

# Fellowship for Establishing and Maintaining a Healthy Book Service

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## **Introduction**

The book service in a local church plays a vital role in introducing the ministry publications to the saints and visitors by displaying the wealth and variety of the publications for both personal and corporate pursuit of the truth. Moreover, an active book service helps to develop and sustain a culture of reading and sharing the ministry publications in the church life.

This document is intended as a guide for a church book service group to read together and contains Brother Lee's fellowship for establishing and maintaining a healthy church book service. His fellowship regarding the book service and publications is found in *The Collected Works of Witness Lee (CWWL)*, 1984, vol. 5, "The Faithful and Diligent Spreading of the Truth—Concerning the Publication Service," pp. 168-331. The thirteen messages covering the publication work was spoken to the serving ones of the Taiwan Gospel Book Room, but many parts of chapter 3 apply specifically to the church book service.

Numerous excerpts from the reference cited above as well as from other books by Witness Lee that pertain to the book service are found in this document. Reading this guide is an efficient way to strengthen the vision and burden for the book service. However, the book service saints are encouraged to read the original source for this guide when the book service begins to meet on a regular basis.

Two other references that will benefit those serving in the book service are: *CWWL*, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training Book 3: The Way to Carry out the Vision," pp. 236-362; and a thirty-six-page paperback compilation of various selections from Witness Lee's writings entitled, "*The Propagation of the Truth in the Lord's Recovery*," 1999. The latter publication can be obtained from Living Stream Ministry (LSM) and is another publication that the book service group should read together to foster the vision and burden for the book service.

## **Importance of the Publications**

### God Initiating the Publication Work

God initiated the publication work. God is a speaking God (Heb. 1:1) The Gospel of John tells us that God is the Word (1:1)...If we did not have the Bible, Christians would suffer an incalculable loss. The Bible is God's publication work; this is a marvelous thing. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, p. 209)

### God Working through Speaking

The Bible reveals that God's work is carried out through His speaking. In His work of creation God spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood (Psa. 33:9). In the Old Testament age all of God's work was carried out through His speaking to man...God's work in the New Testament is altogether a matter of the word. The Lord Jesus came to accomplish God's work as the incarnated Word. In the apostolic age the apostles carried out their work mainly through the word...Through His word God's work has been able to advance on the earth throughout the ages. In church history we can see the progress of God's word. Whenever God's word cannot spread, God's work cannot advance. This has been especially the case among us. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, p. 169)

### The Lord's Recovery Being a Recovery of Truth

From the time that Brother Nee began to minister until now, the Lord's recovery has been a recovery of the truth, a recovery of God's word. Because of the degraded situation of today's Christianity, we can definitely say that God has commissioned us with His word and His truth in these last days. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, p. 169)

## **Raising up Churches**

The publication work is very effective in spreading the ministry in the Lord's recovery throughout the earth. Local churches have been raised up in Europe and Southeast Asia by the distribution of ministry literature....Because the publications really work, it is altogether profitable to distribute the booklets we have prepared....Local churches in six countries in Africa have been raised up mostly through contact with our publications....Therefore, we must do our best to send out ministry publications locally and internationally....The more we distribute the publications, the better. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 1, p. 9*)

### Spreading to Other Countries and Continents

By going to the United States, we brought the Lord's recovery to the English-speaking world, and through the publication work, the Lord's recovery quickly spread throughout the United States, Central and South America, Europe, Africa, and Australasia. Many local churches have been raised up through the publications. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 218*)

At first the recovery spread through the saints contacting people and introducing the recovery to them, but eventually the seeking ones have received benefit directly from the publications....The churches in Europe are an example....For example, the churches have been raised up in Mexico in more than fifty localities mainly through the publications. The churches in Brazil were also raised up through the publications. Presently [1984] about eighty local churches have been raised up in Brazil, and there are dozens of churches in other countries in South America. All these churches were raised up through the publication work....This shows that the publication work is crucial. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 218*)

Most of these churches [1984-650 churches in SE Asia] were not started by coworkers; instead, they were produced by the publication work in coordination with the migration of the saints. The main thing that raises up and builds up churches is the publication work in coordination with the migration of the saints....Almost all of the churches in Latin America were raised up in this way....This shows that the publication work is the greatest help in the spreading of the churches. Those serving in the publication work should have this vision....you are a very important link in the service of the Lord's recovery. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 302*)

The publications have raised up many churches in the fifteen countries that used to make up the former Soviet Union. A strong testimony of this fact is Russia where today [2019], nearly all of the 190 churches there were raised up by the publications since approximately 1992.

### Hastening the Lord's Return

Just as Paul's ministry was a betrothing ministry (2 Cor. 11:2), the ministry publications function in the same way. They motivate us to know and experience the Lord subjectively by loving Him as our Bridegroom and to pray for our growth and maturity as the Bride to hasten His return.

...I wish to live on this earth and witness with my own eyes the truth of the Lord not only being printed into books through our hands, but also being sent through us to every part of the world and prevailing in every place. I absolutely believe that this will hasten the Lord's return because it is through this that the Lord will prepare His bride. I hope that we all can see the manifestation of such a situation. *CWWL, 1986, vol. 2, "The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity," p. 460*

## **The Value of the Publication Work**

### High and Weighty

I would like to speak an honest word. On the one hand, many people heard Brother Nee preach the word without receiving much benefit, but on the other hand, a great number of people, who never heard him speak, received an indescribable, eternal benefit from his writings. When I began to attend the meetings in Shanghai, I never saw more than five hundred people in attendance; usually there were no more than three or four hundred. According to my observation, maybe less than one hundred of them actually heard and received the truths inwardly. However, eighty or ninety percent of the people who have read Brother Nee's books have received something from what they have read. The effect of reading publications is greater and more solid than the effect of personally hearing a spoken message. The value of the publications is high and weighty. (*CWWL, 1984, vol.5, p. 212*)

### Long-lasting and Widespread

It would have been very difficult for the ministry of Brother Nee to spread without the publication work. The usefulness of the publications is long lasting and widespread. Like water, the publications can spread widely and imperceptibly "seep" into people. A published message can have a great effect simply by "flowing" into a home and reaching someone whom we do not know. The effect of the publications lasts forever and is not as shallow as the effect of only hearing a message. A person may be touched as he listens to a message, but after three days his feeling may wane, and he may forget it. However, the more a person reads the messages, the more he will understand, and the messages will stay in his memory a longer time and give him a deep impression. ...Thus the value of the publications lies in the fact that their effect is long lasting and widespread. The Bible has been among human beings for a few thousand years, and its effect is self-evident. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 216-217*)

In the future each of us will have to settle our accounts before the judgement seat of Christ. The publication work is very valuable, and I believe that the Lord will acknowledge this....Therefore we must ask the Lord to have mercy and to give us people like-souled, who would have the will, vision, and view to see that it is absolutely worth laboring on the publications with our whole heart and our whole strength because the effect of this work is long lasting and widespread, and it touches people deeply. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, pp. 227-228*)

In the Lord's full-time service, the publication work is the top area because the publications are long lasting and widespread, able to touch people, and convey a deep impression. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 224*)

### High-priority Service

Realizing the importance of the publication work, during a period from 1984 to 1986, Brother Lee gathered some coworkers, elders, and those serving in book sales and the publication work of the Taiwan Gospel Book Room to fellowship about the publication service. The thirteen chapters are the contents of the main reference for this publication as mentioned in the introduction. The Taiwan Gospel Book Room continues to have these annual meetings to this day.

### Being the Lord's Co-worker

The churches in Southeast Asia have been able to maintain their spiritual life for the past thirty years mainly through the publications of the Book Room. Despite the fact that the co-workers frequently go to help the churches, their true, long-term help has come from the supply of the publications. Moreover, during the past twenty years [prior to 1984], eighty percent of the more than 300 churches in the West have been raised up through the publications. Therefore, we must see that serving in book sales is really

to be the Lord's co-worker, to promote His truth, and to spread His divine economy and divine speaking to the whole earth. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 5, p. 207)

### Work Shop Opening Word

In 2018, Living Stream Ministry held its first national church book service work shop over a two-day period from August 4 to 5. The work shop covered fourteen topics and each attendee received a three-ring binder containing materials for the topics. Appendix A of this guide contains the opening word spoken at the work shop that crystallizes the crucial function of the book service in the church life. It is recommended that the opening word be read before proceeding to read any more of this publication.

### The Cream of the Saints' Understanding

It is neither a boast nor a deception to say that all the books in the Lord's recovery are the extract of the truths in Christianity. They are the crystallization of the study of the Bible and the spiritual life-experiences of Christians throughout the last two thousand years. Hence, we should endeavor to enter into all these spiritual riches and not waste our time or money on other unnecessary pursuits. We should save all our time and money in order to spend them on studying the Bible and spiritual books. (*CWWL, 1986*, vol. 2, "The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity," p. 449)

The truths conveyed in the footnotes of the New Testament Recovery Version and the Life-study messages are the cream of the saints' understanding of the holy Word in the past twenty centuries. They are the accumulation of the revelation that the church has received from the Bible as the holy Word. The style of writing used in composing the footnotes and the Life-studies is simple, yet the points presented are profound, and the contents are very rich, nourishing, and enlightening...but after reading the footnotes and the messages on any particular book of the Bible, a person will surely begin to understand that book....These characteristics make the footnotes and the Life-studies very valuable. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 1, p. 387)

## **Elders Overseeing the Book Service**

### The Importance of the Elders in the Book Service

Brother Lee realized the importance of the elders overseeing the book service, since it functions to minister truth and life to the entire church. Hence when he returned to Taiwan from 1984 to 1986, he gathered together coworkers, elders and book room serving ones of each church to a retreat for special fellowship regarding the book service. The book room serving ones continue this practice to the present day. The spiritual health of the church and the saints correlates directly with the reading and enjoyment of the Bible and the ministry publications. Therefore, the book service should be in regular fellowship with the elders to maintain an active and healthy book service to promote the purchase, loaning, giving away, and reading of ministry books as a vital part of the church's pursuit of the truth.

### Brother Lee's Burden for the Elders

As he was completing the life-studies of the New Testament, Brother Lee was very burdened for the elders to lead the saints into the truth through the life-studies and the New Testament recovery version. The intensity of his burden is captured in some key excerpts that are found in Appendix B at the back of this publication.

The book service is a very important service in the churches, and it has an especially important relationship to the elders. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 5, p. 191)

I hope that the elders in each locality will give the saints some help and encouragement so that each household will have a supply of spiritual books. The saints can place a copy in various places within

their homes—on their dining table, on their nightstand, on their bathroom counter, and in their kitchen—to make enjoying the Lord’s word in every place convenient for all the members of their family and even for their guests. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 190*)

#### Providing Direction, Encouragement, and Incentive

We [the elders] should help the saints to build up a practice or habit that every day they would spend at least thirty minutes in the Word....They should study every day either three times for ten minutes each or one time for thirty minutes....I think we need to remind them week after week, and sometimes the elders need to give the saints some direction, some encouragement, and some incentive. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, p. 325*)

#### Presenting the Truth to All Believers

The higher truths in the Bible are not for a special class of believers but for all of God’s children (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; Eph. 3:9)....The saints have a God-given capacity by which they are able to comprehend much more than we realize (cf. 1:17)....We [the elders] should not consider the higher truths that the Lord has shown us from His Word as too difficult for the younger ones to understand; rather, we should be desperate to present these truths to them.” (*CWWL, 1983, vol. 2, p. 141*)

#### Educating the Saints for Their Growth

The higher the truth we [the elders] present to the saints, the faster their growth in life will be, but the lower the truth we present to the saints, the slower their growth in life will be. If the elders in a church do not present certain messages that they think are too high for the saints to understand, they will lower the standard of the truth in that church (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15). The elders must be desperate to raise the standard of the truth in the church year after year. We need to educate the saints in the divine truth and maintain a high standard of the truth. (*CWWL, 1983, vol. 2, p. 141*)

### **Formation of the Book Service**

#### Applying Vital Group Principles

Saints who are burdened for the book service can be formed into the book service group through much prayer, fellowship, and coordination with the elders. The formation of the book service should issue out of the same principles that Brother Lee spoke about on forming a vital group, i.e., through much prayer and thorough fellowship. Assigning saints to serve in the book service is not sustainable, but a group of saints burdened for the book service will endure since they are serving with a common burden. Thus, to establish and maintain the book service, it is highly recommended that they meet regularly in a scheduled way as other service groups meet for prayer and fellowship.

### **Burden and Goal of the Book Service**

#### Bringing Men to the Full Knowledge of the Truth

In 1 Timothy 2:4 Paul says that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.” Today most of the churches pay attention to the first half of this verse by preaching the gospel to bring people to salvation; however, we are not up to the standard of God’s goal in the matter of leading the saints to know the truth. The responsibility for filling up this lack and arriving at God’s goal lies with us.” [book service] (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 191*)

#### The Most Important Burden

The most important burden of the book service is not to care for the inventory of books but to study and find a way to spread every book into all the homes of the saints in your locality and, once the books are in the homes, to find a way to deposit their contents into the saints’ hearts. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 191*)

### Not Making a Profit

Regardless of whether we are full-timers going out to work or those who serve with books, our goal is to spread the divine truths for the accomplishment of God's goal of establishing and building up churches in every place so that they may become the expression of Christ.

I would like to make something clear from the start. If we think that the goal of the publication work is to make money, we are wrong. From the first day until now we have not had the slightest thought of making money or earning a profit. Our burden is to spread the truth and to serve the churches." (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 198)

What the Lord wants to accomplish in this age is to recover the truth....when you look at the publications among us, they are full of rich truth. This is not my boast; it is proof that the Lord has blessed us. Therefore, we should receive the burden and not worry that there are too many books piled up in the meeting halls; instead, we must find a way to distribute these books, and we must first get them into the homes of the saints. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 205)

### The Future of the Lord's Recovery

Today the Lord has gained saints who have a heart to serve Him; some serve as elders, some serve as deacons, and some serve in book sales. We thank the Lord for this, but please forgive me for speaking honestly to you in love: I am afraid that even you are not clear about the truth. This is the matter that concerns me the most. If we are a group of believers who have only been saved but do not understand the truth, what will be the future of the Lord's recovery? The present teaching in the homes is insufficient; we must get the truth into the saints' homes. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 206)

### Stirring up the Saints' Interest for the Truth

The primary matter is not to promote the books but to stir up the saints interest in pursuing the truth and to encourage them to enjoy reading the spiritual publications....The Lord's word will require that we bear the responsibility to labor willingly to zealously encourage and urge everyone in all the local churches to pursue the truth and read the spiritual publications. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, pp. 207-208)

## **Learning the Truth in the Service**

### Being a Pattern to Read and Pursue

The serving ones in the book room should all endeavor to be the first to enter into a daily exercise of pursuing the truth by a scheduled reading of the Bible and the ministry publications to serve as a living pattern to those they will be serving.

### Studying, Speaking, and Writing the Truth

First, we must learn to speak the truth. Our inheritance today is much richer than it was thirty or forty years ago; therefore, our real need is practice. Through practice we will know how to use these riches in an appropriate way. Second, we need to spend the time to learn, practice, and equip ourselves with these rich truths. It would be excellent if there were such a prevailing atmosphere among us. The co-workers, elders, and serving ones should all be full of the truth and speak the truth in their daily conversations. If our living is according to the truth, this will spontaneously produce an uplifted atmosphere....Third, we should not neglect the riches on our bookshelves; instead, we should read, study, discuss, and even write about them. If we can learn a little every day, we will spontaneously and gradually gain a great accumulation of truth. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, pp. 232-233)

### Developing Habits to Study and Speak

Since the truth among us is very rich, I especially hope that those who serve in the Book Room would develop the habit of studying, speaking, and using these riches to produce, uplift, and strengthen the spiritual atmosphere in the Lord's recovery. If we do this, the future of the Lord's recovery will be bright and full of hope. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 233*)

### **A Solid Foundation in the Word**

The serving ones should become familiar with the book titles and be prepared to recommend books based on their knowledge of the book content and the spiritual needs of the brother or sister they serve.

### Being Constituted with the Truth

We must do our best to get ourselves into these truths and to get these truths constituted into our being. . . . I also am burdened that all the leading ones, either the elders or the serving ones taking some kind of lead, should have a real burden to pray for the saints in your locality that the Lord may stir up their interest, their seeking heart, and their spirit to seek after the Lord in His truth. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training Book 3, The Way to Carry out the Vision," p. 324*)

### Diligently Reading the Bible and Spiritual Books

The quotation below was spoken by Brother Witness Lee in 1986 to the trainees of the full-time training in Taipei, Taiwan. The message subject was becoming a useful vessel. Although these messages were given to trainees, the principles can be applied in general to all those serving in the book room.

As those who serve the Lord, we must be equipped in these two matters: the growth in life and familiarity with the truth. Therefore, we should be diligent not only in reading the Bible, but also in reading the spiritual books. We have to spend time to study every page of every book that has been published from Brother Nee until this day. We have to try our best to make good use of our time, reading a little bit even after every meal. We have to practice this to the extent that we have a book in hand all the time. Even before bedtime, we should study a little more. (*CWWL, 1986, vol. 2, "The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity," p. 448*)

### **Promoting Reading and Distribution**

#### Creating a Reading Atmosphere

The book service group should regularly coordinate with the elders in setting up activities and events throughout the year to promote the reading of the Bible, ministry publications, and the distribution of books and booklets. The saints in the book service should be patterns of reading, speaking, and distributing the publications. Then over a period of time, a reading culture and atmosphere will develop in your local church.

#### Using Events and Programs

Through prayer and fellowship in the scheduled meetings of the book service, you can coordinate with the elders, to encourage the saints to read and distribute the publications by various programs such as:

- a. Reading books together during the book service meetings and sharing your enjoyment to the saints one-on-one and corporately.
- b. Developing reading schedules or programs: e.g., church-wide, working adults, young people reading challenges, special one-time reading gatherings, reading and posting on social media platforms, forming internet reading groups, and holding weekend retreat reading camps, etc.

- c. Giving book room gift certificates, books, Bibles, or other prizes as incentives to fostering reading and speaking through the activities in point (b) above.
- d. Promoting borrowing by visiting the saints one by one, especially the young people, to encourage borrowing and reading.
- e. Setting up a personal library at home as a sales display, for personal use, or as a lending library to encourage others to do the same, or sponsor display racks in public places for sales or loaning.
- f. Initiating mini-conferences or trainings to heighten awareness of reading and distributing through outlines, viewing videos, listening to audio messages or guest speakers, either in person or via the internet.
- g. Coordinating with the elders to allow a short, weekly reading overflow time after the Lord's Table or prayer meeting. Limit the time of sharing for each speaker so that many can share.

### Becoming a Good Minister of Christ

Brother Lee was very burdened that the saints would become a good minister of Christ, not only to the saints meeting in the Lord's recovery, but to all of the children of God. This burden was expressed many times during his ministry. A classic representation for this burden is stated explicitly below in message seven of the *Life-study of First Timothy* given in 1981.

I am deeply burden by the fact that many who love the Lord Jesus and seek Him have been deceived and frustrated. We must find a way to share with them the spiritual riches the Lord has provided us. Many who truly love the Lord are starving. We must take up the burden to supply them with food. We all need to be good ministers of Christ, serving others with His riches. Let us first be nourished ourselves and then minister this nourishment to all the people of God. (*Life-study of 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 72)

Let us pick up our brother's burden and be faithful to the Lord for the riches that we have enjoyed through the ministry publications. As we serve in the book service, we can be encouraged by what Brother Lee told a publication serving one who was concerned about the future of the Lord's recovery, shortly before he went to be with the Lord, "It's all in the books."

It is appropriate now to read a prayer that Brother Lee prayed during one of the meetings held during 1984 to 1986 with the saints serving in the Taiwan Gospel Book Room. May we be those who are faithful and diligent in being constituted with the truth and spreading the truth through our serving together in the book service.

### A Prayer Concerning the Publications

Lord, we worship You. We sincerely confess that we are a group of people who have received mercy. We are the offscouring of the world and the scum of all things. We are worth nothing, we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing. But Lord, You chose us and separated us, and You have made us useful vessels in Your hands. We thank You for the portion of usefulness that You have given us. We thank You for greatly blessing this publication work so that the riches of Your truth have been stored up in the publications. We believe that Your grace is sufficient for us. Every day we want to be overshadowed by Your grace to experience and enjoy the supply of this grace. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, p. 233)

## **Setting up a Display or Library**

### Functions of a Display or Library

The primary functions of such a display or library are to provide: 1) a display for the saints, 2) a lending library for borrowing, 3) a sales showcase for the saints to order or buy books.

If the display serves as a library to loan out books, books will be missing from the display during periods of time. Churches can also set up two sets, one for display and a second for lending. If a church has a book sales showcase, saints can fill out order forms or order online from lsm.org or Amazon and leave the books in the display. The book room can also allow persons to purchase the books they want and replenish them by reordering them from LSM. A church may consider keeping a stock of multiple copies of some of the more popular books.

### Location of the Display-Library

The LSM display package information includes approximately how much physical space should be allocated for each of the display packages. Based on the books purchased and how they will be displayed (shelves, tables, racks, book holders, etc.), determine a location for the display whether it is a home, rented room, meeting hall, or even a retail space.

### Book Display Furniture

Purchase suitable book display furniture (shelves, racks, bookstands, etc.) for the purchased books and determine the location of the display. Churches may order from the internet or purchase book displays from local retail stores. Some churches have purchased custom-made book displays and shelves to fit the space available for their book room.

## **Inventory Selection**

### LSM Display Packages

The book display program is a custom-tailored program for churches to stock their book room or library. Through fellowship and the oversight of the elders, the book service group should determine the content and quantities of the publications that best meet the needs of their church. The program is designed to give greater discounts for larger purchases. For more details, please visit our website at <https://www.livingstream.com/display-program> or contact the LSM book section by emailing books@lsm.org.

### Rush Orders

Special orders for books out of print that are requested in less than three months are considered a rush order. For rush orders of books out of print, LSM has a print-on-demand service that can print books that are presently out of print. If a church has a special need for a large quantity of a single book, it is best to contact LSM six or eight weeks before the time the book is needed.

## **Business Matters**

Fellowship with the church elders regarding the business matters related to the book sales such as: obtaining a business license, setting up a business entity for compliance with state and local tax regulations, opening a bank account, deciding on payment methods (cash, check, credit/debit cards, digital payment methods, e.g. Venmo, Zelle), record keeping, and purchase of a cash register if needed. The aforementioned steps related to the actual set up and operation of the book room are brief and intended to provide only the minimal steps needed on the business or operational side of this service. Although this is a small part of the book room service, it is nevertheless important so that at least two

brothers (under covering of the elders) devote adequate attention to the business matters. When there is the handling of money, follow the church practice of always having two brothers involved.

## **Sustaining the Book Service**

### Regular Prayer and Fellowship

As with all of the important service groups in the church life, regular prayer and fellowship are the foundation of the book service. It is good to establish a regular time to meet for reading, sharing enjoyment, and taking care of the practical side (stock inventory and ordering, banking, setting up displays, etc.) of the book service. The fellowship herein is only a general guide to establish and sustain an active book service group. The particular book service needs of a church will develop through regular meetings.

### Continuing Steadfastly

Continuing steadfastly in regular prayer and fellowship, with a group of burdened saints in coordination with the church eldership, are the essential ingredients for a successful and living book service. Such a service will be a great blessing; firstly, to those who serve in the book service group, as well as to the entire church.

### Keeping the Book Service Fresh

The following activities are recommended to keep the book service fresh, focused, and motivated:

- Continuing the weekly book service meeting.
- Fellowshiping and blending with other church book service groups.
- Visiting [MinistryPropagation.org](http://MinistryPropagation.org), for mutual encouragement and learning.
- Attending any special book service meetings at the seven feasts.
- Reading and reviewing relevant portions of *“Faithful and Diligent Spreading of the Truth,” CWWL, 1984*, vol. 5, when appropriate.
- Tracking the status of the book room sales on a quarterly basis to assess if more books are being purchased and read.
- Communicating with the elders regularly to keep them apprised of the book service and the saints’ reading habits.
- Participating in the Living Stream Ministry book service workshops.

## **Coordinating with Living Stream Ministry**

### Sweet Coordination

Maintain regular communications with the Living Stream Ministry book section to foster a sweet and efficient coordination to stay apprised of new publications, programs, and burdens regarding the publication work. This kind of coordination will enable the LSM book section to better estimate print quantities and production schedules, and thus enable them to better serve all of the churches.

### Representing Living Stream Ministry

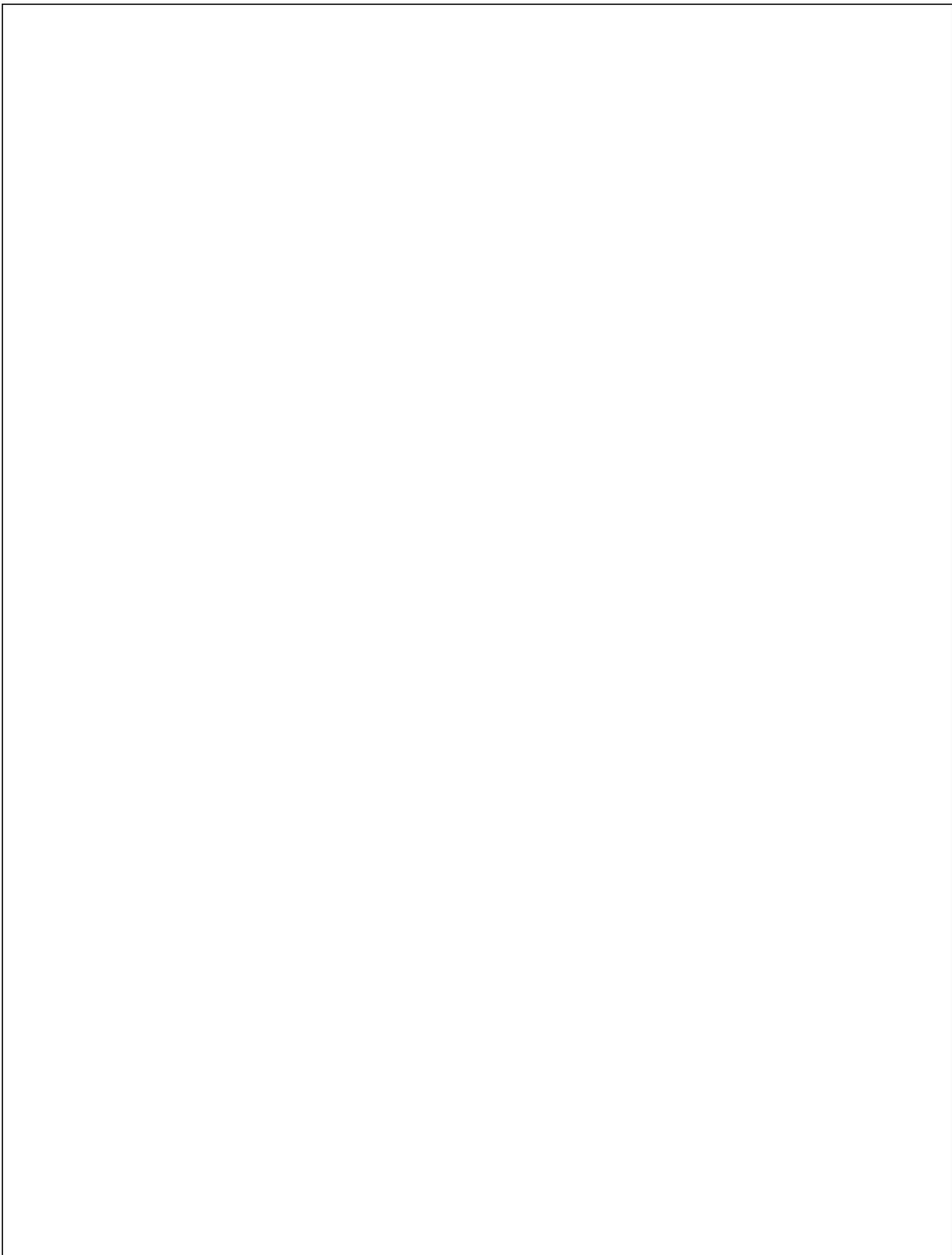
In one sense, each church book room is a representative of the Living Stream Ministry book section since it shares the same vision and burden. However, a church book room can promote new publications, products, and programs to the saints in a way that Living Stream Ministry cannot do.

### Announcing and Promoting the Publications

Reading aloud selections from books in larger meetings and saints sharing their reading enjoyment to other saints will cause the saints to develop the love of reading the ministry publications. The announcements regarding the LSM publications should be made in an attractive way so that the saints’

reading appetites and appreciation for the ministry publications will be aroused. Over a period of time, this practice will spontaneously lead to more reading, loaning, and giving away of the ministry publications that will cause the preparation of the Bride and will hasten the Lord's return because, "It's all in the books."

Appendix C covers the distribution of Christian literature which was promoted by both Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. The appendix includes two anecdotes from church history regarding the powerful effect of giving away and loaning books.



## Appendix A-Book Service Workshop Opening Word

### Topic One CHURCH BOOK SERVICE WORKSHOP

#### An Opening Word

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

One of the hopes this weekend is to see the churches recover the function of the book sales service in their localities. We hope that there will be saints, brothers and also sisters, together with leading ones in each local church who are burdened for such a service—a service that makes the publications of the Living Stream Ministry available to the local saints, and also a service that actively promotes the reading of the publications of the ministry of the age among the local saints.

Many years ago, when you walked into a local church meeting, the first thing you would see was a wall full of books for sale; almost every church had a prominent book sales service, which was crucial for the church life. At that time, the LSM office did not deal with individual saints. Instead, all the books were sold to the local saints individually through the book sales service of each church; each church's book sales service received packages of books from Living Stream and distributed them to the saints week by week. Many churches devoted an entire room at the front of their meeting hall just to display the books of the ministry. When the ministry station began in Anaheim in 1974, four individual messages were printed every week and sent out in packages to all churches. These messages were eagerly anticipated by the saints, and they would eagerly and earnestly wait for them to arrive like infants waiting for their next feeding.

Unfortunately, this was lost over the years until nearly no churches maintained a book room display or a book sales service. More important than the lack of a physical display of books, the burden to promote the publications also was lost, and individual saints were left to themselves to pursue the reading and the purchasing of the publications. Part of the reason for this loss is that during the past few storms, some of the local book sales services had become a hindrance instead of a help to the distribution of the books. Some churches, because the leading ones or the serving ones had become negative towards the ministry, did not want the saints to have access to the ministry publications. Instead of being held hostage by these negatives ones, the Living Stream Ministry started the Direct Mail Service (DMS), whereby saints could deal directly with LSM, and LSM could mail books directly to the address of each individual saint. On the one hand, this made the ministry more accessible to the saints, but on the other hand, the book sales services in the local churches gradually felt that their function had been taken over by the LSM directly. First they stopped actively promoting the ministry, and eventually, many removed their physical displays altogether.

In the 1990's Living Stream began to publish *The Holy Word for Morning Revival*, and over the years, it has become the regular subscription for most of the saints in the Lord's recovery. We thank and praise the Lord for this, but in Brother Lee's mind, he never intended that this would be the only publication circulated among the churches to meet all their needs.

The hope today is that every church in the Lord's recovery would rise up to recover the burden of the book sales service. This is like in the time of Nehemiah when the wall of Jerusalem had been torn down and the city left in desolation. Nehemiah rose up at night to examine the poor condition, and then he called the people together to charge them to build. The result was that some leading ones as well as ordinary citizens rose up to answer the call. Local groups within each district of the city took care of their local situation and built their own gates or their own part of the wall; soon the whole wall was finished, and the enemy was driven away. Some of these builders were elders, others were full-time serving priests, but many were just local residents. Nevertheless, each group took care of its part of the city, and they built their own gates. It did not matter that what one group built was not the same as others; they all recovered the same function. With the building of the gates and the wall, there was now a line of communication and supply to both the city armory and the city granary; that is, the supply of food and weapons

could quickly be distributed to every part of the city, and the need of every district in the city could be conveyed quickly to the armory and the granary. Thus, every gate became a node or joint to serve its own district.

We hope to see in the coming days that there would be the recovery of such “gates” in each local church throughout this country. With a healthy book sales service recovered in every church, whether there are 500 or twenty saints, a healthy channel of supply and communication would be restored, and hopefully the saints would be helped to become more educated, equipped, nourished, and supplied by the ministry. Not only will there be the healthy communication between the churches and LSM, but there will also be a healthy communication and blending between all the various “gates.” Thus, the blessings received by one church can be shared among the other churches, and many more people will be ushered into the city through these gates in all four directions.

This cannot be the work of one “Nehemiah” alone; it must be the work of the burdened ones in the whole congregation of God’s people. At the same time, if such a healthy book sales service is recovered and built up in every locality, it would be a big help to LSM, to seeking believers throughout the country, and to the promotion of the ministry of the age. But as it is true with everything else, no one person or group can do it alone; it will take the whole Body to rise up and to take up this burden.

We hope to see that besides the Lord’s Table meeting and the prayer meeting, every local church would have the book sales service as a high-priority service in the church to meet the internal need and for external propagation. Such a service must become a crucial part of the church life. We cannot imagine a church in the Lord’s recovery without the Lord’s Table meeting or the prayer meeting. In the same way, hopefully there will be healthy book sales services within each local church in the Lord’s recovery. May the Lord bless His recovery, and may He bless this weekend.

Andrew Yu  
July 26, 2018  
Anaheim, CA

## Appendix B- Promoting Reading the Publications

### 1. Helping to Promote the Standing Order

“I hope that all the churches in all the localities, which have received the supply in the Lord’s word from this ministry, will **do their best to help the publication of the ministry in the matter of standing orders**. . . . We encourage the brothers and sisters to sign up for standing orders so that we can print books in larger quantities but at a cheaper cost, which benefit everyone.” (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, “The Faithful and Diligent Spreading of the Truth,”* p. 189)

### 2. Encouraging the Saints to Build Up the Habit of Reading

“We also want to **encourage the brothers and sisters to build up the habit of reading spiritual books** after every meal and before going to bed. They will gain a great benefit from reading in this way.

I hope the elders in each locality will **give the saints some help and encouragement so that each household will have a supply of spiritual books**. The saints can place a copy in various places within their homes—on their dining table, on their nightstand, on their bathroom counter, and in their kitchen—to make enjoying the Lord’s word in every place convenient for all the members of their family and even for their guests. These books are full of the God’s rich grace; it would certainly be beneficial for each household to place them throughout their home. (pp. 189-190)

### 3. Leading the Saints to Become Addicted to Reading the Truth

“**We should lead the saints to become addicted to reading the truth**. We should consider reading the truth to be more important than eating and drinking. If we do this, this truth in the Lord’s recovery will greatly increase and be victorious; furthermore, the number of people in all the churches will spontaneously multiply (Acts 6:7).” (pp. 206-207)

### 4. Finding Ways to Promote the Truth

“**We must have a proper attitude and be positive and aggressive, doing our best to urge people to read His word**. If we do not **find ways to promote** the truth or pray, how can the Lord’s word be spread? If we take the Lord’s word lightly, how can we have boldness to **promote the publications among the saints?**” (p. 207)

### 5. Being Jealous to Change the Atmosphere to Make Reading a Priority

“Some brothers and sisters spend more time reading the newspaper and watching television than they do reading the ministry publications; **this really grieves me. I hope that we could have a jealous heart for the Lord and change the atmosphere so that everyone would have a desire to read the Bible, and each household would make reading the spiritual publications a priority**. . .

Despite the fact that the co-workers frequently go to help the churches, their true, long-term help has come from the supply of the publications.” (p. 207)

### 6. Stirring Up the Saints’ Interest in Pursuing the Truth

“**Please pick up a burden to return to your localities, fellowship with the elders, and consider this to be an important matter**. The primary matter is not to promote the books but to **stir up the saints’ interest in pursuing the truth and to encourage them to enjoy reading the spiritual publications. This will depend on the way that we do it.**” (pp. 207-208)

### 7. Immersing, Soaking, Diving, and Bathing in the Truth

“If we have a clear view and know the Bible, the condition of today’s Christianity, the truth, and the mercy given to us by God, we would spend our whole life **being immersed and soaked in the truth. Then we would surely have the burden to propagate this truth as much as possible among the brothers and sisters in the churches. We would endeavor to create among the brothers and the sisters an atmosphere of desiring the truth and the Life-studies**. . . . I hope that we could all learn to appreciate the Life-studies by **diving into them, bathing in them, and allowing the light of the truth to penetrate us**. Only then will we be able to spread the blessings and benefits that we have received, thereby **creating an atmosphere in which the saints desire the truth and the Life-studies.**” (pp. 172-173)

## 8. Bringing in a Real Revival

“The Lord’s word will require that we bear the responsibility to **labor willingly to zealously encourage and urge everyone in all the local churches to pursue the truth and read the spiritual publications.** In this way the Lord’s truth will spread widely, and **there will be a real revival.**” (p. 208)

“If all the six hundred churches on the earth would **seriously read** the Life-studies and thoroughly study the truths contained in them, I absolutely believe that **a great revival would begin** not only among us but even on the whole earth.” (p. 172)

“I absolutely believe that if any local church **promotes** the Life-studies in this way, **it will be revived.** If all the saints in a locality practice for one year to read the Life-studies to receive the life supply and study the truth for small group meetings, message meetings, and shepherding and helping others by fellowshipping with them, **the church in that locality will surely be revived.** This is because there is nothing more powerful than the word of God as the truth of God.” (pp. 174-175)

## 9. Fighting Against Satan to Gain Ground for the Truth to Go Forth

“Satan will resist this matter; hence, we must focus on this matter and be **ready to fight against Satan to gain this ground** so that God’s truth may have a way to go forth.” (p. 175)

## 10. Giving the Saints Direction, Encouragement, and Incentive

“We should **help the saints to build up a practice or a habit** that every day they would spend at least thirty minutes in the Word. ...I think we need to **remind them week after week**, and sometimes the elders need to **give the saints some direction, some encouragement, and some incentive.**

Many of you leading ones have never encouraged the saints in the last five years to get the truths in the way of using the Life-studies. You leave the matter of the saints’ getting into the Life-studies altogether up to them. You do not seem to care whether this is a dying matter or a living matter. This way of getting into the truth has become an orphan with no father and no mother, with no fostering. This has been the situation, and in some of the local churches, your problems all have been due to this one thing...as leading brothers try your best in your locality to **stir up an atmosphere and to create a hunger and thirst in the saints for the Lord’s truth.**” (CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry out the Vision,” pp. 325-327)

## 11. Hastening the Lord’s Return and Preparing the Bride

“...I hope that we could live to be eighty or ninety, even to over a hundred, so that we might be able to see the fulfillment of all that we have fellowshipped today. I wish to live on this earth and witness with my own eyes the truth of the Lord not only being printed into books through our hands, but also being sent through us to every part of the world and prevailing in every place. I absolutely believe that this will hasten the Lord’s return because it is through this that the Lord will prepare His bride. I hope that we all can see the manifestation of such a situation.” (CWWL, 1986, vol. 2, “The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity,” p. 460)

## Appendix C-Distributing Publications

### I. REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRESENT MINISTRY

In recent months there has been much consideration of the need to increase the distribution of the present ministry. One source of encouragement came from a particular speaking by Witness Lee

“...I hope that we could live to be eighty or ninety, even to over a hundred, so that we might be able to see the fulfillment of all that we have fellowshiped today. I wish to live on this earth and witness with my own eyes the truth of the Lord not only being **printed into books through our hands** but also being **sent through us to every part of the world** and prevailing in every place. I absolutely believe that this will hasten the Lord’s return because it is through this that the Lord will prepare His bride. I hope that we all can see the manifestation of such a situation.”<sup>1</sup>

### II. REGARDING THE GIVING AWAY OF BOOKS

In 1925 in an announcement in *The Christian* magazine, Watchman Nee promoted the buying of books and then giving them away.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THE GIVING AWAY OF BOOKS

This work is very important. Of course, we should do our best to proclaim our beloved Lord and other truths with our mouth. But we cannot take hold of everyone to speak to him. For this reason, **we should give away books**. Do you know that giving books away produces the greatest results? Do you know that giving away a good book can lead others to receive the Lord, to understand the truth, and to forsake heresies? Unfortunately, those believers who are able would not do this work. Although we cannot know the result of giving books away, in that day when we stand before the judgment seat, we will see why it was worthwhile to do this work. We publish books, and **you should buy and give away books**.<sup>2</sup>

In 1995 we were encouraged by Brother Lee to visit people and give them books.

We should learn how to visit people by knocking on their doors. When we do this, we should bring certain publications to **give them** as free gifts. Everyone will be happy to receive *The All-inclusive Christ*, *The Economy of God*, and *The Normal Christian Life*. Among the many millions of Christians today, these books are very much needed.<sup>3</sup>

### III. REGARDING THE LOANING OF BOOKS

The biographies of two young men show that two major areas of the earth were opened to the gospel through brothers loaning books to seeking young men.

#### A. THE OPENING OF AFRICA TO THE GOSPEL AS A RESULT OF LOANING BOOKS

The first account is in the 1820s when a twenty-year-old youth in Blantyre, Scotland,<sup>4</sup> opened his heart to what he referred to as “a personal application of the provisions of the Savior’s atonement.”<sup>5</sup> Shortly, it became his desire to show his attachment to the cause of Him who died for him by devoting his life to His service.<sup>6</sup> “When he determined to be a missionary, the only persons to whom he communicated his purpose were his minister and his parents, from all of whom he received great encouragement.”<sup>7</sup> His minister at this time was John Moir, a twenty-four-year-old pastor in the adjacent village of Hamilton, Scotland (a walk of about two miles).<sup>8</sup> During this time Mr. Moir shepherded him by informal meetings and by **lending** him books,<sup>9</sup> books that included a Greek Lexicon.<sup>10</sup> *These books were “conscientiously returned.”*<sup>11</sup> Later, in 1837, Moir approached the London Missionary Society on his behalf.<sup>12</sup> This young man was **David Livingston**, whose labors as a missionary and explorer would open the door to the gospel throughout Africa.

## B. THE OPENING OF INLAND CHINA TO THE GOSPEL AS THE RESULT OF LOANING BOOKS

At about this same time in a small town in England, out of boredom, a young man borrowed a pamphlet from his father's library to while away unoccupied hours. It was concerning the finished work of Christ.<sup>13</sup> This resulted in his "accepting this Savior and His salvation."<sup>14</sup> Soon "he recognized that he was saved to serve, and that a work was waiting for which a life of inner victory and power would be essential."<sup>15</sup> Later, he felt that God had called him to spend his life in missionary service in China.<sup>16</sup> He learned that a minister in his "native town possessed a copy of Medhurst's *China*,<sup>17</sup> and calling upon him ventured to ask a **loan** of the book."<sup>18</sup>

At a certain point the treasurer of the Bible Society and a founder of the Sunday School, John Whitworth, "lent" him Christian papers and books.<sup>19</sup> The young man admitted that there were books that "**I was not able to afford.**"<sup>20</sup> He was able to write that "since then I have had access to a tolerably good library."<sup>21</sup> This young man was **Hudson Taylor** who would take the lead in the opening of inland China to the gospel

## IV. REGARDING RAISING UP BOOKROOMS AND BOOKSTORES

Brother Lee proposed further that we open bookstores for the distribution of the publications.

We should train the young trainees and co-workers not simply to preach but to set up these bookrooms for people to read and study our books.<sup>22</sup>

Now what we must do, and what the Lord will do, is to take steps to spread His truth to care for God's people on the whole earth. The best way to do this is to **set up bookstores** with our publications in many languages and in many countries...In a few years the truth will flow like oceans around the earth.<sup>23</sup>

Would we be those who give and loan books of this present ministry to many seeking young people? To do this could afford the way for us to tell them of our own help from a particular book and later to fellowship with them regarding their reading. We need to sell the books, give the books, and loan the books. "It is all in the books."

<sup>1</sup>Witness Lee, *The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity* (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 2001), p.163.

<sup>2</sup>Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 7* (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1992), p. 1236.

<sup>3</sup>Witness Lee, *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1995* (Anaheim, Living Stream Ministry, 2007) .

<sup>4</sup>William Garden Blaikie, *The Personal Life of David Livingston, Chiefly from His Unpublished Journals and Correspondence in the Possession of His Family* (New York: Fleming Revell Co., [originally published] 1880), pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup>Blaikie, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Blaikie, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup>George Seaver, *David Livingston: His Life and Letters* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), p. 22.

<sup>8</sup>R. J. Campbell, *Livingstone* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1930), p. 33.

<sup>9</sup>Blaikie, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup>Blaikie, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup>Blaikie, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup>Campbell, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup>Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor in the Early Years* (London: The China Inland Mission, 1923), p. 67.

<sup>14</sup>Taylor, p. 67.

<sup>15</sup>Taylor, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup>Taylor, p. 85.

<sup>17</sup>Medhurst was an early missionary to the Chinese.

<sup>18</sup>Taylor, p. 85.

<sup>19</sup>Taylor, p. 103.

<sup>20</sup>Taylor, p. 103.

<sup>21</sup>Taylor, p. 104.

<sup>22</sup>Lee, *Collected Works*, 1995.

<sup>23</sup>Lee, *Collected Works*, 1995.