

Homes

I. The homes being containers to retain the students we have contacted on the campus.

Acts 2:46-47

46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of *their* food with exultation and simplicity of heart,

47 Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.

"The right way to gain people is to bring students into the church life and then encourage them to meet together in the way that we have described above. Through them we will have a "living advertisement"—a group of young people who are meeting together day by day. By means of these students it will be easy for us to convince others. The young people will bring in more young people and eventually even older people. ...The churches are the "boats" that will contain the "fish" that we will catch in the future. ...On the one hand, we need "fishing boats" that can help to bring in the students, and, on the other hand, we need "containing boats" that can contain all the fish that have been caught by the fishing boats." *Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1967 Vol. 2, pp. 103-104, 108

For the work on the universities, we also need married couples with homes. Out of the number that go to work on a campus, there should be some who have homes. The younger saints can take the lead to contact people, and the couples can open their homes to keep the ones who are contacted. We need both functions. In this way, all the saints will be useful.

The Lord's Recovery and the Present Situation of Religion, Chapter 4

It is very easy to see that without a good church life, there is no way to retain people. If we use a hose to pump water out of a well and onto the ground, the water will soon seep back into its original place... Unless we have a container, we will not be able to keep the water from leaking away. The church life should be like a reservoir which keeps the water from leaking away whenever it rains, because the water is completely stored up in the reservoir. It is not easy to build a large reservoir, but it is very easy to find water pots. Each home meeting, even if it cannot be considered a small reservoir, can be considered a small water pot. The water which we pump up can be poured into these pots. From the beginning to the end of the year, only a small amount will leak out. For the most part the water can be stored up. In the past our failure was that we only had the big meetings and did not build up the home meetings, so we did not have a place to store the water. It was like giving birth to children with no place to raise them. Now we have found that the home meetings are the right place for the new ones to grow up and live. Therefore, we all must see clearly that the new way depends on the home meetings, and the home meetings depend on how we lead and perfect the new ones.

The Furtherance of the New Way for the Lord's Recovery, Chapter 7

The home is a steady and stabilizing unit. Those who are saved in the homes grow up in the homes. Since they are built up in the homes, it is not easy to lose them. In the past the church life was like a social club. When a person was saved, he was frequently ignored because of lack of care and concern. Now the church must be built up in the homes. When a person is saved and baptized, he will not be dropped. Rather, the fruit will remain and be strong.

Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 1: The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, Chapter 16

The big meetings are not the foundation of the church. The meetings from house to house, the meetings in the homes, are the foundation of the church. The big meetings are a kind of skating on ice. It is the home meetings that can actually keep people. This light is very clear in the Bible.

On Home Meetings, pp. 10-11

I am not joking. Based on my observation from every angle, I am convinced that the increase and spread of the church depend fully on the home meetings. This is based on my sixty years of experience. I have discovered the law for the increase and spread of the church. Everything has its own laws. Science is the discovery of these laws. The law for the increase of the church is the home meetings.

Key Points on the Home Meetings, Chapter 7, p. 79

A. Coordinating with the community saints to form a nest for fruit-bearing

We estimate that each full-timer can take care of twenty new ones. While you are taking care of these twenty new ones, you should find a way to join the new ones with the old ones in the district. These old ones are experienced and should be brought in to coordinate with you. Their time is not so flexible as yours. The working ones have to go to their offices, and the sisters have to take care of their housework. You have to work according to their schedule and see how to put the new ones into the group. Only when these groups have been formed will there be a stable condition. All the districts should do their best to carry out these points

Words of Training for the New Way, Vol. 2, Chapter 19, pp. 73-74

Psalm 71:18

So even into my old age and greyheadedness, O God, do not forsake me, Until I have declared Your strength Unto the next generation, Your might unto everyone who is to come.

- B. Practical care in the homes—untying the “knotty” problems in life

Colossians 2:2

That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

- C. A spiritual gymnasium where the young people find their spirit and learn to exercise their spirit.

Acts 12:12

And when he became aware of *this*, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled together and praying.

John 12:1-3

1 Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

2 Therefore they made Him a supper there; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of the ones reclining at table with Him.

3 Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

The church in the house of Nymphas was the local church in Laodicea, which met in Nymphas's house. Such meetings in the saints' homes afford every attending believer the opportunity to function, and they also strengthen the mutual fellowship among the saints. *Colossians 4:15, Footnote 15¹*

- D. The place where the young people are planted into the hearts of the saints.

Philippians 1:25

And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,

- E. The place where the young people see their future

If the older saints in the church can pass on the lessons they have learned in the Lord throughout the years to the younger saints, regardless of whether it is a burden for the gospel, knowledge of the truth, or a portion in the service, this would be wonderful. In this way, the older saints can rest and sleep in peace, the young people can function appropriately in the church, and the teenagers and children can grow up healthily in the church.

Knowing Life and the Church, Chapter 9, p. 113

...If the saints in every locality are well coordinated, the new ones will be inspired with what they see. They will see the real social life, communal life, and family life. Our service in coordination will touch, soften, and warm up their heart to receive the living, piercing word (Heb. 4:12). Once a freshman is brought into your living room, most of the work is already done. *Preaching the Gospel on the College Campuses*, Chapter 2, pp. 27-28

- F. The place that becomes an entrance into the church life (Acts 8:3)

1 Corinthians 14:23a-24, 26

23 If therefore the whole church comes together in one place...

24 But if all prophesy and some unbeliever or unlearned person enters, he is convicted by all, he is examined by all;

26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

When we work in this way, we should first bring people to the house of the couple who live near the campus. There we can bring them to the Lord. After we have brought them to the Lord, it will be easy for us to train them. By this training, we will bring them to the church life. It is true that the couple's home is their stepping-stone into the church life. *Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1967 Vol. 2, p. 106

Having a home to bring the students to makes it easy to bring people into the church life.

Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967 Vol. 2, p. 105

- G. The place where the saints become happily exhausted, happily satisfied, and totally un-routine

2 Cor. 12:15

But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?

II. Some characteristics of the homes

- A. Mutuality

John 12:2-3

2 Therefore they made Him a supper there; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of the ones reclining *at table* with Him.

3 Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

- B. Loving one another

John 21:15

Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

- C. Considering one another (fellowship)

Heb. 10:24-25

24 And let us consider one another so as to incite *one another* to love and good works,

25 Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.

- D. Interceding

Acts 4:31

And when they had *so* besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

- E. Shepherding

1 Pet. 5:2

Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

- F. Disorderly, non-uniform and disorganized.

At the same time you must be careful not to bring the atmosphere of the big meetings into the home meetings. Big meetings should be carried out in an orderly manner. In contrast, home meetings are characterized by their disorderliness, and it does not matter even if the meetings drag on a little. We really must learn to meet with the new ones just like a family and talk about things together, leading and helping them as the need arises but without replacing them. *The Furtherance of the New Way for the Lord's Recovery*, Chapter 6, p. 80

In addition, we can open our homes one evening a week to allow the saints to relax and be comfortable. We should not take anything else as our enjoyment. We should read the Bible, discuss the truths of the Bible, speak of the Lord Jesus, and give testimonies, and we can play the piano to accompany our hymn singing. This is the way of blessing. *Three Crucial Matters for the Increase and Building Up of the Church*, Chapter 4, p. 54

We need to understand that the element of non-uniformity is the very characteristic of the small groups. This is a very distinctive feature of the small groups. It means that the small groups are able to take care of every saint in the group. This is the reason we say that the small groups are the life pulse of the church...

Still, we need to realize that it is this "unorganized" element that brings in new ones... We will not be afraid of the so-called "unorganized" element in the small groups. Once the small groups become uniform, the requirements increase, and it becomes difficult to bring in the new ones. The fact that the small groups are somewhat disorganized is proof that the new ones are being brought in. In order to care for everyone's condition, each one can come as early or as late as he pleases.

Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 1: The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, Chapter 4, pp. 95-96

I once planted a peach tree and a plum tree behind my house, and they both grew well. I decided to trim them myself. My way was to trim them in a neat and tidy way like giving a haircut. Eventually, however, the trees did not bear any fruit. I was quite frustrated. One young American sister, who came periodically to help me, said to me, "My father used to trim trees. He told me that the young shoots should not be cut off. It is the young branches that bear the fruit. You have cut off all the young branches and have left behind only the old branches. To be sure,

you will not have any fruit.” I had cut off the young shoots because I considered them untidy, yet it is these untidy branches that bear fruit. Do not complain that the home meetings are going nowhere. It is possible for us to damage them through our “trimming.” When this happens, it means that we are not doing things the right way.

Later I learned the lesson concerning trimming fruit trees. Last year my wife and I went to my daughter's house for a rest. For years she had sent me many sweet and juicy plums. When I arrived at her house, I went to her backyard to take a look at her plum trees. They were extremely ugly. All of them looked scruffy and untidy. My daughter said to me, “Do not despise these ugly branches. Under their boughs are many fruits.” I looked carefully and discovered that indeed all the branches were bent over with fruit. I began to say to myself, “Man, do you want fruit, or do you want tidiness?”

Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 1: The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, Chapter 8, Section 1