, Chap. 7, Sect. 6. Part of the quote is

from the Chinese edition. The book was first published in English with some revisions in the Chinese edition by the author afterward.)

However, in 1948, Nee advocated the Jerusalem principle. He said: *Today we need to consider afresh the principle of Jerusalem. God’s work began from Jerusalem (Acts 1:4, 8). The word of the Lord was that the gospel should spread from Jerusalem. In the Bible Jerusalem represents God’s work. God set up Jerusalem as the center of the work. In God’s eyes all the apostles were to remain in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4, 8:1, 14, 25). We will not take back a single word of what we have said in Hankou before. No doubt the church is local. But in God’s eyes there are centers in His work. . . . Our failure today lies in the fact that we have the local churches first without having a Jerusalem.*

*The order of the Lord’s way is first Jerusalem, then Samaria, and then the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). Jerusalem came first, then came the local churches. In the past we did not see this. This is why we did not learn coordination even though we had so many small churches, and why the local churches became little kingdoms under the hands of one worker with two or three responsible brothers. The problem with the Lord’s testimony in the past is that we did not begin from Jerusalem. (Nee, “The Treasure in the Earthen Vessel and the Principle of Jerusalem,” in *The Resumption of Watchman Nee’s Ministry*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 3, Sect. 3) *It is a little too early for coworkers to take the way of Antioch today. The principle of Antioch that we practiced before begins from Acts 13. In practice we have omitted chapter one through twelve; we have skipped the line of Jerusalem (Act 8:1.) (Nee, “Report of the Work,” ibid, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 28, Sect. 1)**

A few years after Nee started serving the Lord, he advocated the principle of Antioch for his basic theory of the Local Churches. His major books in this regard are: 1) *The Normal Christian Church Life*, (Collective Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 30), also named as *Concerning Our Missions* published in London in 1939, and 2) *The Orthodoxy of the Church* (CWWN Vol. 47) published in Chongqing in 1945. The latter is a recording of the special Chongqing meeting for coworkers. By 1945, Nee had held onto his basic theory of the Local Church for more than twenty years.

However in 1948, he changed his view. One year prior to the political regime change, Nee proposed a radical shift from his major principle. He called for all the relatively independent Local Churches to join a monopoly under the leadership of the apostle (delegated authority) and the leader was Nee himself. He was striving for the greater goal of “taking over China for the Lord.” In that way, the Local Church in China turned another page in her history.

Comparison of the Principles of Antioch and Jerusalem

Antioch Principle (1924-45)	Jerusalem Principle (1948-52)
Independence of local church	Local churches handed over to apostle(s)
Churches ruled by local elders	Apostle(s) rule over all churches & elders
Emphasis on deep spiritual matters	Work-centered and oriented
Emphasis on the growth of life	Emphasis on evangelism & Handing-Over
Emphasis on relationship with God	Emphasis on the entire Local Churches as one

“Handing-Over” & “Taking over the Whole China”

1948 Nee called for the entire congregation and all the Local Churches to “hand-over” all they had to the apostles. He said: *The principle in the work is the same. To coworkers in all the places should first hand themselves over and place themselves under the Head and be directed by the Head. Only then can the Lord do something, and only then will the work have a way to go on. We hope that in these days the Lord will at least give us a way to go on. Henceforth, we have to accept the judgment of the Body. All major decisions and directions must be placed in the hands of the Body. . . . The manifestation of the Body in the future will be determined by the nature of the testimony of the local churches today. The local churches are the models of the coming universal church.* (Nee, “The Way of the Church,” *ibid*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap.7, Sect. 6.

The brothers and sisters should know that their future, their jobs, occupations, dwellings, businesses, possessions, and everything that forms a part of their living should be put in the fellowship of the church. Formerly, one could make decisions on his own. But now, if he is to take the service of God as his center, everyone has to take one great step forward. From now on no one can make his own decisions or do things his own way.⁽²⁹⁾ If anyone asks me how much he should offer, I would answer, “Everything.” Brother Lee said that the church will lay aside the consecrated things for us. But what would we do if the church does not lay them aside? If we want to serve God, we have to serve Him in a desperate way.⁽³⁰⁾ (29. Nee, “Report on the Work (2),” *ibid*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 29, Sect. 1. 30. Nee, “The Service of the Whole Body,” CWWN Vol. 57, Ch. 20, Sect 3)

The Lord has to do what He did in the first century. We are not afraid of believing in the first-century gospel. We are not afraid of preaching the first-century gospel. We are not afraid of acting according to the first-century gospel. If we would rise up as a whole Body, the whole of China will be taken; no one will be able to withstand us. If we do not believe in a thorough gospel and if we do not have a thorough consecration, it will be difficult for the Lord to use us.⁽³¹⁾ Every believer should have his living centered on the gospel; his work, occupation, dwelling, and livelihood should all be for the gospel. The church should continually send out more people. After we finish the building of the meeting hall, in a month or so, it will not be difficult to see the number double. It is even possible to triple or quadruple our number in one year.⁽³²⁾ (31. Nee, *ibid*, *ibid*. CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 20, Sect. 4. 32. Nee, “Report on the Work (1),” *ibid*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 28, Sect. 1)

Self-Confidence and Joy

1948 Nee’s new strategy delivered during the national Coworkers’ Meetings was extremely demanding. Apparently all the coworkers accepted his speech without reservation. It was a turning point for the Local Churches. **The leadership of Nee was now established at a much higher level than ever before. Most of the resources of the Local Churches were in his hand.**

The coworkers were excited. Their feelings were expressed as “on earth as if in heaven.” Finally, Nee gave words of exhortation on May 8, 1948: *Within the last few days, I have met some of the happiest people I have ever seen. Many people held my hands tightly, and they were both excited and happy. Praise God, there are many happy faces here today. They have all handed themselves wholeheartedly to the Lord. Tonight it is as if the last train is about to leave. I hope that no one will miss this train and that no one will be left behind.⁽³⁴⁾*

The brothers and sisters at SCA were also excited and happy. Although I was only a high school student and could not contribute much; yet I was happy and willing to hand over my whole life to the Lord and the church. I also became “one of the happiest people.” (34. Nee, “Testimonies by the Saints and Words of Exhortation,” *ibid*, CWWN Vol. 57, Chap. 32, Sect. 1)



“Handing-Over” at Shanghai Church Assembly

1948 According to Nee’s strategy, the Jerusalem Principle was to be first carried out at SCA, and then rapidly spread to the Local Churches all over China.

As stated earlier, Witness Lee called the SCA congregation for “A Renewal of Dedication” one year prior to Nee’s resumption. After the national Coworkers’ Meetings, the slogan of “Renewal of Dedication” was replaced by “Handing-Over.” Lee arranged special meetings in order to gather the entire SCA congregation and explained the significance of “Handing-Over.” At times, these meetings were held every evening. Many brothers and sisters handed over themselves, including their possession and family for submission to Nee and Lee. Many handed over their choice of jobs. They were willing to quit jobs or change their profession if needed. They were willing to do any job for gospel.

Furthermore, the “Handing-Over” movement in Shanghai was directly linked to the financial need for building the huge meeting hall. The assembly hall was now packed. The need to build a new facility was urgent. Because of the unstable political situation and chaotic economy, brothers and sisters were more than willing to hand themselves over to the church completely. There was also an unspoken fear that the oncoming Communist Party might confiscate the property of the rich people, so it was far better to hand over possessions to the church.

In the summer of 1948, Lee took the responsibility of designing the meeting hall. The construction was started in the winter of 1948. Meantime, a huge reed mat tent was built between the gate and the construction area. By the end of 1948, the congregation moved into the tent for meetings.

By the fall of 1949, even with the chaotic economy and the skyrocketing price of building materials, the one-story, 2400-seat brick and wood building was completed. Now with the new building the Sunday attendance rapidly increased and was soon filled to the capacity. A significant number of the newcomers were young Christians.

The Arrest of Watchman Nee

1952 On April 10, 1952, the law enforcement agents from the Security Bureau of the Northeast Part of China came to Shanghai. They went to Nee’s office (also his residence) on Jiangxi Road. He was asked to leave for Shenyang immediately to confess his financial problems. Nee’s wife Zhang Pinhui (Chang Pin-huei, Charity) and another deaconess (LJL) were at the scene.

Nee’s secretary GXY was in the building. He saw them lingering in Nee’s office about thirty minutes. Looking out the window he saw Nee being brought out of the building between two Security agents. Charity told GXY that they were taking him to the Police Station and then to Northeast China. “Charity was not so worried outwardly.” GXY recalled, “We did not think of it as an arrest. It was very common to take away capitalists to confess.” (Personal information: Brother GXY, Nee’s personal secretary) Nee was officially arrested on the train on the way to Shenyang. The SCA leaders kept silent. Because Nee did not attend church meetings, the congregation was unaware of his absence.

NOTE: There is still important material to record of a volatile nature that strongly impacted the church in Shanghai, but I have purposed in this timeline to focus on Nee's path of deviation from his original vision. I believe that leading ones should examine our true history. My efforts are toward that end. The content I am leaving out concerns the most devastating scenes of emotion and trial in the church life that I have heard of, which I and many others deem veritable and indeed a part of our true history. Brother Nee did have a big change in his vision which Lily Hsu and others have addressed, as did his co-workers in China in the aftermath of years of severe trials in Shanghai. I will share a little on the 1957 co-workers meetings.

1957 "From May 20 to June 5, 1957 the national Coworkers' Meetings were held at SCA. I and a few others were allowed to attend as visitors. The theme of these meetings was 'Confirming Our Faith'. Coworker Huang De-en described a touching scene during the first morning of the conference: *In May 1957, the Responsible Brothers and coworkers from various areas gathered at Nanyang Rd, including those from SCA. There were more than sixty attendees. The prayer meeting in the first morning of the first day was a meeting of confession, prostration before God, and seeking His mercy. Everybody was heart-broken with tears. I recall the prayer of Sister Lin Ni Guizhen (Brother Nee's second elder sister.) She prayed to God: "We always pray and ask, Lord, to purify Your church. Now we bow down under Your hand, receiving Your judgment, cleansing and seeking Your mercy . . ."* If we do not see the purity of God and His judgment, we could not understand the significance of our grief at that time."

"In their confessions they wept bitterly with repentance for covering of [a brother's] sins. During that meeting, two official documents were discussed, written, and forwarded to all of the Local Churches in China. The first document was *Holding Fast to Our Faith*. It was clearly and meticulously written, reassuring the fundamental faith, which were the viewpoints of the Local Church originated from Watchman Nee. **However, Nee's viewpoints after his resumption in 1948, on matters such as "authority," "delegated authority," and his plans of action were omitted.**"

"The regrets were expressed under the topic of 'Some Concepts of Previous Mistakes'.

1. Following a man or overly honoring a man more than the Bible leads to blind submission to man-made authority. We were trapped by those concepts and fell into wrong pitfall. God's name was ashamed and brothers and sisters were debilitated.

5. Overly emphasizing, stretching, and even taking advantage of Biblical truths resulted in doctrinal mistakes. These were not mistakes of God's Word, but the wrong interpretation of man, including:

A. As the servants in God's house, we realize that we are merely vessels in His hand and ministering the children of God; but not controlling them. Any kind of expression of authority in the church should never be without the leading of the Holy Spirit or beyond Biblical truth. Someone in the past, improperly emphasized the submission to authority, but ignored the relationship between authority and truth, leading to a man-made authority. A few people overstepped the authority of the Holy Spirit, with erroneous expressions such as: "If you are asked to use sand to cleanse the glass, you have to submit" or "If you are asked to plant a tree upside down, you have to listen." Those extremely erroneous speeches misled brothers and sisters away from "weigh carefully what is said" (1 Cor. 14:29) for holding onto the standard of the truth. Blind submission was then encouraged. We, as servants of God who had submitted to those concepts in the past are deeply regretful.

B. The children of God must “remain in God” according to the anointed doctrines of the Holy Spirit. (1 John ch. 2-4.) Therefore directing life apart from right or wrong issues is erroneous; and the relationship between knowledge and life is similar. Knowledge cannot substitute life; likewise life cannot blot out knowledge. It was wrongful in the past only to emphasize life, and ignore the standard of right and wrong, and knowledge...

...We must stand on the side of the holiness and righteousness of God, have the heart of God’s jealousy, and convict what God has convicted....”

And, they did.

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