

THE PERFECTING TRAINING FOR THE SHEPHERDS

General subject: THE CHURCH LIFE IN THE VITAL GROUPS

Message Two

THE LIFE PULSE IN THE PRACTICE OF THE NEW WAY—THE HOME

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:19-21a; 1Cor. 14:31; Acts 2:46; 1Cor.16:19; Rom.16:5; Acts 5:42, 1Cor. 14:15;
Col. 3:16; Eph. 6:17.

I. The present urgent needs in the Lord's recovery:

- A. Every brother and sister needs to ask the Lord for a new revival. This revival is the God-man life. In every church, we all need to live the God-man life. Whether we are at home or in the workplace, we all need to live the God-man life—Phil. 3:19-21a.
- B. We need to produce vital groups and endeavor to gain people to be members of the Body of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12.
- C. Every brother and sister in the Lord's recovery needs to pursue prophesying for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor 14:31.

II. The successfulness of the new way is to bring the church into the home, to bring the saints into the truth:

- A. To bring the meetings to the homes is the very heart of the God-ordained way—Rom. 16:3, 5a.
- B. Based upon this, I feel that for the long range for the Lord's recovery in such a top country as the United States, which is full of culture, education, scientific knowledge, and biblical knowledge, the greatest need we must meet is to bring the saints in the Lord's recovery into the truth to carry the Lord's recovery on.
 1. For the long run, we surely have to help the saints in the Lord's recovery to get into the top spiritual education.
 2. We still uplift the living Christ, the life-giving Spirit, life itself and its riches, and the church in a living way. To promote these things, we need the Word and we need the truth.

III. The life pulse in the practice of the new way—the Home—Acts 2:46, 1Cor. 16:19, Rom. 16:5, Acts 5:42:

- A. The Lord is for His spreading, and His spreading is in the homes.
- B. The home is the basic unit of society; it is the foundation of a nation. According to God's Word, the church of God is first the house, household, or home of God. After that it is the kingdom of God—Eph. 2:19.
- C. During the time of the apostles, the church was built up in the believers' homes. The church life at the time of the apostles had a very strong home atmosphere. Under Satan's influence, Christianity has completely annihilated this spiritual atmosphere of the homes—Rom. 16:1¹.
- D. This is the reason that we must endeavor with all the energy, strength, and time that the Lord has given us to recover the proper atmosphere of the homes. The first thing we must do is to make every saint's home a place for meeting.

IV. The god-invented, god-ordained, and god-created way to meet

- A. In the early days the way invented and ordained by the Spirit for the believers to meet is based upon two principles or two factors—mutuality and speaking:
 1. Meeting in the temple was not the Christian way. The Christian way was to meet from house to house. This practice was altogether new. It was not there in the Jewish religion.
 2. By that time, these believers were full of the Spirit, so whatever they did was something of the Spirit. We should consider the way of meeting from house to house as something invented and ordained by the Spirit.
 3. In this way of meeting there was mutuality and speaking and even mutuality in speaking.
- B. Having the lord's word as the center of the meeting:

1. During the bread-breaking meeting we can choose some practical, concise, and meaty portions for everyone to pray-read and enjoy.
2. For the prayer meeting we can choose some messages on service that open up the basic spiritual principles of service.
3. In the home meetings there should be some short messages for edification besides the fellowship, prayer, hymns, and greetings. This will help to raise up the new believers.
4. We need to spend an adequate amount of time to pray thoroughly, to observe the condition of the brothers and sisters, and then we should search out the suitable material from our publications.
5. We must approach the problem from a few directions. On the one hand, we need to enhance our hygiene, which includes immunization. On the other hand, we need to pay attention to nutritional care.

V. The four basic factors of the group meeting—the Spirit, the word, praying, and singing—Gal. 5:25; Col. 3:16; 1 Thes. 5:17; Eph. 5:19:

- A. To live by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, pray with the spirit (1 Cor. 14:15a; Eph. 6:18), sing with the spirit, and be strong in the spirit (2 Tim. 1:7) is to exercise the spirit. When we exercise the spirit, the mingled spirit becomes the very factor of the Christian meeting. —1Cor. 14:15a, Eph. 6:18, 1Cor. 14:15b, 2 Tim. 1:7.
- B. We must first learn to acquire the constant word and look to the Lord for Him to change His constant word into the instant word—Col. 3:16, Eph. 6:17.
- C. To pray at the beginning and at the end of the meeting may stir up, strengthen, and enrich the meeting. The more prayer there is in the meeting, the better—2Tim. 1:6.
- D. The home meetings need much prayer and much singing. If we are really filled and saturated with the Spirit and the word, we will be persons praying unceasingly and singing all the time.
- E. Our daily living needs to be saturated with the Spirit, the word, prayer, and singing so that we can be strong, living, new, and fresh to take care of the home meetings.

VI. Opening the homes in four directions simultaneously—home, school, all circles, children:

- A. There are four functions of the believer's home: the first is to preach the gospel, the second is to afford a place to contact students, the third is to contact different kinds of persons, and the fourth is for the children's work.
- B. The unit of the home is basic. If this concept can be wrought into our being, then the gospel will be successful.
- C. If we cannot work out the home meetings then we will not have a base. If we work out the home meetings then the foundation will be firm.

The Present Urgent Needs in the Lord's Recovery

In the Lord's recovery there are a few matters that are urgent at the present time to which we should pay special attention. First, every brother and sister needs to ask the Lord for a new revival. Although we have so much vision, we still need to ask the Lord for a new revival. This revival is the God-man life. In every church, we all need to live the God-man life. Whether we are at home or in the workplace, we all need to live the God-man life.

Second, we need to produce vital groups and endeavor to gain people to be members of the Body of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ. Every member should be living, organic, and not in organization, especially not in arrangement. It is through the vital groups that we all can become the living members in the Body of Christ.

Third, every brother and sister in the Lord's recovery needs to pursue prophesying for the building up of the Body of Christ. We should not make any excuses, saying that we are weak and without strength. Every one of us has the consummated Triune God, who has become the life-giving Spirit, living within us to enable us to pursue prophesying, to speak for the Lord for the building up of the Body of Christ. These are the present urgent needs of the Lord's recovery. I hope that the Lord will be gracious to us so that we can receive these words and actually practice them in our living and in our church. (Issue of the Union of the Consummated Spirit of the Triune God and the Regenerated Spirit of the Believers, Ch6)

[Our] burden in this message is first to bring the church to the homes, and second to bring the saints into the truth. If we can achieve these two points, the new way will succeed, the gospelization of Taiwan will be realized, and there will be a bright future in the Lord's recovery. Therefore, we need to give our all to do these two things. We must build up the home meetings, and we must teach the truth. I hope that we will pray much before the Lord for these two matters. (*The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way*, Ch.10)

Bringing the Meetings to the Homes Is the Very Heart of the God-Ordained Way

To bring the meetings to the homes is the very heart of the God-ordained way. It will be a great failure in the Lord's recovery if we cannot bring the meetings to the homes. For the past twenty years in the Lord's recovery, we have been bringing people to the meeting halls. The more we work in this way, the fewer people we have, and the worse the condition of the homes becomes. More and more our meetings have become a kind of Sunday morning service. In Christianity many people "go to church" to listen to the singing of hymns and to attend the "service," but their homes are deplorable; their tables may still be scattered with mah-jongg game pieces. In the morning the family attends the service, but in the afternoon the mah-jongg game goes on in the homes. In order to overturn this degraded situation, we must bring the meetings to the homes. I hope that every home will be mobilized, that everyone will become a soldier, and that together we will become an army of the Lord. (*The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way*, Ch.10)

To bring the saints into the truth

Based upon this, I feel that for the long range for the Lord's recovery in such a top country as the United States, which is full of culture, education, scientific knowledge, and biblical knowledge, the greatest need we must meet is to bring the saints in the Lord's recovery into the truth to carry the Lord's recovery on. For a country to be strong there is the need to bring its people into the proper education. If the people are behind in education, that country is also behind. The reason why the United States is a top country is because of its highest education. When President Nixon was in office, he encouraged the young people to study at the universities because many young Americans at that time did not want to study further after high school. The trend in the United States has changed, however. Such a big country needs many more people to receive the

highest, up-to-date education. Otherwise, there is no way for a country to be among the top countries in today's world.

Today we are here for the Lord's recovery. For the long run, we surely have to help the saints in the Lord's recovery to get into the top spiritual education. You must remember that we still uplift the living Christ, the life-giving Spirit, life itself and its riches, and the church in a living way. To promote these things, to carry these things out, and to bring people into these things so that they remain there, we need the Word and we need the truth. (*Elders' Training, Book 03: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, Ch10*)

The life pulse in the practice of the new way—the Home

During the time of the apostles, the church was built up in the believers' homes

We know that the only way anything can be sustained in human society is for it to be carried out in the homes. The home is the place where everything related to human existence is sustained. If we have only individuals in a society without the existence of the homes, nothing related to our human living will last; society will be short of the vessel needed to hold it together. The home is the basic unit of society; it is the foundation of a nation. According to God's Word, the church of God is first the house, household, or home of God (1 Tim. 3:15). After that it is the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17). It is difficult for God's kingdom to exist without the existence of the homes. Without the home as a basis, it is difficult for individuals to exist, and it is difficult for a nation or kingdom to be established.

Christianity has fallen prey to the wiles of Satan; it has completely overlooked the homes. In Christianity only the big meetings are cared for without any thought of the home meetings. A person in Christianity finds no vessel to hold his experience together. There is no vessel to uphold the testimony and no vessel to keep and maintain the truth. Consider Romans 16. Without a doubt, during the time of the apostles, the church was built up in the believers' homes. We know that the book of Romans is a book dealing specifically with the spiritual life in Christ and the spiritual living in the church. At the end of this book, one entire chapter is devoted to Paul's greeting of the saints. From his greetings, we can see that quite a number of homes were opened to the church. This shows that the church life at the time of the apostles had a very strong home atmosphere. Under Satan's influence, Christianity has completely annihilated this spiritual atmosphere of the homes.

This is the reason that we must endeavor with all the energy, strength, and time that the Lord has given us to recover the proper atmosphere of the homes. The first thing we must do is to make every saint's home a place for meeting. At the present moment, many saints are burdened to open up their homes. This is a great step forward, yet we cannot be satisfied with this initial step. We must not only open up the homes of those who are burdened, but we must also bring the meetings to the homes of those who are not burdened. We hope that every home can be opened to become a place for meeting. Each opened home means one more place for meeting. The smallest places of meeting in a church are the homes of every brother and sister in that church. (*The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, Ch.12*)

Having the Lord's Word as the Center Of The Meetings

In all our meetings we should emphasize the Lord's Word. During the bread-breaking meeting we can choose some practical, concise, and meaty portions for everyone to pray-read and enjoy. We can then share and testify concerning these portions. This will satisfy the Lord and minister to our needs. For the prayer meeting we can choose some messages on service that open up the basic spiritual principles of service. In the home meetings there should be some short messages for edification besides the fellowship, prayer, hymns, and greetings. This will help to raise up the new believers. We do not like to see people come to our meetings without learning something of God's Word or without God's Word being ministered to them. We hope that in every meeting some word from the Lord is released and ministered to the brothers and sisters. If we nourish the saints with these three kinds of messages in the bread-breaking meetings, the prayer meetings, and the home meetings, and if we teach *Truth Lessons* in a systematic, solid, and educational way, the saints will be helped and perfected. (*The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, Ch.17*)

Carefully Selecting the Reading Material

Such a practice involves an effort on the part of the co-workers and the elders. We must carefully select the proper material for the home meetings. We need to spend an adequate amount of time to pray thoroughly, to observe the condition of the brothers and sisters, and to understand the need of all the homes and the groups. We need to know their conditions, and then we should search out the suitable material from our publications. A mother, in preparing a meal for the family, should consider the condition of all the members of the family. Sometimes one member of the family is sick, and she needs to prepare special food for that one. Sometimes the season changes, and she needs to shop for the proper kind of food. All this takes research as well as common knowledge. (*The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way*, Ch.11)