

**Articles and Sermons :: Equipping and Training of Watchman Nee****Equipping and Training of Watchman Nee - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/7/30 1:44**

Watchman Nee attended no theological schools or Bible institutes. His wealth of knowledge concerning God's purpose, Christ, the things of the Spirit, and the church was acquired through studying the Bible and reading spiritual books. Watchman Nee became intimately familiar with and greatly enlightened by the Word through diligent study using twenty different methods. In addition, in the early days of his ministry he spent one-third of his income on his personal needs, one-third on helping others, and the remaining third on spiritual books. He acquired a collection of more than 3,000 of the best Christian books, including nearly all the classical Christian writers from the first century on. He had a phenomenal ability to select, comprehend, discern, and memorize relevant material, and he could grasp and retain the main points of a book at a glance. Watchman Nee was thus able to glean all the profitable scriptural points and spiritual principles from throughout church history and synthesize them into his vision and practice of the Christian life and of the church life. Watchman Nee received much enlightenment and help from a number of Christian writers, as follows:

The assurance of salvation
George Cutting, a Brethren writer

Life
John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress
Madame Guyon's biography
Hudson Taylor's biography
the writings of other mystics

Christ
J.G. Bellett
Charles G. Trumbull
A.B. Simpson
T. Austin Sparks
others

The Spirit
Andrew Murray's The Spirit of Christ

The Three Parts of Man
(body, soul, and spirit)
Jessie Penn-Lewis
Mary C. McDonough

Faith
George Müller's autobiography

Abiding in Christ
Andrew Murray
Hudson Taylor's biography

Christ's death
Jessie Penn-Lewis

Christ's resurrection and His Body
T. Austin Sparks
others

God's plan of redemption
Mary McDonough

The church
John Nelson Darby
other Brethren teachers

Prophecy
Robert Govett
D.M. Panton
G.H. Pember
other Brethren writers

Church history
John Foxe
E.H. Broadbent
others

Re: Equipping and Training of Watchman Nee, on: 2005/7/30 2:17

Thank you for posting this Greg.

So many have said things that aren't right or true about Nee, but he helped me so much, when I first got saved, that I owe him a big hand-shake One Day.

Nee let me in on TAS and Jessie Penn-Lewis, as he mentioned them in his writings somewhere.

The opposers of Nee, call him a "mystic". in a negative sense, but that's not true. He just believed that "He must increase and we must decrease" ... and I guess that teaching isn't as well received as it was back in the old days.

He and TAS & JPL protected me from the "strange" things, that can happen in the Full-Gospel realm.

Anyhow, thanks !

Re: Which Lee? - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/7/30 3:20

Quote:
-----So many have said things that aren't right or true about Nee, but he helped me so much, when I first got saved, that I owe him a big hand-shake One Day.

I feel the same way Grannie... "Normal Christian Life", and "Sit Walk Stand" are very helpful books.

The controversy over Nee, as I understand it, is that many books bearing his name were published through an associate of his named Witness Lee who may have contributed to the content. In short, many of the words attributed to Watchman may not be his, but loosely collected oral teachings that were recollected and written down by Witness Lee. As such they are not authentic Watchman. The problem is that there is no way to distinguish Witness' editorial influence from straight Watchman thinking.

At least this is how I understand the controversy and dubious reputation of many books credited to Watchman. Some of the books I have read of his do indeed feel more mystic and seem to have a different "voice" than NCL. (I noticed this before I heard about Witness Lee...)

Maybe someone else here has a better understanding of this issue.

MC

Re: - posted by Koinonia2 (), on: 2005/7/30 9:26

Actually, the Nee titles published by Living Stream Ministry (Witness Lee's publisher) are generally considered very good editions. They can always be compared to the editions published by CFP (Stephen Kaung's publisher), and one will always see that any differences are minor.

The problems people usually have with Nee are related to some of his own teachings - some feel that THE SPIRITUAL MAN can lead to extreme introspection; some feel that SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY (aka AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION) can lead to control and abuse, etc. None of these stem from differences of translation.

And, I would say that problems people find even with these books are personal - misapprehensions of teaching, or misapplications of practice, not necessarily results of Watchman Nee's theology.

Just my thoughts. :-)

Re: Equipping and Training of Watchman Nee - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/7/30 11:32

Thank you Greg for your post.

I'd like to say something which is just a personal observation.

I have read Watchman Nee for many years. Some of his books, (actually transcribed messages for most of them), are better than others.

But I would like to say that I cannot and would not recommend "The Spiritual Man", nor "Spiritual Authority" to anyone.

Brother Nee himself was reluctant to have "The Spiritual Man" translated into English. It was written when he was very young, and when he was being greatly influenced by Jessie Penn Lewis. As Daniel said, it can lead to introspection, which is never a good thing. The chapter "An Analysis of the Spirit", (i.e. the spirit of man), while acknowledged by many is inadequate.

Having said this, there are many good things in the book, but I would definitely say that it shouldn't be read by the young believer.

I have a big problem with "Spiritual Authority". To me it might be his worst book. I will say why I don't like it in a sentence : it is solely based on the Old Testament. Authority in the New Testament has nothing in common with the one we find in the Old.

Having said this, Watchman Nee remains one of my favourite authors.

Manfred

Re:, on: 2005/7/31 3:20

Hia Manfred, I wanted to thank you for posting all of those TAS posts for us. Great !

The first book I read of Nee was in '79, "The Release of the Spirit", about dying to self. Then read it again about '85 or so, and got even more out of it. Then again a third time, and once again, got even more out of it.

I started collecting his books in '79. In fact, strangely enough, our Romans professor made The Normal Christian Life, mandatory reading.

I think I've read about 30 of his books, though all a while ago. There were 2 points, that I did not agree with him in.

One was, he had "multiple raptures". Seemed like about 5 or so. I lost count anyhow. And can't remember which book that was in.

Second, was that he said, that if The Lord called him to go to such & such city, and he didn't go, that he'd miss the rapture

e for that disobedience. I thought that was just a bit rough. Can't remember what book that was in either, but both of these were small books.

But I've been collecting Classics for all these years, and I find at least a few points in each and every Author's teachings, that I don't agree with, but still like their stuff.

I liked Nee's "Latent Power of the Soul". Because, coming to Christ, I found myself with the David Wilkerson crowd, when DW was still in Texas writing articles for Keith Greens newsletter, years before Times Square, which are Pentacostal, and it was good to know some of what was in that book, when in a Pentacostal Church.

But, to tell you the truth ... after all the Nee books I read, I got just the opposite out of them then "introspection", because I remember telling folks, not to get into introspection since I was a babe in Christ, because of Nee's books that I had read. Especially 'Release in the Spirit', where he said, 'we can't kill ourselves', in other words, no flesh or self, can work to put self to death. Only that God does it, mostly by circumstances that show us how much of 'us' is still in us. And other books he had written, made me see that introspection was wrong, and helped me, because I tended to do that, not knowing any better.

I also agree with the points you brought up about, much on the "Authority" side. There's sure an imbalance on that issue in the Churches, that's for sure.

But I'd like to hear where you disregard Jessie Penn-Lewis.

Some say she taught that Christians can be demon "possessed", but I didn't get that from the book. I know she said, oppressed.

I recently read her book a second time. The first time was in about '85 also.

I don't find the introspection in her writings.

What it did help me with, back when I first read it, was the abuses going on in the Full-Gospel realm and about "the dangers of a Passive mind".

I think that is an important teaching, that both she and Nee taught on.

Anyhow, both of them combined, spared me all of the (what we call) hooga-booga extremes in Full-Gospel and other churches.

I also liked that she teaches, that an oppressed person can be set free with just The Lord and themselves, and that proved they don't need these wacky all-nighter "deliverance services". Hoy !

I'd like to hear your feelings about her teachings, because I recently downloaded all of her articles here. I felt that with the deception that's here and increasing in the signs & wonders gang, etc. that her book was very helpful to help folks discern between a true move of God and a counterfeit.

Could you share, where the "introspection" part was ? I haven't read all that I've downloaded yet ... just her book.

Thanks,
Annie

Re: Equipping and Training of Watchman Nee - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/7/31 9:53

Annie,

Thank you for your post, I'll try to answer your questions.

1) I think that all those who desire to study Romans, should indeed read "The Normal Christian Life"; to me it is WN's best book.

2) I never gave too much importance to the theories of a few raptures, or to the teaching of "partial rapture(s)". WN got his teaching from a circle of godly men whose names were: Robert Govett, D. M. Panton (Govett's successor at Norwich), G. H. Pember and especially G. H. Lang. I have and appreciate these men's ministry, but I feel that their insistence with their "partial rapture" theory is unacceptable. I think that they considered the rapture as a reward, which it is not.

2) I liked what you said about reading the classics, but not agreeing with all that they say. This is, I think, putting Paul's words into practice: "Examine everything carefully, hold fast to that which is good."

3) I don't disregard JPL, I disagree with some of the things she taught. She definitely taught that a truly born-from-above believer could be demon-possessed. It is in the unabridged version of the book called "War on the Saints". A book I certainly don't recommend.

4) As to Nee's "introspection", I have read the "Spiritual Man" many years ago, and can't quote off hand. But you should perhaps check the following chapters/parts: "The Analysis of the Soul", in volume 2 and 3.

I can't agree either with what he says in his chapter/part called "The Analysis of the Spirit", i.e. man's spirit. For the reason that the spirit cannot be defined in rational terms.

I hope this helps, otherwise revert.

Manfred

Re:, on: 2005/7/31 18:12

Great ~ Major helpful, Thank you !

That clears up a lot then.

I had heard that of the unabridged version of JPL's "War on the Saints" ... I have the 1994 and the latest, 2004 and see it was first published in 1916. Ah-ha, dat explains dat.

I know that WN wrote the Spiritual Man after only being saved 5 years. And I read it back when, as I told you ... but I'll dust it off and look up what you've said ... I don't doubt you in the least.

Thank you for your very succinct answers and your time.

Annie

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/7/31 22:47

I've thought about it a lot more since I've read Nee, and I used to be pretty convinced that perhaps Witness Lee had tampered greatly with Nee's writings, especially given the cultish nature of "the little flock" as it exists in the states today. However, I think it is much more reasonable to conclude that Watchman Nee's theology grew very much over time, thus, changes of "tone" and the like. This would also explain the many contradictions his writings are riddled with (or at least appear to me as contradictions), especially regarding the gifts of the Spirit and nature of Church government and authority.

Re: Watchman Nee - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/8/1 5:07

Quote:
-----I've thought about it a lot more since I've read Nee, and I used to be pretty convinced that perhaps Witness Lee had tampered greatly with Nee's writings, especially given the cultish nature of "the little flock" as it exists in the states today. However, I think it is much more reasonable to conclude that Watchman Nee's theology grew very much over time, thus, changes of "tone" and the like. This would also explain the many contradictions his writings are riddled with (or at least appear to me as contradictions), especially regarding the gifts of the Spirit and nature of Church government and authority.

Hello Jimmy,

I would like to respond to your post making some remarks.

1) I don't think that Witness Lee has tampered with Watchman Nee's messages. (Remember that WN wrote only one book, all the other books are transcribed messages.) Let me quote what Daniel said about this in an earlier post:

Quote:
----- Actually, the Nee titles published by Living Stream Ministry (Witness Lee's publisher) are generally considered very good editions. They can always be compared to the editions published by CFP (Stephen Kaung's publisher), and one will always see that any differences are minor.

I know Daniel well, and I also know that his assessment is trustworthy.

2) There is no "Little Flock" movement as such in the US. Even though WL claims to have carried on from WN, that is not true; WL's movement is radically different from the "Little Flock" in China. WL's movement is called "The Local Church" or "The Lord's Recovery", never it is, or should be, referred to as the "Little Flock". In fact in China today the two movements are very distinct, and those counted among the "Little Flock" won't have anything to do with the "Local Church", (also called the "Shouters", in that country).

3) Third, you speak of WN's theology growing over time. For some things it should be so. (Of course I don't refer to what we call "the fundamentals of the Christian faith"). When I was a young believer I held things I wouldn't hold today. As we grow in the Lord, we see the things spiritual in a different light; that in fact is the nature of being a disciple compared to just being a believer. A disciple keeps on learning, and will do so until the end, so adjustment to some things will be necessary.

That is why it is often wise to read WN in a chronological order. Some of the dates when these messages were given are stated at the beginning of the books.

Hope this helps,

Manfred

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/8/1 12:18

Quote:

There is no "Little Flock" movement as such in the US. Even though WL claims to have carried on from WN, that is not true; WL's movement is radically different from the "Little Flock" in China. WL's movement is called "The Local Church" or "The Lord's Recovery", never it is, or should be, referred to as the "Little Flock".

Correct. Witness Lee's offshoot is not the same, though of course, he would have begged to differ. You are right as well, it is called "The Local Church" here in the states. It's been a while since I've done any reading on the issue, so I co

uld not recall exactly what it was called.

Quote:

Third, you speak of WN's theology growing over time. For some things it should be so. (Of course I don't refer to what we call "the fundamentals of the Christian faith")

Indeed. I can even look at my own web site that I have maintained for a couple years now, and see that I even disagree with some of the things which at the time I asserted with much confidence. Such is perfectly fine, and can often be a sign of health, for somebody to be willing to change a doctrinal position they previously held, especially considering how stubborn we can all be. Indeed, fundamentally he seems to have remained the same. Though regarding his doctrines regarding the church, he seems to have changed quite a bit. And being that Nee was a highly motivated missionary, and very active in planting new churches, I can only imagine how this must have effected his oversight of his churches.

It is also interesting enough to note that Nee seems to have considered his doctrine regarding the Church relatively a pretty important fundamental. I recall in one of his writings where he refused to have fellowship with other denominational churches in the area, because they did not meet under the headship of Christ.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/8/1 15:54

Quote:
-----But I'd like to hear where you disregard Jessie Penn-Lewis.

Some say she taught that Christians can be demon "possessed", but I didn't get that from the book. I know she said, oppressed. I recently read her book a second time. The first time was in about '85 also. I don't find the introspection in her writings.

Here are a couple of threads about JPL. I just posted them for FYI. To discuss JPL it would probably be better to start another thread on her.. I don't know but there might already be one somewhere.

(http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?mode=viewtopic&topic_id5539&forum41&start0&viewmode=flat&order1) War on the Saints
(http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id5659&forum36) Types of believers
The thread on Types of believers starts with a quote from the book. Type 2 she clearly tells that she believes (I do not) they are possessed

Re: JPL - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/8/1 17:45

Josh,

We can, should and must reject the teaching that says that born-from-above believers can be demon possessed simply because it is not taught in the New Testament. We cannot find one verse that will back this up. I am amazed that JPL and Evan Roberts could write so much about this without having any support from the New Testament, and it is even more amazing to see that many Christians believe it! Obviously these ones have not applied Acts 17:11.

Manfred

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/8/1 17:58

I'm somewhat leary of responding cause I dont want to get off tract here but I assume it does have something to do with the topic, since Watchmen Nee did read JPL books. I have heard that Evan Roberts did regret having his name on the book War on the Saints. From what I have read and seen JPL completely drug Evan Roberts away from the ministry. I think (i cant remember the exact number) that Evan Roberts only preached 8 or 10 times after being taken in by JPL.

Re: - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/8/1 18:43

I wouldn't want to expand too much here about JPL and ER, by doing a search on SI, one can find quite a few threads of the past about them and even on "War on the Saints".

Watchman Nee is the subject of this thread. You may want to start another one about JPL and ER.

(For your information there is a good biography of ER: "Evan Roberts: An Instrument of Revival, Brynmor Pierce-Jones 1995, published by Bridge Publishing")

Manfred

Re: - posted by Koinonia2 (), on: 2005/8/1 19:00

If I might continue the discussion on the different English editions/translations of Watchman Nee, I would just add that I agree with Manfred in the usefulness of going through Nee's writings according to their order of original publication.

I have two full sets Nee's books (one called "complete", the other "collected") here. One of these is published in a chronological format. Just to compare the first volume (written when Nee was still a very young man in his early 20's) with the last (immediately prior to his imprisonment) is very striking. General differences are very noticeable. I think there can be little doubt that Nee's theology, tone, and even his style gradually changed as he matured.

Perhaps it would be of interest here to show an example with two texts, one from the beginning of Nee's public ministry, followed by another from near the end:

Quote:
-----Throughout church history, there has never been a time when messages on the cross are as needed as today. For the present-day Christians, who, being Christians, are obviously redeemed by the blood, the most important thing is to know and to experience the deeper aspects of the fundamental truths of the cross. It is, of course, a glorious thing to know about the substitutional death of the cross, but this will not afford the believers much growth. All the things that Christ has accomplished for us on the cross must be experienced by us one by one before we can mature in life and can become a vessel for God.

~*The Christian Life and Warfare*, pg. 6, 1922 (Watchman Nee is just 19!)

Quote:
-----God desires to express His authority through the church. Many people do not realize that the church is a crucial and solemn institution. God must carry out His will fully through the church; the church cannot afford any hindrance to Him. If a man does not see the seriousness of this matter, he may presume the church to be nothing but a gathering of Christians, a society of brotherly and sisterly love. He may consider the church a mere gathering of men with the same faith or same love who cherish the same future hope. However, God has a different view toward the church. In man's eyes the church is an organization, a gathering of men with kindred love, but God's view is different. He considers the church to be the Body of Christ. God has made Christ the head of the church. The church is the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23); it is not merely the gathering of men with similar goals. The relationship between Christ and the church in God's ordination is a relationship between the Head and the Body.

~*Miscellaneous Records of the Kuling Training (1)*, pg. 166, 1948 (WN is 45)

Not only is Nee touching deeper, more difficult matters by the second quote, there is even a clear difference between the form of the first (being a published article) and the form of the second (being a spoken address).

Unrelated to this, but allow me also to show the difference between two translations of the same book as edited by two different people. The first is from Stephen Kaung's publisher; the second from Witness Lee's:

Quote:
-----The word "flesh" is *basar* in Hebrew and *sarx* in Greek. Seen often in the Bible, it is used in various ways. Its most significant usage, observed and made most clear in Paul's writings, has reference to the unregenerated person. Speaking of his old "I," he says in Romans 7: "I am fleshly" (v. 14 Darby). Not merely his nature or a particular person of his being is fleshly; the "I" - Paul's whole being - is fleshly. He reiterates this thought in verse 18 by asserting "within me, that is, in my flesh." It follows clearly that "flesh" in the Bible points to all an unregenerated person is....

~*The Spiritual Man*, CFP, pg. 69

Quote:
-----The word *flesh* is *basar* in Hebrew and *sarx* in Greek. This word is often seen in the Bible and is used in various senses, but chiefly in reference to an *unregenerated person*. If we take a look at what Paul has said, we shall have a clear insight into its meaning. He said, "I am *fleshy*" (Rom. 7:14). It was not only his nature or merely any one part of his being that was fleshy; it was "I" as a person, the *whole being* of Paul was fleshy. In verse 18, in further clarification of his meaning, he declared "In *me*, that is, in *my flesh*." It is very clear here that the flesh in biblical usage refers to all that is in man when he is still in an unregenerated state....

~*The Spiritual Man*, LSM, pg. 59

For all practical purposes, these two quotes could be one and the same (the reason, coincidentally, that I choose *The Spiritual Man* here is only because, as Manfred has pointed out earlier, it is the only actual *book written* by WN, and thus easier to compare....I chose the portion randomly).

In doing all of this, I hope it can be a clarification for those who wonder about differences in WN's writings (it is not uncommonly brought up). I do not want to give the impression that I study Nee more than I study the Holy Word! Surely, this would be ridiculous. But it is something that interests me, and something I have spent time looking into.

Personally, I prefer to read CFP's translations. I find I have an easier time reading them. However, I know others who would say the exact converse! CFP's translations seem to be edited more thoroughly in order to give them a literary polish (vs. spoken form being retained) - slightly more "elegant", less repetition. For me, this makes for an easier time reading. LSM's translations come across as more plain and straightforward. The spoken form is retained. One might argue that LSM's are actually more "accurate" than CFP's (though I am not arguing that at all). It seems to be a matter of preference.

I think either set is very worthy. Remember, not only are most of these redacted from individuals' shorthand notes (no tape recording from which to transcribe!), they are also translated from a language which is *entirely* different from our own. Being a multi-lingual person, I am very familiar with the fact that two different people can translate the same text and, without consulting the other, come up with two similar, but quite different end-results. Both may be *entirely* accurate to the original, and yet elicit the response, "How do they differ so?" That's just the way it is...

As others have said, I would be more cautious as to choosing *which* of the books you read. Some are not recommended, especially to younger believers.

Regards,

Re: Watchman Nee - posted by TruthWitness, on: 2005/8/8 18:12

Watchman Nee had a very great impact on my life, going back to 1967 when I read "The Normal Christian Life" for the first time. I regard the chapter entitled "Why This Waste?" on the woman with the alabaster flask, as one of the messages that had the most profound influence on my life.

However, I have long stopped reading Watchman Nee and it is not because I reject him. Not at all. I believe the greatest problem with Watchman Nee was that with most things in his life it became a "law" and I believe in the end he could not get away from his own personal "laws".

He had this thing about "locality" which he adopted from the Brethren teachers. To him you simply could not get past this principle. While he was in England in 1937-1938 he spent a lot of time with T. Austin Sparks, about 18 months altogether (Manfred can correct me on this). The matter of locality frequently came up in fellowship and TAS even went so far as to print "Concerning Our Missions" (with the later English title "The Normal Christian Church Life"). However, this book was never distributed and I have a feeling it was by mutual agreement.

That was the turning point in Watchman Nee's life: had he given up his strong opinion on "locality" and had he built on his relationship with T. Austin-Sparks, I believe the remaining years of his ministry could have been much different. He had embraced so much of others (Penn-Lewis, Govett, Panton, Pember, Godet, Lang and many others, including John Nelson Darby, from which he took over extreme dispensational teachings) but he was unable to let go of some, including the Brethren teaching of "locality".

Watchman Nee and TAS never saw each other again and until Nee's imprisonment in 1952 seldom corresponded by letter. However, in a letter to Austin-Sparks not long after his visit, he lamented that he did not have a true soulmate amongst his co-workers, someone with whom he could fellowship on an equal footing.

It is my humble opinion that Watchman Nee's views on "locality" cost him much in terms of acceptance to a wider audience, which I believed he deserved. His strict "laws" has made him somewhat unpalatable to most. In my own case, I just had to let go of him.

Just a passing note: like Manfred pointed out, Nee's "Little Flock" and Witness Lee's "Local Church" are not the same. They are much the same on several points of teaching but Lee's practices were somewhat dubious, to say the least.

Re: Watchman Nee - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/8/12 6:20

Quote:
----- While he was in England in 1937-1938 he spent a lot of time with T. Austin Sparks, about 18 months altogether (Manfred can correct me on this).

Actually, according to different sources, Watchman Nee spent 10 months in Europe; from July 1938 to May 1939.

I don't think personally that Watchman Nee was as dogmatic as Witness Lee on the "ground of the church", viz. one church per locality. Sure, he held and taught this view for many years, which he had picked up from the Brethren. But I think that with time and maturity, he would have seen that this system was not only not practical, but it wasn't in accord with the Scriptures.

For one thing, T. Austin-Sparks didn't adhere to this teaching, and if only he and Watchman Nee had had the opportunity to fellowship about this matter, I think that Watchman Nee would have changed his views. Unfortunately he did not have the time to rethink and reconsider this matter.

Witness Lee pushed it to extremes, so as to become very exclusive.

Manfred

Re: - posted by baruch_48, on: 2005/8/27 5:18

Witness Lee's gotten a bad rap, I feel, amongst the Church at large - not that I disagree with the sense that he did go to "extremes" concerning the idea of 'locality.'

I do feel that's the main separating point from his stream of ministry and Brother Nee's, perhaps moreso than Nee from Sparks (over the thought of locality). But I'm an outsider to the why's and wherefore's of their dividings.

How it must sadden the Lord's heart, to see these dividings over time yet under His sovereign provenance.

I am curious to see if the Lord is going to bring these separated 'streams' together, as we reach the end of this age.

The little flock in China, with the so-called 'shouters'

the Stephen Kaung 'adherents' with the Witness Lee 'adherents' in North America, Taiwan, and other parts of the earth at this point in time, I don't believe there would be many fellowships that would say they divide over Nee and Sparks, tho

ugh

It's been refreshing reading this thread, seeing many here use discernment in the teachings of a so-called "giant" like Brother Nee.

I've always had the impression that he's one saint in particular that his devotees won't question.

I too have profited through his teachings (mainly The Release of the Spirit) .. and I don't find him " too mystical " at all. But I do find The Spiritual Man to have been too "wallowing" in peeling the onion of the human soul, which I stayed away from, as that's my carnal tendency too much.

Refreshing thread!

baruch

Re: Demons and believers - posted by Strick, on: 2005/8/27 8:42

Quote:

Manfred wrote:

Josh,

We can, should and must reject the teaching that says that born-from-above believers can be demon possessed simply because it is not taught in the New Testament. We cannot find one verse that will back this up. I am amazed that JPL and Evan Roberts could write so much about this without having any support from the New Testament, and it is even more amazing to see that many Christians believe it! Obviously these ones have not applied Acts 17:11.

Manfred

We really can't believe that everything that there is to know about the spiritual realm is included in the Bible. One missionary speaking at our church was amazed that he had to cast a demon out of a Christian-his church's traditions said it wasn't possible. But, God showed him that she was born again. When illuminated on the subject, he was shown that though they can't get into your spirit, they can get into your body if you let them. Or if, in this case, you are an African brought up in a demonic religion. Getting saved doesn't automatically cast all of them away from you. There is quite a difference between our spirits and our souls and our bodies.

May all the blessings of the Bible overtake you. Deut. 28:2

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/8/27 11:55

Quote:

But, God showed him that she was born again. When illuminated on the subject, he was shown that though they can't get into your spirit, they can get into your body if you let them.

This is entirely absurd. There is not even a hint of understanding in the Scriptures that this is possible. What you call "illumination" is only in reality darkness.

If your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, then your body cannot be full of the Devil.

Quote:

Getting saved doesn't automatically cast all of them away from you.

How in the world can such a person be called saved... in what sense are they saved? Such a person is still under the dominion of Satan, and therefore, not saved.

Re: - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/8/27 16:29

Quote:
-----We really can't believe that everything that there is to know about the spiritual realm is included in the Bible. One missionary speaking at our church was amazed that he had to cast a demon out of a Christian-his church's traditions said it wasn't possible. But, God showed him that he was born again. When illuminated on the subject, he was shown that though they can't get into your spirit, they can get into your body if you let them. Or if, in this case, you are an African brought up in a demonic religion. Getting saved doesn't automatically cast all of them away from you. There is quite a difference between our spirits and our souls and our bodies.

I would join with Jimmy here is saying high and loud that the above is totally absurd.

Quote:
-----We really can't believe that everything that there is to know about the spiritual realm is included in the Bible.

Really ? I don't think that there is a thing that we can experience that cannot be found in the Bible. And if it is the case, then our experience must seriously be questioned.

Manfred

Re: - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/8/27 16:35

Quote:
-----I've always had the impression that he's one saint in particular that his devotees won't question.

Baruch,

That would be a terrible mistake:

Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so., Acts 17:11.

Notice that it was what Paul was saying that these people were examining.

Manfred

Re: - posted by Khatharr, on: 2005/9/6 4:11

My first post on a new forum... Here we go!

Quote:
-----Really ? I don't think that there is a thing that we can experience that cannot be found in the Bible. And if it is the case, then our experience must seriously be questioned.

Like space travel, internet use, fast food restaurants, etc? Does the Bible talk directly about multi-dimensionality, which it implies, or for that matter, what was Lamech's favorite hobby?

Does the Bible talk about everything? Well, the scripture teaches us the principals of God and what we need to know to serve Him. No more, and no less, and yet, that's an incredible mouthful in itself. It's not necessary for the Bible to tell us

about space travel, because God's principals apply the same in space as they do on Earth. If I go to the moon and beat up an astronaut, then I've sinned, just like if I had beat someone up in LA.

Just like outer space, the Bible doesn't talk much about the direct spiritual side of existence, and what it does talk about is mostly confusing, since we're not really equipped to live there right now. We've gotta wait for our new bodies before we'll be ready to grasp a lot of that stuff.

But here's a question to consider. The Bible repeatedly warns against the use of sorcery and witchcraft. Doesn't this imply that there's something to them?

I question my own experiences often, as it is wise to question all things. Before I was saved, I studied and even practiced a lot of different things. There are things out there that are real that make a lot of Christians shake in their boots and move to denial. Why? Doesn't the scripture teach that the gates of hell shall not prevail against us? Stop being afraid that there may be some validity to these things and accept that there's a whole other world out there that isn't our business right now.

I know that a lot of people teach that all 'magic' is just demonic influence of some sort. And if you want to teach that, then whatever. The majority of it is.

However, there are some things that are human 'capabilities' which are 'off-limits' for us. I struggled with this issue for a long time in my early Christian walk. My flesh wanted desperately to cling to the things that I knew how to do, but my renewed spirit (Not to mention His Spirit!) was calling me away from them. To compound this issue was the fact that the mainstream church tends to shoot its own wounded, and knowing that, there was nowhere I could turn for Godly advice.... Except to God Himself.

Which begins the tie-in with the other thing you were talking about, which, yes, is absurd. Does the Bible explicitly say that a saved person cannot be possessed? No, not directly. If you study the matter out for more than 30 seconds the conclusion will become apparent, though.

However, doesn't just the concept of a saved person being demon possessed offend the Spirit of Truth inside of you? Can't you feel that? God Himself testifies to us if we listen to Him. I've dealt with demons for a long time, both in my BC years and in my AD years ;-) and I'll tell you right now that no demon is gonna get control of one of God's redeemed. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes the idea absurd. For me it's as if that still, small voice is saying, "I'd like to see them try it. lol"

I dunno. I'm kinda coming off half-cocked here, but it's late and I'm sleepy, so please forgive me.

Since I'm new to this forum and not completely clear yet on how this whole system works, I wanted to make comment on some Nee stuff, though. The anti-Nee sites that I've come across are all about how humans are utterly powerless and all of this stuff must be nonsense because only God has any power. This immediately brings to mind the account of Babel, specifically Genesis 11:6. Then they go on to say that Nee was a 'mystic' and thus can't be trusted.

According to WordNet the noun mystic has one meaning:

Meaning #1: someone who believes in the existence of realities beyond human comprehension

Well, I'm a mystic, and not much can be done to change that. John was a mystic. Christ is a mystic.... Anyway....

Then they start misquoting Nee, saying that he claimed that Christ used His 'latent powers', which, having only scanned the first chapter so far of Latent Power, I know is not what Nee said. Why is the mainstream church so afraid of this? I'm looking for a full copy of this book and it's friggin hard to find, which frustrates me. Nee wrote a book about the reasons that we should set these things aside when we come to Christ, and I want to read it because it is pertinent to my experience, and yet there's Pergamos out there smacking my hand and saying "That stuff isn't real, just get over it."

Argh.... My people, my people, my people.... Will you deny me to use the brain that God put in my head, even as it's tempered by His Spirit within me?

:-P

Sorry, I know that probably doesn't have anything to do with you folks here, I just needed to vent.

The blessing of God be with you in the name of Jesus, the Christ.

-Until He comes.

Re: - posted by Warrior4Jah (), on: 2005/9/9 17:32

Hi Khatarr, and welcome :)

Quote:

I know that a lot of people teach that all 'magic' is just demonic influence of some sort. And if you want to teach that, then whatever. The majority of it is
.

I wanted to respond on this bit of post of you. :-P

Well I haven't read an awfull alot of Watchman Nee, apart from some articles and one book 'Finest of the wheat' (which I haven't finished yet) but if I'm correct he states that humans had certain powers which where retained or hold back since the fall of man.

But if it is, why can't all 'magic' still not be demonic influence? Something has to trigger these 'shut away' powers doesn't it? It would not be shut away if man could reach it themselves.

People claiming to have certains powers or do the 'so called' supernatural are often not doing these by God's Holy Spirit. Watchman Nee used this to explain why there are people who could do the 'impossible'.. (while not following God)

Just some thoughts there.

About if demons can posses a reborn Christian filled with the Holy Spirit..

My first thought of this was that we have one thing written down in the NT which may get close..

Matthew 16:23 and Mark 8:33

Mark 8:33 *But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*

Peter did follow Christ. Still he got suddenly influenced.

What did just sprang up in me is that the Holy Spirit didn't come yet.

But still, how can an evil spirit fall upon someone filled with the Holy Spirit? Seems not possible to me.

Well you can allow yourself to not be filled by the Holy Spirit.. something else can 'posses' you when that happens, for example money. Regardless if there is a 'money' demon or not..

Isn't satan trying his best to 'reclaim' you, find weak spots where he can get hold of you more and more? satan doesn't stop his attacks on you if you are just an average christian or a great spiritual man or woman of God. he's trying to dismantle you slowly so eventually you can be possessed... by worldly things.

How can satan ever break the link God has with us through the Holy Spirit? he can't touch God or His works. he can (only) attack that through our flesh.. and we then decide to sin or set our mind or hearts on something else.

Some more thoughts..

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2005/11/8 13:18

The argument that "if one's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore cannot be host to the "devil"" is an unscriptural notion.

It could just as well be argued that if one's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit then it would be free from lusts and the principle of indwelling sin. Yet this is not what the scriptures affirm as Paul said, "I know that in me dwells no good thing, that is in my flesh." And we are told in Galatians that if we "by the Spirit do put to death the deeds of the body we shall live ...". The body has its "deeds" which we need to apply by the Spirit the cross to overcome it and to "put it to death" in experience.

The fact is our bodies have yet to be redeemed (dispositionally in contrast to positionally) according to Romans 8 and 1 Cor 15. Our bodies now are still a body of sin. Our souls are yet unrenewed fully. Our spirit has been regenerated, our soul is being renewed and transformed from within by the indwelling Spirit of Christ and our bodies await the Lord's return when we shall be transfigured and our bodies glorified by the Spirit who indwells us (Romans 8).

The issue of 'possession' is one of definition. To be "possessed" in one sense is to be "under the control of". A Christian who is living and acting in his "soul life" and who gives himself to some sin can very well become temporarily used and controlled by the evil fallen spirits.

A backslidden Christian who has grieved the indwelling Spirit and who is pursuing his fleshly lusts for a time subjects himself to such a situation. His spirit is redeemed and regenerated and does not sin because it is born of God, but his soul and body are not yet in that state. Our spirit is Life because of righteousness (of Christ), if our mind is set on the spirit it is life, and our bodies will be made alive at the Lord's coming. This is all clearly laid out in Romans 8.

If regeneration of our spirit automatically renewed and transformed our minds and transfigured our fallen bodies, then yes, it would be an impossibility. But it does not. It requires our ongoing cooperation with the indwelling Christ and daily feeding on Him in His word for the Spirit to fully renew us and transform us into the image of the Firstborn Son of God.

JPL and Watchman Nee both understood the process of salvation beginning with regeneration as the entrance and starting point, renewing, transformation, and conformation as the daily ongoing process, and final transfiguration by the indwelling Spirit at our Lord's return as the consummation of Christ's redeeming work in us dispensationally as well as positionally.

JPL's view is based on an understanding wholly rooted in the Bible and because it differs from our traditional or natural religious notions and concepts does not invalidate it.

Re: - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2005/11/8 14:07

I think these are some good points. It needs to be clear that regeneration is not the same as "being filled with the Holy Spirit". In Acts, the disciples were already regenerated but on occasion it is written that they were "suddenly filled with the Spirit".

To be regenerated is to be born again of the Spirit of God. That is to have our dead human spirit resurrected and indwelt by Christ as the "Life Giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45). On the eve of His resurrection in John 22, the Lord Jesus as the resurrected Christ breathed into His disciples saying, "receive the Holy Spirit". This was a good 50 days prior to Pentecost when the Spirit of the Ascended Christ was poured out in power.

When we repent and believe into the Lord Jesus, we are regenerated and He comes into us as Life. We are New Creatures. He indwells our spirit. He as the resurrected Christ enters into us bringing His Eternal Life into us making us children of God with His Life and Nature.

Our spirit is born from above and we are now Children of God with His indwelling Life and Nature. But our souls (our mind, will, and emotions) are not yet in resurrection and not yet renewed and transformed. This is the process of growth. Christ is sown into us as the Seed of the Divine Life but this Life has to grow in us daily as we feed on Him, daily taking the cross denying our soul life and living by Christ as our indwelling Life.

Genuine growth in the Christian Life requires us to daily spend time with the Lord, call on Him continually, pray and feed on His word and contact Him in our spirit daily to be fed, strengthened, enlightened and empowered to walk according to His Spirit in our spirit to manifest Him as our Life.

We all must admit that though we are Christians, born of God and have His Life, we are still fallen creatures still in possession of our fallen natural life and quite capable of turning aside, of being misled, of even deliberately choosing to ignore the promptings of the Spirit within us. Otherwise Paul would not have told us, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by Whom you were sealed..." or "do not quench the Spirit". If we could not do this, surely he would have not have spoken these words.

And though we may be born of God with His indwelling Life, we are still very natural in our concepts and in our opinions and in our feelings and intentions. When we are saved we are full of our own religious concepts of how to live and please God. And to the degree we act according to our natural constitution we are acting according to the prince of this world. But only by the daily application of the Cross by the Spirit are we transformed and renewed and brought experientially into the experience of the overcoming Life of Christ.

The fact is, if we are living by our natural fallen life, even our good nature, we are in the realm of the old fallen creation and in our experience we are in the "domain of darkness". Only as we are renewed in the spirit of our mind and enjoy the indwelling Life of Christ do we experience the reality of being translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love. This is not automatic. When we become Christians we are translated from one domain to Another, but we need the growth in Life to enter into its reality experientially.

Re: Witness Lee and Watchman Nee - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2005/11/8 15:14

Witness Lee was Watchman Nee's closest co-worker. I heard a testimony last year by a very elderly Chinese man who shared a cell with Watchman Nee in the Chinese Prison and who was converted there through Watchman Nee. This brother was released after 7 years and just prior to his release, according to his testimony, Watchman Nee took him by both hands, looked him in the eye and said, "brother, when you are released, look up brother Witness Lee. My teaching is his teaching and my words are his words". This is the attitude Nee had toward Lee.

It was also Nee who selected Witness Lee to leave China and take the Ministry to Taiwan under the communist threat. Under His specific instruction, Lee took several co-workers and believers and went to Taiwan where in 5 years the church there grew from 400 to over 50,000.

I have been a believer for 30 years and was greatly influenced by Watchman Nee in my younger years. I attended the Evangelical Institute of Greenville SC, a school founded by Joseph S. Carroll, author of "How to Worship Jesus Christ".

Three years ago I began to meet with the local church in my city. I came in with a strong evangelical background with many years of biblical study and church history under my belt.

When I began to meet with the local church, though I found there the most rich and living expression of Christ in His body, I was concerned that the ministry was in keeping with Watchman Nee's. I knew and trusted Nee but I did not know Witness Lee except for negative things published about him by many. For at least 6 months I gave myself relentlessly to study the ministry materials to determine if it was the same as Watchman Nee's and especially to determine if all things were scriptural.

What I found was that everything taught by Witness Lee could be found at least in seed form in the teaching and writing of Watchman Nee. I took every teaching and searched the works of Nee and found them all.

But, what has to be considered is that, even as Nee's teaching evolved and matured over time, so has the ministry of the Living Stream. That is, Nee's ministry spanned 30 years. Lee's ministry continued another 40 years and though the teaching in the "recovery" today is developed and matured, it is mined from the same shaft opened by Nee.

The principle of "locality" which Nee saw in scripture is more than a "law". It is based in the reality of the oneness of the body of Christ as revealed in scripture. It is based in Life, not law. And it is inclusive, not exclusive.

The local churches hold that all believers in any given city are members of the One body of Christ and therefore members of the church in that city. Whether or not they choose to leave their denominational affiliation or distinctions and meet with believers simply as "the church", They are in fact members of the One church in their locality. The church is inclusive of all believers. And since church membership is a matter not of joining a group or "denomination" but rather a matter of being joined to the Lord Jesus Christ through regeneration and the One Spirit, all believers in a given locality are by regeneration members of the One Body and members of the church in their locality.

As a testimony to the Oneness of the body of Christ, the local churches meet simply as, "the church in _____".

The term "Little Flock" is not a name which Nee adopted. It was a name others began to impose as a result of Nee's publishing of a hymnal called, "Hymns for the Little flock". Nee never adopted any name other than "the local churches" in China. The "local churches" today are just the same as in China. There is no difference. Local churches is not a name but just a reference to what the churches are. They are churches and they are Local.

I can testify that today, the local churches are in the same stream that was begun through Watchman Nee. Others, even his other co-workers have sought to set up works and churches, but where are they? Today, there are over 3000 local churches (not counting mainland China) world wide through the ministry of the Living Stream with is the ministry of Witness Lee. Today in Russia there are over 300 local churches raised up through this ministry. And in China there are over 1,000,000 believers who adhere to the present ministry of the Living Stream.

In the beginning, I appreciated the ministry of Watchman Nee as unprecedented in our age. And I say this as one who has been privileged to sit under the teaching of the greats of this age including Joseph Carroll, A. W. Tozer, Martin Lloyd Jones, and others.

After over 3 years of fellowship with the saints in the Lord's recovery, though my study and fellowship with the Lord Himself, I have come to appreciate the ministry of Witness Lee as one which far surpasses any other in terms of Light, Life and understanding of the New Testament and God's economy. If Nee was a Jet, the present ministry of the Living Stream is the space shuttle.

These are my conclusions and not arrived at lightly nor ignorantly or blindly. There is in the recovery today a measure of Light, life, and intensity which I have not seen anywhere else in my 30 years of Christian life and service.

There is also a measure of freedom and liberty which I have not found in any other movement or christian group. In the recovery, Christ is the head of the church and we are all members one of another. There is no outward control, hierarchy, central authority, but all things are done in Life and by Life.

And in the local churches all the members function and speak. There is no single "Pastor" but rather leading brothers who shepherd and equip the saints for the work of the ministry. The Body is built up not just by the joints of the rich supply but also by the measure of each one part.

Nee and Lee are in the Same Divine Stream which proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. There is in reality only one Stream, One flow, one river of the water of Life, One New Testament Ministry, One New Covenant, One Gospel, One Body, One Spirit, One Lord Jesus Christ, One God and Father who is over all, through all, and in all. And we all should seek the Lord who redeemed us to find this stream and to enjoy its rich supply.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2005/11/10 22:20

I am not sure what is considered "cultish" about the Local churches in the US. To begin with, "cult" is not really a biblical term but a modern psychological term. A better word is "heretical sect" which is more accurate in defining an aberrant group of so called Christians. And today one would look in vain to find in the local churches anything to justify the accusation of "heretical sect". There is no heresy in the local churches but rather the most biblical and orthodox doctrine and practice of any group I have encountered in my 30 years of Christian Life and service.

I believe that in most Christian's understanding today, the word "cult" would be in reference, if honestly considered, to be anyone who is different from the Norm of what is considered "mainstream" and in that definition, I would agree that the local churches do fall into that category.

But "mainstream" is not the standard of orthodoxy nor of New Testament Christianity. If it were so, then the "mainstream" would today not be in the state it is in which is very low in terms of Biblical Christianity. In the days of the Apostles, the Christians were referred to as a "cult of the Nazarene".

I mean, come on, honestly, if we check with our experience and consider the content of all the sermons in this web site such as Tozer's and Ravenhill, etc. can we say that today's mainstream is an accurate expression of the church life as presented in the New Testament? I believe we would all have to agree that the answer is no. Otherwise these sermons would have no relevance.

Yet, the mainstream belief and practice is in most believers the standard by which they judge whether or not a particular group is a "cult". We all lament the state of modern Christianity but woe to those who step "outside the camp" and claim anything related to the genuine article. There is inherent in most the belief that the genuine thing does not exist and can not exist in our age.

Yet, is this not an absolute denial of the plain revelation of the New Testament? Is there no reality to the body of Christ? Is Christ as the ascended Lord not known anywhere? Did Christ really come into this world as God manifest in the flesh? Was He not crucified for our sins and resurrected? Is He not today in resurrection the Life Giving Spirit to indwell us, to make us children of God, sharers of His resurrection Life, and partakers of the Divine Nature to be His many brothers through His redemption and indwelling Life?

The Local churches today enjoy this reality. The Local churches have broken with the mainstream and don't seek the mainstream's approval. Today there is on this earth those who meet together as the church, who hold no other head than the Lord Jesus Christ and who meet in His Name alone and enjoy the reality of Christ as the indwelling Life Giving Spirit who brings into all the reality of the Triune God, incarnated, crucified and resurrected and glorified.

Those who choose to remain in their divisions and denominational distinctions may scoff and try to justify their position by using such terms as "cultic" but the only standard to be considered is the scriptures themselves alone. And an unbiased and prayerful consideration of the scriptures will show that the local churches today are fully in line with the Biblical revelation and in the meetings of the churches there is the reality of Christ in a way that is non-existent in any other group on the earth. I say this as a matter of testimony and observation, not of biased opinion.

If the standard is "mainstream" then both the "little flock" in China and today's "local churches" (if you choose to make such a difference) are cults. The denominations in China persecuted Nee and the so called "little flock" the same as they do today do the local churches. But the reality is that they were the "local churches" in Nee's day as they are today and the local churches today are just the continuation of the same New Testament Ministry which Nee ministered.

Graftedbranch

