

## The Jerusalem Council's Apostolic Decree (Acts 15)— Proof Text for Authority & Uniformity OR Blueprint for Diversity?

When the “founding father” of a Christian group passes away, it enters a new era. This juncture offers members a unique opportunity to re-evaluate their teachings and practices.<sup>1</sup> The Moravian Brethren are an historical example of such constructive re-examination. Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-60) was the central guiding figure in the Moravians’ recovery of the church-life and gospel outreach in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Under Zinzendorf’s leadership the Moravians established a vibrant church-life and the vision to bring Christ to all nations. Nevertheless, in Zinzendorf’s later years they tottered on the brink of bankruptcy and, due to his “blood & wounds theology,” they were labeled a heretical cult. Zinzendorf’s legacy was re-evaluated after his death in 1760. This strategic re-assessment saved the Moravian Church from a *rendezvous* with destiny on the radical cult fringe. Instead they became the model for the successful evangelization of the heathen, inspiring many during the “great century for missions.”

Over a decade has elapsed since Bro. Witness Lee completed his course on June 9, 1997. We believe it’s time the Lord’s recovery began a similar respectful re-examination. Watchman Nee proclaimed “the Bible is our unique standard.” Moreover, the local churches have long declared,<sup>2</sup> “All teachings, inspirations, and guidance which claim the Holy Spirit as their source must be checked by God’s revelation in His Word.” Yet, the local churches have largely abrogated their responsibility to undertake such a “check.” Thus a strategic re-evaluation is overdue. Applying this principle without bias would include the writings of LSM’s “blended brothers” and Bro. Witness Lee, whom they claim to represent. Witness Lee (1905-1997) was an outstanding Bible teacher. His prodigious output of publications from 70 years of Christian service testifies to his abilities as a Scripture expositor. Yet the volume of his writings presents a unique challenge—where to begin? Here we point out the necessity of distinguishing between different categories of writings—Bro. W. Lee’s biblical expositions and his polemical writings. To bring the underlying issues into focus we examine W. Lee’s and the “blending brothers’” treatment of the “Apostolic Decree” of Acts 15. This event has been used to argue all local churches should be identical and to underscore the doctrine of submission to God’s “deputy authority.”

### Acts 15—Precedent for the local church Uniformity?

The Jerusalem Council<sup>3</sup> (*circa* 49 AD) recorded in Acts chapter 15, with its “Apostolic Decree,” was precedent setting. On one hand it rejected circumcision as a condition for receiving Gentile believers (Acts 15:19). On the other, it imposed certain requirements upon them, e.g. abstaining from idol-sacrifices (15:29). This assembly established the biblical exemplar for over twenty Church Councils during the past 2,000 years of Christian history. These include the notable councils at Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD) which produced and revised the Nicene Creed. Other councils earned more dubious reputations, e.g. “the Robber council” at Ephesus (449 AD). The Acts 15 Council is important not only in history, but also in the Lord’s recovery. Watchman Nee emphasized the Jerusalem gathering’s significance, saying,<sup>4</sup> “God has specifically placed this unique conference in the Bible to be a pattern ... [Acts 15] is the pattern accepted by the church for the past 2,000 years.” Moreover, the Acts 15 Council has been proposed as a precedent for uniformity in the Lord’s recovery. It is alleged that,<sup>5</sup> “The one solution made at Jerusalem...became a decree for all the churches...to keep.” Some argue, based on this, all the churches ought to be identical; they label the idea local churches could be different as “erroneous.”<sup>6</sup> LSM’s “blended brothers” claim<sup>7</sup> “This word of resolution was not a word for just one church; it went out to many churches...[this resolution was for the Body of Christ. It was for all the churches](#). No church had the right to select what they wanted.” Based on the Acts 15 “apostolic decree,” they assert that all the local churches should be identical in speaking, practice and living.<sup>8</sup>

### Witness Lee—Bible Expositor and Polemicist

In examining these claims it is important to distinguish between Witness Lee’s biblical expositions and his polemical writings. The former are exemplified by W. Lee’s *Life-study* messages which unfold and apply Scripture in the light of God’s eternal economy. On other occasions, however, Witness Lee was responding to events and people, either external or internal to the Lord’s recovery. The former includes the publication of books such as *The Mind-benders* and *The God-Men*. The latter includes perceived threats<sup>9</sup> to Brother Lee’s leadership and critiques of his Taiwan “New Way” experiment in the

1980s. These factors color several *Elders' Training* books.<sup>10</sup> Due to human frailty, the danger of "going beyond what is written" (1 Cor. 4:6) is exacerbated in polemics where the speaker is reacting to people or events. The New Testament vindicates the Apostle Paul's polemical writings (e.g. Galatians) along with his non-polemic epistles (e.g. Romans) by including both in Holy Scripture. Both appear in the divine canon; we accept both as divinely inspired. Nevertheless we shouldn't merely extrapolate from the Apostle Paul's case to later Bible expositors. We accept Martin Luther's expositions on justification by faith. Yet we reject his polemical tirades against Jews as rampant anti-Semitism. On these issues the Bible charges believers to "prove all things, hold fast to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). This test should be applied to Witness Lee's writings, especially his polemics, as well as to all who claim to expound Scripture according to God's mind.

## Witness Lee Remixed

Unfortunately LSM's "blended brothers" don't distinguish between Bro. Lee's polemical speaking and his more balanced expositions of Scripture. Instead they treat all Witness Lee's writings as equally inerrant and uniformly infallible. Consider the "blended brothers'" practice of remixing<sup>11</sup> W. Lee's speaking. They routinely mine quotations from his writings and assemble selected quotes into outlines for LSM's "seven annual feasts." They triumphantly proclaim<sup>12</sup> 'these outlines are 100% Brother Lee's speaking.' Yet, they are the result of a "cut and paste" technique, juxtaposing diverse quotes, divorced from their original context, into what appears to be a coherent whole. Yet, the fact remains that, almost invariably, *Witness Lee never spoke all those points in that sequence or in that context!* Leaving aside obvious issues like misunderstanding, manipulation and misrepresentation, the validity of this process assumes that *all W. Lee's speaking is applicable for all time*, regardless of the original context. None of his speaking so used is regarded as situation-specific, person-specific, or time and context-dependent! Yet many controversial points in LSM's outlines, emphasized by the "blended brothers," originate in W. Lee's polemical writings. Here we examine the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). We ask--Is LSM's version of "Witness Lee remixed" consistent with Scripture and with his other writings?

## The Jerusalem Council's Apostolic Decree (Acts 15)

As a concrete example, consider the exposition of Acts 15 in the book,<sup>13</sup> "*The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today...*" As the title suggests, these messages were a rhetorical reaction to the (so-called) "rebellion" of the 1980s. Under the heading, "The One Solution Being the Decree for All the Churches," Witness Lee writes,<sup>14</sup>

"The one solution made at Jerusalem for the problem of circumcision became a decree for all the churches, both Jewish and Gentile, to keep (Acts 15:1-31). Hence, in relation to the matter of circumcision, all the churches should be the same. After the issuing of such a decree, it would have been wrong to allow the Jewish churches to keep the practice of circumcision while permitting the Gentile churches not to observe it....The one solution regarding the problem of circumcision was good for all the churches, making all the churches the same."

Even beginning Bible-students will recognize these statements contradict a straight-forward reading of the Acts 15 record. It's not rocket science! This part of Acts is not the "high peak of the divine revelation"! The Jerusalem decree was not "for all the churches, both Jewish and Gentile, to keep." It was addressed to "the brothers...*who are of the Gentiles*" (15:23). At issue were the conditions required of Gentile believers; circumcision was rejected, yet Jewish dietary restrictions were enjoined. The question of circumcising Jewish believers' sons was not addressed,<sup>15</sup> hence it surfaced in Acts 21. It is clearly counter-factual to assert "The one solution made at Jerusalem...became a decree *for all the churches, both Jewish and Gentile*, to keep." Jewish churches were unaffected by the Jerusalem decree, falling outside its scope. Moreover, the decree was not global in application; it was addressed to a geographically limited area—"the brothers throughout Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are of the Gentiles" (15:23). These were the initial Gentile churches raised up by Paul. The Jerusalem letter was not addressed to "all the churches, both Jewish and Gentile." Moreover, the "one solution" at Jerusalem did not "make all the churches the same." It does not prove churches should be identical.<sup>16</sup> On the contrary, it enshrined a double-standard—circumcision was not required of Gentile believers, but still practiced by Jewish-believers. The curious statement above says,<sup>17</sup> "it would have been wrong to allow the Jewish churches to keep the practice of circumcision while permitting the Gentile churches not to observe it." Yet, that is exactly what happened! In his *Life-study of Acts*, W. Lee acknowledges the<sup>18</sup> "Jewish believers at the time of James were still practicing and keeping the Old Testament law." Moreover, he describes James' concept, saying<sup>19</sup> "James, continued to think that it would be better for

the Jewish believers to practice the...Old Testament and to keep the law. James seemed to say, 'The Gentiles do not need to keep the law or to be circumcised. But we [Christian] Jews should practice circumcision and keep the law.'" That is a two-tier system, a double standard. The Jerusalem decree enshrined James' concept and (contrary to the polemic quoted above) did not have the effect of "making all the churches the same." Elsewhere, W. Lee asserts<sup>20</sup> "I have the full assurance that in the early days the churches in Judea *were quite different* from the churches in the Gentile world." Personally, I find it impossible to reconcile W. Lee's latter statements with the quote above from "[The Intrinsic Problem...](#)" The contradiction, I believe, arises because one is a polemic against certain brothers' views; the other an exposition of Scripture. Polemical writings risk "pushing the envelope" beyond the Bible in an attempt to "prove" a point. Checked against Scripture, in my estimation, W. Lee's rebuttal fails the test. Given its counter-factual claims, I feel it's unfortunate LSM ever published this polemic; it does nothing to enhance W. Lee's reputation as a Bible teacher. Yet LSM's "blended brothers" elaborate upon it.

### Acts 15—Proof Text for Uniformity OR Blueprint for Diversity?

When selecting which writings on Acts 15 to include in their "Witness Lee Remix"—the expositional or polemical—LSM's "blended brothers" opted for the latter. Their proof text for the "universal one accord of the Body" is the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council interpreted according to W. Lee's polemic. The council's "Apostolic Decree" declared, 'It seemed good to us, having become of one accord...' (15:25) to impose certain restrictions on Gentile believers (e.g. abstaining from idol-sacrifices, 15:29). Based on this, Benson Phillips says,<sup>21</sup> "*us* here refers to the apostles, the elders and the whole church in Jerusalem. Who should be in one accord?...all the churches must be in one accord. The whole kingdom of God should be in one accord. Do not say that you are standing against uniformity...Forget about uniformity." Another "blended brother" reiterates W. Lee's polemic, declaring<sup>22</sup> "The one solution made in Jerusalem...became a decree for all the churches...to keep." He also asserts<sup>23</sup> "This word of resolution was not a word for just one church; it went out to many churches...[this resolution was for the Body of Christ. It was for all the churches.](#) No church had the right to select what they wanted." According to this view, the Jerusalem decree is binding on all churches throughout the Church age.

However, closer investigation reveals that Acts 15 is a "weak reed" on which to base a doctrine of the universal one accord of all local churches, uniform in all essential aspects. First, the "blended brothers" concede that (despite accepting the non-requirement of circumcision) Paul<sup>24</sup> "was not very pleased with the decision made in Jerusalem." So, was this genuine one accord, or merely a pragmatic compromise? Second, although Paul delivered the decree to the Galatian churches (Acts 16:4,) it is never mentioned in Paul's ministry or epistles. Significantly Paul's epistle to Galatians<sup>25</sup> makes no reference to the Jerusalem judgment when addressing this issue. Evidently, once Paul delivered the decree to the churches explicitly named in the Jerusalem accord, he chose to conveniently ignore it. New Testament scholars suggest<sup>26</sup> "Paul imposed the apostolic decree of Acts 15 on Gentile congregations only as far west as Galatia." In terms of churches subsequently raised up by Paul, Professor F. F. Bruce concludes,<sup>27</sup> "it is...certain in the light of Paul's writings, that Paul did not impose [the Jerusalem decree] on his own churches." Third, whenever Paul spoke of eating idol-sacrifices, (as F. F. Bruce says<sup>28</sup>) "it is noteworthy that...[he never \[appealed\] to the apostolic decree](#)"—prohibiting such eating (Acts 15:20, 29). On the contrary, directly contravening the decree, Paul gave the Corinthians the liberty<sup>29</sup> to "eat everything sold in the meat market," no questions asked (1 Cor. 10:25-30). Likewise, Paul told the Romans, "one believes he may eat all things [including meat from idol-sacrifices,]...Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14:2-5) Paul gave individual believers liberty<sup>30</sup> before the Lord in this matter, instead of mandating the "Apostolic Decree." For Paul, Christian liberty trumped the legality embodied in the Acts-15 decree.

### All Local Churches identical in Custom & Practice?

Did the "one solution" decided in Jerusalem result in "all the local churches being the same" in custom and practice? Does it provide a precedent for arguing all the churches should be identical?<sup>31</sup> New Testament scholars answer, "No!" The Jewish churches still observed Moses' law (as W. Lee acknowledges<sup>32</sup>). Moreover, in Paul's era, the Gentile churches had two distinct teachings and practices—while some churches probably applied the Jerusalem decree (Antioch, Syria, Cilicia & Galatia?) only eating kosher meat,<sup>26</sup> it is clear that other churches under Paul's ministry (e.g. Corinth) exercised greater liberty.<sup>27</sup> To the extent they followed Paul's teaching, the "western churches" (Rome, Corinth etc.) practiced more liberty than "eastern churches" (e.g. Galatia, Antioch) which explicitly fell

within the provisions of the Acts 15 decree.<sup>33</sup> On this issue the practice of various churches differed significantly; they were not the same; some were under the legality, others had liberty. Contrary to W. Lee's and the "blended brothers'" assertion,<sup>34</sup> all the churches did not "keep the one solution made in Jerusalem"! By soft-peddling these differences, they "paper over the cracks" to hide this underlying disparity regarding (what were in that era) fundamental issues. Given these marked differences, we ask—where is the "universal one accord of the whole Body," making all the churches the same? Certainly, there was no "universal one accord" in applying the Jerusalem decree. Rather than providing a basis for a "universal one accord" with uniformity in local-church practices, **Acts 15 does the opposite—it establishes a precedent for diversity!** Instead of setting the precedent that all the original local churches were identical, "the same in their custom and practice," the opposite—variety—has been established! Paul did not impose the Jerusalem decree on the churches he founded after Acts 15. In fact, his teaching explicitly contradicted its provisions. We conclude the characterization of the Acts 15 decision as a universal<sup>35</sup> "**resolution...for the Body of Christ...for all the churches**" is an invention, a fiction, lacking adequate biblical foundation. Moreover, as we noted, Paul did not impose the decree; rather, by ignoring it, he *de facto* rejected the Jerusalem accord as a legalistic attempt to override Christian liberty. **Acts 15 is not a proof text for uniformity among local churches; rather, it demonstrates one accord and uniformity cannot be legislated by decree.** Yet, isn't this the goal of the "blended brothers'" recent decrees regarding 'one publication' (June, 2005) and quarantine (Oct., 2006)? Doesn't Paul's response provide a scriptural precedent for ignoring LSM's legalistic decrees? Watchman Nee denounced the use of decrees, saying,<sup>36</sup> "We must never have any decrees..."

### **Paul's Divine Revelation vs. James' Deputy Authority**

Some seek to apply the doctrine of God's "deputy authority" to Acts 15. They refer to<sup>37</sup> "the principles set forth in Acts 15 regarding maintaining the proper order in the Body...[and] respect for the Lord's leadership of His church exercised through the ones in authority." They summarize Acts 15, saying, "After much discussion took place, those brothers with more spiritual stature expressed their opinion. When the Lord's leading through the common feeling among **the brothers bearing the highest authority** in the work became evident, a decision was reached." In their view, the "highest authority" in Acts 15 was James (the Lord's half-brother); presently they claim LSM's "blending brothers" are the "highest authority," deserving submission to their direction in matters such as "one publication" and quarantine.

Bro. W. Lee also relates the concept of authority and submission to Acts 15. He says,<sup>38</sup> "In the end, James, who was the authority at that time...stood up and stated the way they should proceed. Immediately after James stood up and spoke, no one had anything more to say. This is the principle of authority." This doctrine dictates that the decision of God's "deputy authority" should be submissively obeyed regardless of whether it matches the divine revelation or not. Hence W. Lee says,<sup>39</sup> "Everyone has to learn to have no arguments and to obey. **The leading ones may make wrong decisions and wrong moves.** But if everyone would take this way...there will still be the blessing. Everyone is still fully one and in harmony. **All wrong decisions and wrong moves can easily be adjusted...**". This reasoning suggests, in the event of conflict, the principles of oneness and submission to authority trump the divine revelation and the Lord's leading. In Acts 15, James represents God's "deputy authority," while Paul epitomizes the New Testament revelation. Applying this teaching, the Apostle Paul should have submitted to James as the highest authority and imposed the Jerusalem decree on all the Gentile churches. He should have implemented James' "wrong decision," trusting God to rectify matters. **Yet this is not what we see!** Paul did not simply submit to James' "wrong decision." On the contrary, New Testament scholars conclude<sup>40</sup> "it is... certain in the light of Paul's writings, that *Paul did not impose* [the decree] on his own churches." Hence, for Paul, Christian liberty overrode "submission to the highest authority." For him, obeying the divine revelation (Acts 26:19) trumped obedience to God's "deputy authority," in the form of James' decree. But, isn't this consistent with the apostles' declaration to the Sanhedrin—"We ought to obey God, rather than man" (Acts 4:19; 6:40-42)? The "highest authority" is surely God Himself. We agree there is the principle of "deputy authority" in the Bible. However, this teaching has its checks and balances in Scripture. Paul's handling of the Jerusalem decree, strategically ignoring it and "teaching differently" from it (e.g. concerning idol-sacrifices in Corinthians & Romans) exemplifies the limits of the "deputy authority" doctrine. In this respect, Paul is not an exception, or a "dissident," a rebel; Rather he is our pattern, charging us "be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1).

## Paul, the Minister of the Age vs. James, God's Deputy Authority—who should submit?

Those espousing the twin doctrines of God's deputy authority and the "Minister of the Age" are vulnerable to the charge of self-contradiction. Under the "deputy authority" teaching, the Apostle Paul should have submitted to James as the "highest authority" at that time. Some quote W. Nee with approval,<sup>41</sup> "Acts 15 records a big conference...James made the decision. There was a lining up even among the elders and apostles. Paul said that he was the least among the apostles." According to this view, in "lining up," as "the least among the apostles," **Paul, should have submitted to James**. On the other hand, Paul is designated the unique "Minister of the Age," the "master-builder" supervising God's building work. Hence, Bob Danker declares,<sup>42</sup> "the situation in the first century was not satisfactory" because "God's way is to have all His people serving Him...under the supervision of one master builder"—Paul. This includes the apostles, Peter and James, as Bob Danker explicitly states,<sup>43</sup> "Peter and James should have joined themselves to Paul's company and worked together with Paul under the vision the Lord had given him...All the workers...should have served together with Paul in God's move at that time." Under this doctrine, **James should have submitted to Paul**, working "under the supervision of one master builder." Clearly the two doctrines have opposite implications—Paul submitting to James and vice versa. They cannot be reconciled without mental and semantic gymnastics of Olympic proportions. Yet, LSM's "blended brothers" are on record espousing both teachings and endorsing both their contradictory implications! They are sending mixed messages. This causes us to ask—who should have submitted to whom?

## Conclusion

It is 30 years since the local churches declared,<sup>44</sup> "All teachings...which claim the Holy Spirit as their source must be checked by God's revelation in His Word." Sadly this maxim was seldom applied. As a result "the wheat has not been separated from the chaff"; cultural concepts have been confused with biblical precepts. The Bible has rarely functioned as "our unique standard" (W. Nee). Both the saints and local churches have abrogated their responsibility to evaluate all ministry against the canon of Scripture. It seems this neglect was a response to the rich revelations issuing from Brother Witness Lee's ministry, especially his expositions of Scripture. Many saints fondly remember the *Life-study* trainings (e.g. Hebrews) as life-changing events. The respect accorded Witness Lee, as a minister of God's Word, gave him a status without peer within the recovery. As a result, rather than the biblical pattern of many ministers<sup>45</sup> (1 Cor. 12:5; 2 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 4:11), he emerged as the sole minister. Instead of the Scripture, "we have this ministry" (2 Cor. 4:1), the *de facto* situation was "I have this ministry." Judged against the New Testament, this abnormal situation, lacking checks and balances, was fraught with risk.<sup>46</sup> Human sentiments might be accepted as scriptural revelations; personal polemics as biblical teachings.

The situation has exacerbated during the decade since Bro. Witness Lee's passing. His status has been relentlessly elevated. As the<sup>47</sup> "Minister of the Age," his writings are the "Interpreted Word," virtually infallible and inerrant, equal to (if not greater than) the Bible.<sup>48</sup> His personal ministry is equated with the entire New Testament ministry.<sup>49</sup> Extra-biblical teachings<sup>50</sup> have proliferated. Many of these doctrines can be traced back to Witness Lee's own polemical writings. Instead of a healthy re-examination of W. Lee's ministry in the light of Scripture, LSM's version of "Witness Lee Remixed" emphasizes these polemical, extra-biblical elements. We have illustrated this, using the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) as a case study. In his polemical writings, W. Lee, used this incident to argue local churches should be identical, the same in custom and practice. LSM's "blended brothers" have extrapolated these notions further, calling for a<sup>51</sup> "universal one accord." Yet, these assertions are contradicted by a straightforward reading of Scripture and by New Testament scholars. Rather than supporting uniformity, the Acts 15 decree and Paul's response to it, provides a precedent for diversity among local churches. Moreover, the validity of the doctrine of submission to God's deputy authority (irrespective of right or wrong) is called into question. Today the urgent need is for a long-overdue, respectful re-evaluation of the recovery's teachings and practices in the light of Scripture. Under their "One Publication decree," LSM claims the exclusive right to conduct a<sup>52</sup> "discerning check." This usurps the saints' "divine right" to discern (1 Thess. 5:21,) relying on the Anointing (1 John 2:27). Isn't it time the saints and churches began their own discerning check?

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NOTES:

1. For an extended treatment of this theme, see my, "After the Founding Fathers—Historical Case Studies: Zinzendorf & James Taylor" available at:  
[http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Case%20Studies/Founding\\_Fathers\\_After\\_Their\\_Passing.pdf](http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Case%20Studies/Founding_Fathers_After_Their_Passing.pdf)
2. *Beliefs & Practices of the local churches*, p.
3. W. Lee takes issue with the designation "Council," saying "Some think that the conference in Acts 15 was the first church council. This is a mistaken understanding. Here we do not have a council but a gathering for fellowship, with the Holy Spirit as the One presiding." (W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts* p. 356) The NT does not use the terms "council" or "conference" to describe the assembly in Acts 15. However, the description of Acts 15 as merely "a gathering for fellowship," seems inadequate since a definitive statement in the form of "a decree" was issued.
4. W. Nee, *Church Affairs*, pp. 150-1
5. Under the heading, "The One Solution Being the Decree for All the Churches," W. Lee says, "**The one solution made at Jerusalem for the problem of circumcision became a decree for all the churches**, both Jewish and Gentile, **to keep** (Acts 15:1-31). Hence, in relation to the matter of circumcision, all the churches should be the same..." [W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, pp. 34, emphasis added] This is quoted and elaborated by "blended brother 'DL'" in *The Ministry*, vol. 7, No. 6, (August, 2003) pp. 115-6
6. The Acts-15 decision is described as "a solution that could satisfy all the churches and keep the one accord among the churches." [W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, p. 29]. It is asserted that "The one solution regarding the problem of circumcision was good for all the churches, **making all the churches the same.**" [W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, pp. 34, emphasis added] In this context, Acts 15 forms one point among 8 points presented as "The Base of the Practice of the Proper One Accord in the Church" [W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem...pp. 29-35*] The central thesis is that all the local churches should "be in one accord," and should be the same/identical in all respects, including teachings, customs and practices (excluding only incidental "business affairs" and methods of baptism etc.) The same point appears in Elders' Training Book 7 (1986 pp. 56-9) under the heading "The solution made in Jerusalem being the decree for all the churches to keep." This is one of 4 points (p. 51) substantiating the chapter/message title: "THE NEED OF ALL THE CHURCHES TO BE IDENTICAL." The concluding paragraph proclaims: "From all the verses we have covered in this chapter, there is no hint left in the Bible that anyone can find to justify **the erroneous teaching that the local churches could be different from one another...The need in the Lord's recovery today is for all the churches to be identical.**" [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training Book 7, 1986, p. 61]
7. DL *The Ministry*, vol. 7, No. 6, (August, 2003) p. 116
8. Benson Phillips says, based upon Acts 15, "The one accord the Lord wants to gain is a one accord that is with the whole Body, and I would say, the whole recovery...not only all the saints but even all the churches must be in one accord. The whole kingdom of God should be in one accord. Every believer should be in **one accord with one mind, one will, one intention.**" [BP, *The Ministry*, vol. 7, No. 6, (August, 2003) p. 37, emphasis added] He continues by saying, "**The one accord will bring in the same trumpeting, the speaking of the same word. It will bring the churches into the same practice**, causing all the believers to live the same kind of life. Everything will end up in one accord. This is what the Lord wants to gain in His recovery today." [BP, *The Ministry*, vol. 7, No. 6, (August, 2003) p. 38, emphasis added]. For more on this, see my: "PUSHING THE ENVELOPE"—LSM's ONE ACCORD vs. THE BIBLE's" available at  
[http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Truth/Pushing\\_The\\_Envelope\\_One\\_Accord.pdf](http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Truth/Pushing_The_Envelope_One_Accord.pdf)
9. See W. Lee's statement, "Some may feel...they do not want to see that I am the unique leader to control the entire recovery." [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training Book 7, p. 127].
10. W. Lee said, concerning the motivation for the "elders' trainings," "**The negative things I heard caused me to call the elders' training** in February of 1984, in September of 1985, and also caused me to call this third one. Although I feel that my toleration has to be terminated, I want to do it in the Body principle." [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training Book 7, p. 58, emphasis added] He also said, "I called for elders' trainings in 1984 and 1985 in urgency... **I called these gatherings**, truthfully speaking, **not for all of you but for some of you**. In these two elders' trainings every message was given for you. **I also called this elders' training for certain dear brothers** for whom I am greatly concerned." [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training Book 7, p. 53] Based upon W. Lee's own word the messages in the elders' trainings were not addressed to all the elders, but only some, "for certain dear brothers." There are obvious difficulties when person-specific messages are applied to a wider circle.
11. The term "remix" is usually employed in reference to music--"To rearrange or radically alter a particular piece of music." However, it is now applied in a wider context, including literature.
12. We say, "they triumphantly proclaim 'these outlines are 100% Brother Lee's speaking.'" We should perhaps add "(or words to that effect)." This thought is conveyed, for example, in the introduction to the

- Crystallization-study at the LSM Winter Training, 1997, immediately after W. Lee's passing. The editors' affirm, "The subject of this training was originally chosen by Bro. Lee and the outlines were prepared in fellowship with him. **They represent the utterances, the thoughts, and the crystals from various portions of Brother Lee's ministry.**" [The Ministry, vol. 2, No. 4, (April 1998) p. 3] Bro. RK, in his speaking, said, "**We may be assured that they represent the utterances, the thoughts, and the crystals from various portions of Brother Lee's ministry.**" [The Ministry, vol. 2, No. 4, (April 1998) p. 20] Later outlines were not "prepared in fellowship with him (W. Lee)." Nevertheless this understanding about the LSM outlines for the "seven annual feasts" persists.
13. This polemical book is "compiled from messages given in the elders' meetings held in Anaheim, CA on March 8-10, 1990" [W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, Preface] These messages were clearly coloured by events which transpired a year or more previous. W. Lee says, "In his withdrawal from the eldership of the Church in Anaheim on March 19, 1989, Brother John Ingalls charged us with a number of accusations...Hence I have the burden to present...some truths that will blow away the cloud...These practical truths are versus some of John's dissenting accusations." [W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery...*, p. 69]
  14. W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, p. 34 The same point related to Acts 15 appears in Elders' Training Book 7 (1986 pp. 56-9) under the heading "The solution made in Jerusalem being the decree for all the churches to keep." This is one of 4 points (p. 51) substantiating the chapter/message title: "THE NEED OF ALL THE CHURCHES TO BE IDENTICAL." [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training Book 7, 1986]. Here we focus on *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery*, where the presentation is more concise.
  15. Acts 21:21, 25 make it clear that on Paul's final visit to Jerusalem, according to James and the Jerusalem leaders, the question of the Gentile believers had been settled previously in Acts 15 (see Acts 21:25). Nevertheless, the question of circumcising the sons of Jewish believers was now at issue. The Jerusalem believers had been "informed that Paul was teaching all the Jews throughout the nations apostasy from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs." (Acts 21:21) Concerning this W. Lee says the believing Jews' accusations against Paul "were correct as to the facts" [W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, p. 489]. He continues by saying, "I believe that Paul did teach that it was no longer necessary to practice circumcision." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, p. 490] Paul's teaching contradicted Jerusalem's position on this issue relating to Jewish believers.
  16. The same point, related to Acts 15, appears in Elders' Training, Book 7 (1986 pp. 56-9) under the heading "The solution made in Jerusalem being the decree for all the churches to keep." This is one of 4 points (p. 51) presented to substantiate "**THE NEED OF ALL THE CHURCHES TO BE IDENTICAL**," (the chapter/message title). [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training Book 7, 1986].
  17. Elsewhere, W. Lee makes a similar statement, declaring the apostolic decree was "a decision which covered not only the Jewish believers but also the Gentile believers. The decision in Acts 15 was not made merely by the Jewish region or merely by the Gentile region. Actually, it was a decision made above the regions and beyond the regions. **The decision made covered all the churches, whether Jewish or Gentile. This does not mean that the churches in Judea can keep the law and the churches in the Gentile world do not need to keep the law.**" [emphasis added] (W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 29-30) Yet in the Life-study of Acts, W. Lee acknowledges that the churches in Judea did indeed keep the law!(see next note.
  18. This quotation appears twice in the Life-study, W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, p. 365 & pp. 488-9 Church historians indicate that some Jewish Christians continued to practice according to the OT law well into the second century. For example Chadwick points out that "Justin Martyr in the second century could regard Jewish believers as in order if they kept traditional Jewish customs, but that was not the unanimous view among Gentile members of the Church." [Henry Chadwick, *East & West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: from the Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence*, Oxford Univ. Press, p. 8]
  19. W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, p. 505. He goes on to say, "If James' concept had been widely accepted in Asia Minor and Europe, how could there have been one Body for Christ in a practical way? Would there be two kinds of churches—a Judaic church for the Jewish believers and a Gentile church for the Gentile believers? Such a thing is utterly impossible." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, p. 506]. In this context, I understand "two kinds of churches" to mean two kinds of **local** churches in a city. Evidently W. Lee acknowledged here that James' solution introduced at the Jerusalem conference leads to 2 different sets of practices.
  20. W. Lee, *The Life & Way for the Practice of the Church Life*, p. 119, emphasis added
  21. BP, *The Ministry*, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 37 Brother Benson bases his argument on Acts 15, saying "We are not talking about merely a one accord locally. Surely we should have one accord locally in every church. **But let us look at one portion of the Word. Acts 15** says 'It then seemed good to the apostles and the elders with the whole church to choose men' (v. 22) and to write a letter. They began this letter by saying 'It seemed good to us' (v. 25). The word *us* here refers to the apostles, the elders and the whole church in Jerusalem. 'It seemed good to us, having become of **one accord**...' Who should be in one accord?...The one accord the Lord wants to gain is a one accord that is with the whole Body, and I would say, the whole recovery....not only all the saints but even all the churches must be in one accord. The whole kingdom of God

- should be in one accord. Every believer should be in one accord with one mind, one will and one intention. Do not say that you are standing against uniformity and that you cannot agree with such a thing. Forget about uniformity; we do not have uniformity. We are talking about something very organic." (BP., The Ministry, v. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 37)
22. DL., (Dave Lutz? Dan Leslie?) The Ministry, vol. 7, no. 6 (Aug. 2003) p. 115. The quote in context says, "The one solution made in Jerusalem for the problem of circumcision became a decree for all the churches, both Jewish and Gentile, to keep." This is to substantiate the point that "**The New Testament reveals that not only all the saints but even all the churches must be in one accord.**" [DL., The Ministry, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 110] The original point, made by W. Lee, appears in W. Lee, The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, p. 34
  23. DL., The Ministry, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 116
  24. This echoes W. Lee's statement "Actually, I do not believe that the conclusion was satisfactory to Paul." (W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery, p. 37) The quote in the text is from AY., The Ministry, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 61. Andrew Yu points out that, after the Jerusalem council, when Paul "wrote the book of 1 Corinthians...he speaks of the eating of things sacrificed to idols (8:4-13) **in a very ambivalent way. He was not pleased with the decision made in Jerusalem.** He did however go along with it..." (p. 61) What does AY mean by saying "[Paul] did however go along with it [Jerusalem's decision]..."? He seems to soft-pedal the contradiction between Paul's treatment of this topic and the Acts 15 decree. Paul's teaching concerning idol-sacrifices in 1 Cor. **directly contradicts** the Acts 15 decree's provisions on this topic! Moreover, AY says, concerning Romans, "While in Corinth, he [Paul] wrote the book of Romans, where again, **he was not that strong about abstaining from food** that is unclean (14:14)" (p. 61.) Again, this under-statement soft-pedals the contradiction. Significantly, Paul did not impose the Acts-15 decree on the Roman believers; He said, "One believes **he may eat all things** [including (possibly) the residual meat from idol-sacrifices,] but he who is weak eats vegetables...Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:2-5) Paul gives the individual believers the liberty before the Lord in this matter, rather than mandating the provisions of the "apostolic decree." For the Apostle Paul, Christian liberty trumped the legality of the Jerusalem decree. Brother Andrew Yu concedes that Paul did not insist upon the practice dictated by the Jerusalem decree; Based on this, we ask--did Paul practice 'one accord' or not? Did he feel bound by a decision arrived at in Jerusalem through 'one accord'? Was there 'one accord' **in the application** of the Jerusalem decree? I think not! **There was no 'universal one accord'** in the application of this decision.
  25. The Recovery version dates Paul's writing of Galatians **after Acts 15**. The Jerusalem council (in Acts 15) is dated by most scholars around AD 49. Paul's epistle to the Galatians is dated by the RcV. approx. AD 54 "during Paul's second ministry journey, after travelling through Galatia and arriving in Corinth (Acts 18:1,11)" [RcV. introductory notes to Galatians]. Regardless of the exact dates, the attribution of the "time of writing," by the RcV. "during Paul's second ministry journey" makes his epistle to the Galatians **subsequent** to the Jerusalem accord (Acts 15.) Assuming the RcV. is correct, **the absence of any reference to the Jerusalem decree in Galatians is highly significant** since Galatians (chp. 2) records the confrontation between Paul & Peter which centred on Gentile-Jewish eating practices, a topic explicitly addressed in the Jerusalem decree. Why then is the Jerusalem accord not mentioned in Galatians? Clearly, (while accepting the decision not to require circumcision of Gentile believers) Paul did not endorse the provisions contained in the decree by adding the weight of his apostolic writing to the council's declaration.
  26. Hemer cited in Steven J. Friesen, The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 88, No. 3 (July, 1995), pp. 291-314. W. Lee observes: "On the one hand, the believers in Antioch rejoiced because it was not necessary for them to be circumcised. On the other hand, **they still had to observe certain requirements of the law....**The solution, therefore, was actually a compromise." [W. Lee, Life-study of Acts, p. 366, emphasis added]
  27. F. F. Bruce, Peter, Stephen, James & John: Studies in Non-Pauline Christianity, p. 93
  28. Professor F. F. Bruce comments that "**It is noteworthy that** when, in later years, [Paul] was asked to give a ruling on this matter, he appealed to first principles and **never to the apostolic decree.**" [F. F. Bruce, PAUL: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI. 1977, p. 187] We concur with Hemer's view "that Paul imposed the **apostolic decree of Acts 15** on Gentile congregations only as far west as Galatia." [Hemer cited in Steven J. Friesen, The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 88, No. 3 (July, 1995), pp. 291-314]
  29. In 1 Cor. 8:8, Paul said, "But food does not commend us to God...nor **if we eat** do we abound." The RcV footnote tells us, "eating things sacrificed to idols cannot cause us to be full or excelling in any respect before God" [fn. 8<sup>1</sup>]. The point is that the Apostle Paul did not condemn eating idol-sacrifices *per se* (something the Jerusalem decree condemns). Paul only condemns the lack of consideration for weaker brothers—"But, beware lest somehow this right of yours become a stumbling block to the weak ones" (1 Cor. 8:9.) The unavoidable conclusion is that **Paul's teaching on this topic contradicts the provisions of the Jerusalem decree.**
  30. Professor James Dunn says, Paul's counsel "was that 'each should be fully convinced in his own mind' (Rom. 14:5) Again, clearly implied is **the right before God to decide what is appropriate conduct for oneself**, even in regard to some cherished but controverted traditions...Paul also clearly accepted the inevitable corollary...that two believers could have contrasting or even opposing convictions regarding appropriate

- conduct, and **both** be acceptable to God." [James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Eerdmans Grand Rapids, MI, 1998, p. 687]
31. The point that "The solution made in Jerusalem being the decree for all the churches to keep" is one of 4 points (p. 51) substantiating the chapter/message title: "THE NEED OF ALL THE CHURCHES TO BE IDENTICAL," in W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training, Book 7, 1986, pp. 56-9. The concluding paragraph proclaims: "From all the verses we have covered in this chapter, there is no hint left in the Bible that anyone can find to justify **the erroneous teaching that the local churches could be different from one another...The need in the Lord's recovery today is for all the churches to be identical.**" [W. Lee, *One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Elders' Training Book 7, 1986, p. 61]
  32. W. Lee says, "James 2:8-11 indicates that **the Jewish believers at the time of James were still practicing and keeping the Old Testament law**. This corresponds to the word in Acts 21:20 spoken by James and the elders in Jerusalem to Paul." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, p. 365 & pp. 488-9]. Also "The word in [Acts] 21:20 about thousands of believing Jews being zealous for the law indicates how **the Jewish believers in Jerusalem still kept the law of Moses, still remained in the OT dispensation**, and still were strongly under the Judaic influence, mixing God's NT economy with the out-of-date economy of the OT." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, pp. 487-8] He also says, "I have the full assurance that in the early days **the churches in Judea were quite different from the churches in the Gentile world.**" [W. Lee, *The Life & Way for the Practice of the Church Life*, p. 119, emphasis added]
  33. W. Lee concurs related to Antioch observing: "On the one hand, the believers in Antioch rejoiced because it was not necessary for them to be circumcised. On the other hand, **they still had to observe certain requirements of the law....**The solution, therefore, was actually a compromise." [W. Lee, *Life-study of Acts*, p. 366, emphasis added]
  34. DL., (Dave Lutz? Dan Leslie?) *The Ministry*, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 115 and W. Lee, *The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, p. 34
  35. DL., (Dave Lutz? Dan Leslie?) *The Ministry*, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 116 The universal Body of Christ includes all believers (and all local churches) around the globe and throughout the age of grace. By definition therefore a "universal one accord" should include all local churches throughout the age of grace. Why then are local churches (and Gentile believers) today exempt from keeping the decision of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15? If they are exempt, it is obviously not a "universal one accord." I also take issue with DL's assertion that "Paul's way was to consider all the churches to be the same, to be **parts of the one Body of Christ.**" [DL., *The Ministry*, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 114] There is no scripture which says that a local church is merely a **part** of Christ's Body. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthian believers "Now **you are Christ's Body...**" (1 Cor. 12:27)
  36. The quote, in context reads: "**We must never have any decrees**, whether they are creeds, constitutions, rules, charters, or ordinances outside the Bible, no matter how scriptural they may appear. Otherwise, we will become a sect right away...If we institute anything outside the Bible, no matter how scriptural it may appear, we are causing others to despise the Bible and turning their attention to the instituted ordinances. In this way, those who are 'of our group' must abide by the teachings of these ordinances..." [W. Nee, *Collected Works*, vol. 7, pp. 1116-7]
  37. This quote and others in this paragraph are from an article entitled: "An Application of and Deviation from the Pattern in Acts 15" posted on the "AFaithfulWord.org" website operated by the LSM-affiliate DCP [hereafter AFW.org].
  38. W. Lee, *The Elders' Management of the Church*, p. 124. For the sake of brevity here we do not examine Watchman Nee's teaching regarding deputy authority. It deserves separate treatment.
  39. W. Lee, *The Elders' Management of the Church*, p. 127 Watchman Nee makes a similar point: "**Some may say, 'What happens if the authority makes mistakes?'** If God dares to trust those who are entrusted as authorities, then we should dare to submit. **Whether or not the authority makes mistakes has nothing to do with us. In other words, whether the deputy authority is right or wrong is a matter for which he has to be responsible directly before the Lord.** Those who submit to authority need only to submit absolutely. **Even if they make a mistake through submission, the Lord will not reckon that as sin. The Lord will hold the deputy authority responsible for that sin.** To disobey is to rebel. For this the submitting one has to be responsible before God. For this reason there is no human element involved in submission. If we are only submitting to a person, the meaning of authority is lost. Moreover, since God has already set up His deputy authority, He must maintain this authority. Whether or not others are right is their business. Whether or not I am right is my business. Everyone has to be responsible to the Lord for himself." [W. Nee, *Authority and Submission*, chp. 7]
  40. F. F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James & John: Studies in Non-Pauline Christianity*, p. 93, emphasis added
  41. The quote in context reads: "Once you touch authority, you will see God's authority wherever you go. The first question you should ask is to whom you should submit and to whose word you should listen. A Christian should have two kinds of feelings: one is the feeling of sin, and the other is the feeling of authority. When two brothers are together discussing or considering ideas, both can speak. But **when the time of decision comes, one makes the judgment.** Acts 15 records a big conference. Everyone, whether old or young, was free to rise up to speak. Every brother could speak. Later **Peter and Paul spoke. Then James made the**

- decision. Peter and Paul gave the facts; James made the decision. There was a lining up even among the elders and apostles.** Paul said that he was the least among the apostles (1 Cor. 15:9). There is even a distinction between great and small among the apostles. This is not a matter of someone lining us up. Rather, it involves knowing our proper position. This is the most beautiful testimony and the most wonderful picture. This makes Satan tremble, and this will bring down his kingdom. When we all take the way of submission, God will judge the world." [W. Nee, *Authority and Submission*, chp. 7, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 47, p. 162 [emphasis added] Quoted in "An Application of and Deviation from the Pattern in Acts 15" on AFW.org. Note that Watchman Nee is not vulnerable to the charge of contradiction here, since he did not hold the unique "Minister of the Age" teaching. On this, see my, "One, Unique "Minister of the Age"?—What Did Watchman Nee Teach?" available at: <http://www.concernedbrothers.com/MA/Minister%20Of%20The%20Age.pdf>
42. Bob Danker "On the Minister of the Age and the Wise Master Builder" on AFW.org. This material has been printed in book form with the same title as part of the LSM-DCP "Attack Pack" of 28 booklets. [Series Three, Book 2, p. 18] Recent speaking by the "blended coworkers" emphasizes Paul as the one "wise master-builder;" For example, "If we would do the work of the divine building, we must be one with the wise master builder, who is the acting God...**The apostle Paul...surely was the acting God.**" And "**...the architect, the wise master builder, was the apostle Paul.**" [*The Ministry*, vol.10, no. 1, p. 213]
  43. Bob Danker "On the Minister of the Age and the Wise Master Builder" on AFW.org. This material has been printed in book form with the same title as part of the LSM-DCP "Attack Pack" of 28 booklets. [Series Three, Book 2, p. 17] For more on this, see my: *ACTS: Flawed Pattern OR Highest Divine Standard?* Available at: <http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Ground/ACTSFlawedPatternOrDivineStandard.pdf>
  44. *Beliefs & Practices of the local churches*, p.
  45. "The New Testament ministry" means "the unique ministry of the New Testament [which] comprises all the works (ministries) of all...the ministers of the new covenant." [W. Lee, *The Ministry of the NT & the Teaching & Fellowship of the Apostles*, p. 10] Brother Lee explains, "We may speak of Peter's ministry, of Paul's ministry ... [but] these individual ministries are only small parts of...the unique ministry of the New Testament." [W. Lee, *The Ministry of the NT & the Teaching & Fellowship of the Apostles*, p. 12]. Along these lines, Witness Lee himself said: "**I never said that my ministry is unique.** I made it clear repeatedly by my writings that when we say '**the ministry,**' we are referring to the **New Testament ministry, not just my ministry.** If **my ministry is a part of that ministry**, thank God for this." [W. Lee, *The Problems Causing the Turmoils in the Church Life*, p. 16]
  46. Watchman Nee warned: "**We dare not despise God's messengers.** We need again and again the arresting challenge of a truly prophetic spoken word or the calm of mature spiritual instruction. **But we do not commit ourselves totally and exclusively to the revelation which comes through holy men of God**, however sound it be." [Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, Vol. 40, *What Shall This Man Do?* 1993, p. 19.] W. Nee was emphasizing the priority of the individual believer's own relationship with Christ Himself, personally receiving His direct speaking, over the Lord's indirect speaking via His messengers.
  47. Consider, for example, the following statements: "As many of us were under **Brother Lee's** ministry for years, even decades, no one can dispute the fact that **he was the minister of the age**, that he had the vision of the age..." [BP, *The Ministry*, vol.7, no. 6, August, 2003, p. 36, emphasis added.] "Brother Lee could not say it then, but we can say it today: He was the wise master builder; he was **the** minister of the age..." [RK, *The Ministry*, vol. 10, No. 1, (Jan./Feb. 2006) p. 150 (emphasis original)]
  48. Ed Marks asserts that W. Lee's "ministry of the age subsumes and includes all the foregoing ministries. **The whole New Testament ministry has been recovered...**" [EM, *The Ministry*, vol. 9, No. 2, Feb. 2005, p. 137.] Other examples of the accolades heaped upon W. Lee's ministry are: "We thank the Lord for the ministry of the age which has reached the final stage to be the all-inheriting ministry of the age with the vision of the age." [DT, *The Ministry*, vol. 9, No. 8, Sept. 2005, p. 34] "We need to declare to the whole universe that **the ministry we have been under is the apostles' teaching.** This is the ministry that is being released into the recovery today." [BP, *The Ministry*, vol. 9, #3, March 2005, p. 124] Note this last quote equates "the apostles' teaching" (the entire New Testament) with W. Lee's ministry ("the ministry we have been under".)
  49. In a letter to the Great Lakes' brothers (dated Sept. 10, 2006) Bros. Benson Phillips & Liu Suey referred to "Brother Witness Lee's ministry as "this glorious ministry, **which is the New Testament ministry in all its fullness.**" Yet, Witness Lee himself said: "**I never said that my ministry is unique.** I made it clear repeatedly by my writings that when we say '**the ministry,**' we are referring to the **New Testament ministry, not just my ministry.** If **my ministry is a part of that ministry**, thank God for this." [W. Lee, *The Problems Causing the Turmoils in the Church Life*, p. 16]
  50. Examples include: (1) One unique Minister of the Age, most recently, Brother Witness Lee, (2) One unique wise master-builder who is the 'acting God,' supervising God's building, (3) One work on the whole globe, under the "blended co-workers'" oversight (4) One unique continuation of the Minister of the Age-Master-builder (the "blended coworkers"), (5) One global band (or company) of workers under the supervision of the 'Minister of the Age' or his continuation (6) One publication, "*all the saints and all the churches everywhere should...be restricted in one publication in the Lord's recovery.*" ["blended co-workers," *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, June, 2005]

51. Ron Kangas states emphatically "**The genuine one accord is universal,**" [RK, *The Ministry*, vol. 9, No. 2, (February, 2005) pp. 51-2.] LSM President, Benson Phillips says "We are not talking about merely a one accord locally...The one accord the Lord wants to gain is a one accord that is with the whole Body, and I would say, the whole recovery...not only all the saints but even all the churches must be in one accord." [BP, *The Ministry*, vol. 7, no. 6, Aug. 2003, p. 37] For more on this see my, "PUSHING THE ENVELOPE"—LSM's ONE ACCORD vs. THE BIBLE's" available at:  
[http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Truth/Pushing\\_The\\_Envelope\\_One\\_Accord.pdf](http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Truth/Pushing_The_Envelope_One_Accord.pdf)
52. The "Blended co-workers' One Publication decree" dictates, "Those who wish to write in this way should bring their proposals to the blended co-workers as well as to Living Stream Ministry and Taiwan Gospel Book Room **and have their proposals checked** to see whether they should be published or not. In every way, this practice of passing everything that we publish through **a discerning check** is best for all of us..." [*Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, June, 2005, p. 7]