

A LIFE OF SERVICE AND PRAYER

Witness Lee, a bondsman of Christ Jesus, having labored selflessly throughout his entire life and having poured out his being for his Lord's interest, rested from his labor and went to be with the Master, whom he loved and served. He departed on June 9, 1997, at the age of 91. Born in 1905 in northern China, Witness Lee was raised in a Christian family and educated in American-style, English-speaking schools sponsored by the Southern Baptist and American Presbyterian denominations. At the age of 19 he heard the preaching of an itinerant Chinese evangelist and was captured for Christ in a most dynamic way. He immediately consecrated himself to preach the gospel for the rest of his life. After completing his education, he gave up his job as an accountant and began a life of full-time service to the Lord Jesus that lasted nearly 65 years.

Very early in his service, Witness Lee came into contact with Watchman Nee, a renowned preacher, teacher, and writer, who was used much by the Lord in China. Perceiving a profound degree of the freshness of God's presence in Watchman Nee's teaching, Witness Lee immediately gave himself to follow Watchman Nee's leading in the work and without hesitation applied himself to labor together with Watchman Nee under his direction. In China Witness Lee was noted for his tireless travels and labors to bring into practical form the vision that Watchman Nee had for the churches raised up throughout the country under their preaching. Beginning in 1934 Watchman Nee also entrusted to Witness Lee the responsibility for his publication operation, called the Shanghai Gospel Bookroom, which Watchman Nee had started some years earlier.

Immediately prior to the Communist takeover in 1949, Witness Lee was sent by Watchman Nee and the other co-workers in China to Taiwan to insure that the things delivered to them by the Lord would not be lost completely. Watchman Nee instructed Witness Lee to continue the former's publishing operation abroad as the Taiwan Gospel Bookroom. From that point on, as the Taiwan Gospel Bookroom has been publicly recognized as the publisher of Watchman Nee's works outside China. Witness Lee began a fresh work of church building upon arriving in Taiwan in May 1949. The Lord's abundant blessing was soon manifested. From a mere 350 believers, newly fled from the mainland, the churches on Taiwan grew to 20,000 in five years. Witness Lee's labors also brought him to most

of the surrounding Far Eastern countries, where equal blessing was in evidence.

In 1962 Witness Lee felt led by the Lord to come to the United States, settling first in Los Angeles then ultimately in Anaheim, California. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s he traveled extensively within this country at the invitation of numerous Christian groups. During his 35 years of service in this country, he ministered tirelessly in weekly meetings and weekend conferences, delivering several thousand spoken messages. He gave his last public conference in February 1997 at the age of 91.

Witness Lee was unbending in his conviction that God's goal is not narrow sectarianism but the Body of Christ, and many entered into the same vision with him. In time, these believers began to meet in practically every major city in the U.S., choosing not to denominate themselves but rather to meet simply as the church in their locality. These local churches were soon established throughout all the Western hemisphere, matching in magnitude the result of his labors in the Far East. Notably, in recent years a number of new churches have been raised up in Russia and in many eastern European countries, where freedom of religion has been allowed only recently.

Of greater import, however, is his publication work. He continued his publication of Watchman Nee's works in English and commenced the publication of his own works. He leaves behind a prolific presentation of the truth in the Bible that he ministered over the decades of his ministry. His major work, *Life-study of the Bible*, comprises over 25,000 pages of commentary on every book of the Bible from the perspective of the believers' enjoyment and experience of God's divine life in Christ through the Spirit. Many of the numerous conferences he gave throughout his life have been published and constitute over 400 titles. A great number of these have been translated into at least 14 languages, including Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Korean, Japanese, and Portuguese. Their geographical distribution spans the six continents. Under Witness Lee's direction, the entire Bible was translated into English, called the Recovery Version, and he himself was the chief editor of a new translation of the New Testament into Chinese. He provided an extensive body of footnotes, outlines, and spiritual cross references, which appear in the Recovery Version in all the languages into which it has been translated. Of late, a radio

broadcast of his messages can be heard on Christian radio stations in the United States. As a practical means of publishing the ministry that he was entrusted with, Witness Lee founded Living Stream Ministry in 1965, a not-for-profit corporation, located in Anaheim, California, which officially represents his and Watchman Nee's ministry. Similar publishing houses are established in more than ten other countries throughout the world.

Witness Lee's ministry stressed the experience of Christ as life and the practical oneness of the believers as the Body of Christ. Stressing the importance of attending to both these matters, he led the churches under his care to grow in Christian life and function. Throughout the earth members of the "local churches" are known for their devotion to the Lord Jesus and the Scriptures and for their zeal in propagating the faith. This fruit of his life and ministry testify to God's gracious acceptance of Witness Lee's lifelong consecration to Christ and his gospel.

Prayers

The following prayers were offered by Witness Lee during an international conference of co-workers and elders on April 9-11, 1996. The messages from this conference appear in the book *The Divine and Mystical Realm*.

Prayer: Lord, we worship You for this gathering. We praise You. Only You can arrange such a gathering. Lord, for this gathering we need You in a sevenfold intensified way. Lord, come in and open Yourself to us, and may we also open ourselves to You. We ask that there will be a transaction, a traffic, between You and us. Lord, deliver us from the oldness. Deliver us from the old knowledge and from traditional things, things that we have been keeping for years. Lord, forgive us and cleanse us and cover us with Your prevailing blood against the enemy in every way. Releasing Your word is a battle, so, Lord, we hide ourselves in You. We hide ourselves under the blood of the Lamb. Lord, strengthen us and pour out Yourself upon us in a sevenfold intensified way. Lord, touch us and speak to us, making us one spirit with You. Thank You. Amen.

Prayer: Lord, we worship You that You have set us up as a particular people, a particular possession of Yours. We thank You, Lord, that You have chosen us and have even appointed us with a commission to carry out Your eternal economy. Oh, what a career! By ourselves we are absolutely not qualified, but You have commissioned us. What shall we say? We just look unto You. Lord, open Your heart to us again and unveil what is hidden in the depths of Your good pleasure. Lord, we like to be open to You. We do not want to have anything covering us. Lord, we ask You to take away all the veils, all the logic, theologies, philosophies, and traditional teachings. Lord, remove layer after layer of veils from us. Lord, we long to be released, to be freed,

from all these bondages. We do not want to be held back or to be short in carrying out Your economy. Thank You, Lord, for treating us as Your loving followers. We believe that You are here, sitting with us, wanting to have an intimate, face-to-face talk about Your career, according to Your eternal economy. Lord, speak to us. We ask that we may hear Your voice and see Your vision. Amen, Lord.

Prayer: Lord, we believe that in these days You are speaking to us, unveiling the depths within You. We are so blessed. Thank You. Lord, now we come to You to learn how You, the Triune God, are a realm and to see that You want us to enter into this realm, that is, to enter into You. Lord, open our eyes. Take away our disability and make us able to know the mystical things as You know them. O Lord, cover us, cleanse us, and anoint us. Lord, grant that we will sense Your presence and know that You are here speaking to us. May we all hear Your voice. Lord, You are so merciful. We are worthy of nothing. We are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing. But we have You as our everything. Amen.

Prayer: Lord, we can never forget what a mercy and what a grace that You are the Spirit, even the life-giving Spirit and the sevenfold intensified Spirit. Lord, You have created for us a human spirit, and in Your organic salvation the first thing You do is to regenerate our spirit. Eventually, Lord, You put Yourself as such a Spirit in our spirit and mingled with our spirit to make us one spirit. Oh, he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit! We can never forget all this. We worship You for this. Impress us and always remind us of our being one spirit with You. Do we live in our spirit with Your Spirit? Do we move in our spirit with Your Spirit? Lord, do we fellowship with You in our spirit with Your Spirit? Lord, remind us all the time. Lord, speak to us that we may receive further visions. Amen.

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for Your divine intention. You want to make us exactly the same as You are in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Lord, You have added Your divine life to our created, fallen, redeemed, and resurrected humanity. Lord, You have sanctified our crooked disposition to make us like You are in Your holy nature. Lord, You are still working until we are redeemed in our body to make us like You. Eventually, we will be able to say, Lord, what You are, we are, and what we are, You are. The only difference is that You have the Godhead. We thank You and worship You that we don't have the Godhead. You are the unique God. You are the Triune God, processed and consummated. We have humanity plus divinity, and You have divinity plus humanity. What a wonder that God has humanity! The processed, consummated Triune God has humanity. Lord, open the heavens to us. We want to be in heaven to see all the things as You see them. Give us the utterance. This is absolutely a new culture in a mystical realm. We need Your language; we need Your utterance. 