

The following is a somewhat edited version of the fellowship John So had with saints in Manila, March 1990, following the publication of *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*. In this talk John So covers 1) his experience with the five brothers from LSM who came to Germany expressly to gain his cooperation with LSM; 2) his ordeal with control issues involving Philip Lee and LSM that greatly impacted John and Stuttgart; 3) his refutations of the claims made against him in *Fermentation*; 4) the England upheaval induced by LSM against John So; 5) the cutting off of the Stuttgart young people by Philip Lee; 6) John So's letter to Brother Lee discussing all the basic problems; 7) his letter of disassociation with LSM due to moral issues and interferences, following the non-response of Brother Lee to desperate needs in Europe.

John So Fellowship in Manila

Well, this time when I came to the Philippines, I never dreamed that the things would happen this way. But in such a situation like this, I think we have to leave it to the Lord's sovereignty. As our brother has shared, and I appreciate his word very much, I also hope that our sharing here is not for anyone to be able to take any sides, regardless of who is right and who is wrong. I think the ground of the church is not for any church to take any sides, right? Because a church or the churches should be standing on the ground of oneness. So I do appreciate our brother's word. And I have prepared a little outline here knowing that tonight I have no choice but to share something concerning the matter. I will try my best to just follow the outline.

We all know the ministry of brother Witness Lee for many years. I'm quite surprised that this book came out [*Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*]. This is the first time I saw it—in Manila, I mean 2 days ago. I hope it is not the ministry, you know. I'm very sorry that due to my being here, you all had to spend 8 long hours to watch the videos. I believe it is a real suffering to all the saints. In the recent past two years I have been unfortunately branded as, even as, a "minister of Satan", as a "wolf", a "false brother", even 1 John chapter 2, the "Antichrist" was referred to me; I'm a "rebellious one", a "conspirator", a kind of conspirator, a "dishonest man", a "pretender", and more. Therefore, I am being quarantined. Right, I am being quarantined. And I am thankful to the Lord that in spite of all this, you're still here willing to hear what I have to say. I mean without fear of being contaminated. I think the Lord will be able to disinfect you. Please bear with me, I really have a very hard time to prepare this. The Lord knows my heart. If I didn't have to do it tonight, I wish I didn't have to do it. I can testify this before the Lord.

Yet I am forced to do it. It was at your request and partially also at Witness Lee's request through his challenge that encourage me to say a few words. Brother Lee said he waited two years to do this, I only have less than two days. So I hope that these few words will settle this matter once for all. I don't think it'll take 8 hours, let's aim at 80 minutes. Let's try to make it short and to the point. Really it is impossible to talk about this book and about 8 hours of video in a couple of hours. It is really hard. Let's come right to the thing here, let me see where that outline is, ---I would like maybe to just go through Brother Lee's outline, you know, it says the rebellion began to ferment from Stuttgart in 1986. Well, what I would like to do is just give you the chronological events of what took place.

I will only deal briefly with things concerning myself, concerning Stuttgart and Europe, things that I personally know quite well. I don't know, and I am not familiar with, or not thoroughly familiar with, what went on in Hong Kong. I really do not know and I cannot say anything in detail. And I didn't know exactly what happened and what took place in Anaheim in the very beginning. So I cannot speak for brother John Ingalls. And I cannot speak for brother Joseph Fung. I really cannot. And when things happened in Rosemead, I really had no idea what was going on there until I read the literature that

they had put out. [See Rosemead, Appendix 12, p. 166] So all of these places do not concern me. I wrote down this sentence, the last sentence on my outline: *"I did not even know that we had ever formed together an international conspiracy ring until Witness Lee said so"*. I am quite surprised. Okay, Witness Lee claims that rebellion and conspiracy started to ferment in Stuttgart in 1986. I'm going to start at this point.

Five Brothers Come to Stuttgart

Using his own term, the fermentation actually started at Stuttgart in 1986 by the coming of five brothers sent by Witness Lee and sent by his office, Philip Lee. Ironically, things didn't start with us. At that time Witness Lee was invited by us to come to Germany and we were all expecting Brother Lee to come. But to our disappointment, Brother Lee didn't come. He said he was busy and instead he and his office sent five brothers to come to Stuttgart. I think brother Ray Graver came, brother Benson Phillips, brother Minoru Chen, brother Ken Unger, and brother Dan Towle. The Lord knows we were disappointed. We brothers had had fellowship just before the brothers came, and I told the brothers--and all the brothers could testify for me--that we should receive these brothers just as Witness Lee himself. We should not make any difference.

So the five brothers came. You have to realize I'm speaking retrospectively—I'm looking back. At that time we thought their intention was to give a conference, even the "one accord" conference that Witness Lee had just given in the elders' meeting in Anaheim. So we welcomed them. But to our surprise, these five brothers themselves proclaimed that their burden was not for the conference, but that their burden was for the afternoon fellowship they would have with the leading brothers from Europe. There were at least a hundred brothers present there, and every afternoon from 3:00 to 5:30 or 6:00, we had fellowship with these five brothers, and they told us what their burden was in coming to Stuttgart. It was concerning the leading of the ministry office, that the churches in Europe would become one with the office of Living Stream Ministry. And I do have the tapes of these meetings. They were on record and since the matter is opened up, I would certainly request the brothers in Stuttgart to transcribe all these messages and make them available to the public. During all those afternoons I was present just a few times and almost at the end of these meetings sometimes. In those afternoons the brothers' burden was very strong to propagate and to promote the ministry office, and at that time, really, none of the leading brothers had any idea what the office is. At one point, somebody was very ignorantly and innocently asking, "Well, what is the office, anyway?" And everybody laughed. Of course, we found out that the office is really Brother Lee's son, Philip Lee.

You know, it might be public knowledge for everybody perhaps, except for the brothers in Europe. Now, this was the motive of these brothers' coming. This is not my judgment—this was their proclamation. They said it themselves.

John So's Understanding of the Office

At that time my understanding of the business office of Witness Lee was exactly what Witness Lee publicly proclaimed it to be - an office to take care of producing tapes, printing books, and distributing the books and tapes to serve all the churches. That was really my understanding. And for some reason, there was a lot of problem in Anaheim, in the home office of the Living Stream. The fellowship there between the churches in Orange County and the office was not very nice, and I happened to be in one of the meetings, that must be in 1982, and Witness Lee was sharing quite strongly to all the serving ones, especially regarding the Chinese work and the serving ones in the LSM office. And obviously there was a conflict between the office, which is Brother Lee's

office, which is also Brother Lee's son, and many serving ones there. And Brother Lee again emphasized in those meetings—He said, "Should my private cook in my house also be a spiritual person? What if I hire an unbeliever to print books, this is my business office. My printer doesn't have to be a spiritual person. And I do have the right to hire my son to be manager of my office to take care of this business for me." I fully agreed. At that time, I really said, "fair enough, fair enough." The Lord knows. And in fact one of those afternoons—I wish they had printed this out—because they did print out what I shared in these pages in pages 21-25. If you say this is the beginning of rebellion I do ask you to read every word of what I shared there. I'm glad they printed it out. I really am glad. Because if you read what I shared here word for word, I was not at all rebelling. I would challenge you to find one rebellious word here. In fact, I was supporting these brothers according to my understanding of what the business office of Witness Lee is. I'm glad it was printed out.

At that time, I really meant what I said according to my understanding of the function of the ministry office; and I fully agreed with Witness Lee that if the LSM is only operating on the business side to print books and to distribute tapes, then we brothers should accept this, and cooperate with them.

Indeed, in the earlier years in Germany we had enjoyed marvelous liberty to translate and print books. In fact in 1981 when the Irving office for the Living Stream Ministry was being built, the brothers in Germany asked me, "John, maybe you should go and ask Brother Lee if they want the publishers in Germany to be all under one administration, because we don't want to be doing our own thing". And, really we did not. I went to Brother Lee that summer and in his own home I shared what the brothers asked me to tell him. Brother Lee said, "No, no, no, no, you are doing a good job. Go ahead." So I really appreciated that. We were really one with the office at that time. In a proper way, we were one with the Living Stream Ministry, according to my understanding of the function of the office.

Promotion of Philip Lee as "the Office"

Well, the question is this: I was accused here in *Fermentation* of pretending to be one with them, the LSM, but that really I was against them. Tonight let me say a word. I don't want to vindicate, but I just like to share at least the way we look at it. Everything has two sides. I'm sorry to say, it is not that I am pretending. It is because the LSM office really has a double standard. There is a public declaration that the office is only for the business side to print books, to duplicate tapes, and to send them out to serve the churches. But to my realization, there is another aspect expected of us. During the visit of these five brothers to Stuttgart, two of them stayed with me in my home—two of them. And these brothers began to somehow fellowship with me concerning the office, that the office is really brother Philip Lee and that brother Philip Lee is the closest and most intimate co-worker of Witness Lee. And that I need to get into the fellowship with him, and that our brother, Witness Lee, needs his son. And after almost every meeting in Stuttgart, they made a long-distance call to the office to report everything that is happening. To the office! The report went to the office.

I was, in short, expected to do the same. I told the brothers in a very good way—we were not fighting—I said, "Brothers, I'm sorry, in short, I just cannot do that. You have the grace to do it, that's fine, but I just cannot do that." I told the brothers maybe some other German brothers, like Jorn Urlenbac could do it. I was told, No, no, no, you are the right person to do it. I said, Thank you, but I can't do it. This is what I realized later was the cause of many problems that we in Stuttgart began to experience with the LSM. A

report had gone back to Philip Lee that I refused to do what the brothers were doing. Looking back, this is what caused a serious problem with him.

In my view, however, what they were doing in reporting everything to the office had nothing to do with Witness Lee's public declaration of what the office is. I didn't feel there was a need for me to report to the office what we were doing. But these brothers who came to Stuttgart were telling me that Witness Lee's son is his closest and most intimate co-worker. I have to say I had never heard such a thing before. But these two brothers who stayed with me assured me that this was true though Brother Lee doesn't say this publicly. Well, I say, if I haven't heard of this, I just haven't heard of it. Anyway, a report went back to Anaheim, and somebody wasn't happy with me. I was happy with everybody, but somebody wasn't happy with me.

Stuttgart Printers Cut Off By "The Office"

I didn't realize it at first, but as time went by I could see that we had problems with "the office" because we lacked cooperation with the manager of the office. Listen to this, dear saints. When I encouraged the brothers to follow the office and to cooperate with the office one hundred percent, I meant it. And we did. We did. The office, however, began to behave in a strange way. They wanted us to stop printing books and send all of the camera-ready pages to Irving. There they would print the books and send their finished work back to us, which according to our feeling, was not logical. The Germans are very logical people, you know, and this was not logical because we have the whole facilities right there in Stuttgart, right next to it, you know. It's just like in the kitchen: You knead the dough. Afterwards, you pull out the dough and the oven is right there to bake the bread. But we were only able to knead the dough, we just couldn't bake the bread! We had to send the dough, the kneaded dough, somewhere. To South Africa, I don't know where, to America, and then they will bake the bread and send it to us. For a German mind, this is a little bit illogical. You know the Germans, right? They are very systematic; they are very logical. We did it, though, believe it or not, we did it. In fact, at that time, some brothers were slightly irritated. I told them, I said, "Brothers, listen. All the books bear Witness Lee's name, he is the author. It does not matter where the books are printed." You may not believe that we sent within a year and five months over 4100 camera-ready pages to be printed, and we did not receive a response. We did not get at that time one page printed, nothing...nothing...!

I'm not following the chronological order any more or what I've written down. Maybe it's better that way. In fact, brothers, listen, in spite of our hearing nothing from them, the brothers wrote a letter to Philip Lee on March 2, 1987. You see, when I say "follow the office", I meant what Witness Lee publicly said about the office, that it is for book distribution, etc. Anyway, the brothers wrote to Philip Lee himself because Witness Lee says, "Please don't come to me concerning the books. Concerning the books, you all have to go to my son, Philip Lee." So they write, "Dear brother Philip: We would like to fellowship with you briefly regarding the future publication of the ministry in European languages here." You could read this. In spite of sending already at that time to LSM so many pages and yet we heard not one word, we still sent a letter to brother Philip Lee. Let me just read a little bit. Okay, we reported to them all of our activities, pending at that time, and we wanted to finish that work, then ask them what we should do next.

Our letter stated, "We are concluding the translation work of the following books which were started earlier and we hope to complete them by the end of April: Life-study of John, Message 1 to 51, Life-study of Hebrews, Message 1 to 69, Life-study of Romans, Message 1 to 31, Life-study of Philippians, Message 1 to 31. We would appreciate your fellowship with us concerning the books we should start working on after this time. If you have the time to see us, we would be happy to meet with you for further fellowship. We

hope to hear from you soon.” The brothers were even willing to go all the way to Anaheim to see this brother to coordinate with the office concerning the books. No reply. This is written on March 2, 1987. Until this very day we did not receive a reply from this person, from the manager of the LSM office.

It is not right, therefore, to say that on one hand I declare that I am for the ministry office, but on the other hand, I don't cooperate with it. I want to let you know that something more was expected of us at LSM that we could not cooperate with, and, someone was not happy with us about that.

So here I would say is the proof of our cooperation with the office--this letter and our sending of 4,100 pages of camera-ready copies. We kept our mouths shut, not complaining, waiting for the books to come. Nothing came. Nothing came. Okay. Witness Lee then questions my character on page 38 of the book, *Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*. He quoted my negative statement that “All the brothers in Europe could testify of the strong promotion of your office when the brothers came to Stuttgart in the spring of '86, trying to bring all the churches in Europe under the leading of your Office”. Of course, I said this in retrospect, looking back after realizing the double standard of the office. He compared this statement to what I had said one year earlier: “we all can surely testify that neither you nor your office have ever controlled us in the past in any way.”

Witness Lee then said: “eight months later, another letter, dated September 17, 1987, and signed by John So and twenty leaders of nine churches in Europe, came to me, condemning that sweet fellowship and repeating the same thing by saying that “the five brothers whom you and your office sent to Europe in your place in May 1986 were trying to bring people to come under the influence and control in your name and for your sake.” The repeated condemnation both in this letter and in the preceding one contradict the praise [in John So's letter of January 1987]. I am very puzzled as to which of the two contradicting judgments I should believe. At any rate, the two kinds of judgments – the first, very positive, like bright white, and the second, very negative, like dark black -- indicate that in a short time they fluctuated from one realization to another. This makes it difficult for us to work together for the Lord in one accord” (pp. 61, 26, *FPR*)

Witness Lee should know about the fluctuation. Why? My goodness, if he knows about the consideration of the whole earth, this is a little matter. He should know why there was a fluctuation. The fluctuation was due to the new expectation “the office” had for us, which we could not cooperate with. Of course this did make it difficult for us to work together in one accord with LSM.

Summer Training in Irving 1986

I went to the summer training in Irving in 1986 with an open heart to seek fellowship with brother Philip Lee. Ray Graver promised me he was going to set up a time with Philip, but it never happened. I kept asking Ray, but I went back without having a time with this particular brother.

Then at that summer training, I was asked by Brother Lee through Andrew Yu to go help with the training in Taipei to conduct an advanced class. But I really on the one hand couldn't make it; on the other hand, I did have some reservations about taking the class. Everybody has reservations. Why shouldn't I? But, nevertheless, I feel that since our brother is asking me to go, I would like to go, firstly to see what the Lord is doing there; secondly, to learn what the Lord is doing, and thirdly, to help whatever the brother wants me to help with. I went there, and I passed by Manila on the way. I think you remember,

it was in 1986 around October. I passed by for a few days, and I was encouraging you all to go to Taipei, right? I don't know if you remember that.

Statistics Manipulated

I wasn't opposing and I didn't have anything fermenting within me. I'm sorry to say, dear saints, I think there was a plot, a conspiracy, there in Taipei, not on our part, but on somebody else's part, to bring the churches in Europe and myself under a certain leading - under the hidden function of the office. That, I must confess, I cannot fully agree with. But that doesn't mean that if I don't agree, I oppose. I went to Taipei. I joined the door knocking. Okay, I enjoyed it. You might not believe me, but I really enjoyed it. In fact, I fully submitted to the group. You can ask my group leaders. And, I baptized a few people, really. And I was quite fond of that whole group. But when I was there, listen, one major leading brother in Taipei every time he saw me, he told me that the statistics were manipulated. That's the word I think he used. I said, "Are you sure brother?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Why then don't you go and see Witness Lee? If it's manipulated, you have to tell Witness Lee." He told me, "It's very hard to see him. I tried several times, but I can't get through." So, that made me a little concerned.

Of course, I'm not a piece of wood, brothers; I'm a brother, right? I'm not only a person, I'm serving the Lord. If it was really so that the statistics were being manipulated, I'm concerned. Don't say I'm criticizing—I'm concerned.

Well, I went one time to see brother Jim Batten. I love him. He is a very fine young man; I'm really very fond of this brother. I went to him. Of course, I shared with him a little bit of my concern. Brother, wouldn't you share your concern to hear such a thing from a major leading brother in Taipei here? My goodness, if we are manipulating the numbers of those who are saved and baptized, and nobody dares to say anything, my, your work must be a super, super, super, super work. Let me turn to page 40 and also page 139 in the book, *Fermentation*, brother Jim Batten's testimony is here. I just want to show you what was said in this book. I cannot go into every testimony although I would like to.

Baptisms in the Bathtub in Germany

Before Jim Batten's testimony, Brother Lee had been talking about the fermenting, saying that I was beginning to criticize and oppose the training, etc. Let me read to you what he says: *"In that visit, John stayed in Taipei for ten days. During his stay, he said what the training did in the way of baptizing people could be done in Taipei, but if such a thing were done in Germany, the people there would baptize them instead."* I did say that believe it or not. I did say that. But I'm saying it out of my own experience in Germany.

When we went door knocking and tried to baptize people in the bathtub, my goodness, two days later a newspaper came out with an article warning everybody that a group of people are going about door knocking and are going to put you in the bathtub in Eve's costume. Eve's costume—that means with nothing on. And the newspaper warned the public to be careful about those people who are going to the homes to dump you with no clothes on into the bathtub. I'm glad they couldn't identify us. My goodness, if they could identify us that is their baptizing us!

Okay, the Lord knows I'm not criticizing. We already had baptized people in the bathtub 20 years ago when we were in Germany. When I went to Germany we had no place to baptize people—the best place to baptize them was in the bathtub. I went to East Germany, before the new way came, and we baptized five people in the bathtub. East Germany! I am not against baptizing people in the bathtub. Don't think I am. Okay. Then here is the point: Brother Lee also says, *"John So also said that what Brother Lee*

was doing in the training in Taipei was just for Taipei, but that he (John So) had to consider the situation of the whole world." My goodness. You think I am stupid to say that. If you get into the context what I'm trying to tell our dear brother, young brother Jim Batten, it is that this may work in Taipei, but we have to consider that the situation of each part of the earth, of the world, may not be the same. Suppose you go to a Moslem country, Saudi Arabia, and you go door knocking, you might lose your head! That's what I mean. But you see, if you manipulate just one word, my goodness, you will think, "My, John So thought Witness Lee is just caring for that little Taipei, but John So cares for the whole world."

These quotes were used to prove that something was fermenting in me. It is printed here that fermenting John So is opposing the training. I'm sorry, brother, but if this is a testimony against me, I think they will have to deal with it before the Lord. It has been printed, and sent to the whole world. Okay. It is sent to the whole world.

Comparison of the New Way to A Rolls Royce

Jim Batten said further that I considered the new way as a Rolls Royce. Yes, that's right. I think that must have been in 1987 sometime. Brother Lee said in *Fermentation*, "John said to a brother in England that it was better to have one's own body than to have a Rolls Royce." I will give you the background so that you can understand my comment to this brother.

I had gone back to Europe and found that Blackpool, England was fully destroyed. It was fully destroyed to the ground through the establishing of the LSM office there. And at that time nobody was caring for the church in Blackpool, for those poor brothers in Blackpool. And there they were door knocking and boasting how many thousands got baptized in California. If brother Jim Batten would be honest before the Lord, and I have witnesses there. Eddie Wong was there. Some other brothers were there. I was very considerate of Jim Batten. And I had no intention to convince him of anything.

In fact, I explained to him, I said, "Brother, go and door knock. That's fine. That's good. But do not forget about our brothers who are in much trouble in Blackpool. Please take care also of these brothers in Blackpool." And I just made an illustration and asked, "what is more important -- a Rolls Royce or a man's body." I likened the new way to a Roll's Royce and the church to man's body. A best car, you know, is a Rolls Royce. I didn't compare the new way with a Volkswagon or a Fiat or a Manila jeepney. I compared it to a Rolls Royce. My goodness, what is better than a Rolls Royce, right? Don't you want to have a Rolls Royce? But, I said, "No matter how good it is, your body, your health, is more important." I encouraged him, therefore, to take care of the church, along with his care for the new way.

My! You are criticizing the new way! Brothers, let us be logical. Don't believe in such a way that you become superstitious. Just anything that *doesn't* sound like you are for it, people say you are blowing cold wind. "You said the new way is a Rolls Royce." What should I say? A chariot, a heavenly chariot? Okay, I can say it. You know Elijah went with a heavenly chariot of fire and is gone. Okay. If you think that is better than a Rolls Royce, well, compare it. This is not the way. Really, brothers, this is not the way. Let us be normal. Let's be able to talk in a normal way. "My, that is something fermenting in John So." Oh my, you see, a testimony is written here to prove that I am rebelling. Rebellion is fermenting in me. Our brother Na Ning said that you're not the jury. I'm going to consider you tonight as the jury. Whether you like it or not, Na Ning, I'm going to consider you as a jury, and I'm not afraid to be judged by you here. One day I'm going to be judged by the Lord anyway. And, let's bring this book to the Lord, and let Him judge. Just by this alone they want to prove that rebellion and conspiracy was fermenting within

me. I don't like to talk about these things—the Lord knows. I had a hard time preparing this crazy thing.

Anyway, anyway, at least, I hope they will correct the mistake. Maybe they will find other witnesses that are correct. They can always put another piece of paper into the book and say, "Correction, that witness is wrong." Otherwise, you should write in here, "With false testimonies; maybe it's a misprint."

Taipei Training 1986

Let's go back to my experience in Taipei. I'm not through with that yet. This book, *Fermentation of the Present Rebellion*, mentioned Howard Higashi and Lin Rung. When I was there in Taipei, they invited me for dinner. Shortly before I was leaving, do you think I would be so stupid to tell them to their face, I'm rebelling, if that is what I was going to do? I'm not that stupid yet. I am not that clever but I still have some sense in me. You know, I was trying to think back, "What did I do there with Lin Rung and Howard Higashi that caused a problem with them?" Then I began to realize, "Maybe, I told them that my burden was for the high schoolers." I just gave them a little suggestion that maybe it would be important and quite easy to gain all the high schoolers also.

"My you are not in a position—you are not following the burden of the ministry now." My goodness, you cannot expect me to go to Taipei without opening my mouth and say a little bit of my feeling. I am not a piece of wood here. Okay, then because of some unfinished business I had to do for my brother, by the Lord's sovereignty I had to go back to Germany. I was very polite. I went to ask one leading brother and said, I'm leaving.

That brother said, "No, you should go and tell that brother you're leaving." I went to that brother, and that brother says, "Yes, it is good that you tell me. You should go to that brother", and I went to that brother and I said, "I'm leaving".

He said, "Yes, you have to call the United States, you have to call brother Philip Lee and tell him that you are leaving." By that time I said, "I came here freely, I go back freely, you know. I'm a free man, my goodness." So I told Howard Higashi very clearly—I said, "Brother, I thought Witness Lee's burden is to tear down the hierarchy." If I am conspiring, if I am rebelling, I won't tell Howard Higashi that I am. And, I was not rebelling. Maybe I'm wrong. Okay. "Boy, that must be a big conspiracy. I don't know...I don't know what they thought—but that must be a terrible conspiracy. Or rebellion." Okay. I said goodbye. I didn't call Anaheim, I'm sorry, sometimes I am really a little bit rough and tough. I don't know why, but you know, I'm a human being, okay. But within my heart I have no intention to rebel against anybody. Okay, then I went back.

At that time Witness Lee did say he also sovereignly had to go back to the United States because he was sick. I went back to Germany, also sovereignly. When I went back to Germany, my goodness, a big turmoil was going on in England. In England! A big turmoil happened in England. I made a copy of some letters here.

England in Upheaval 1986

What happened in England really shocked me. You know, in the summer of 1986 about twenty-five saints from England went to the Living Stream office in Irving to serve. And I encouraged them to go. Can you imagine that? They were there for approximately two months. When they came back, they began to say strange things. They said that Stuttgart is resisting and John So is resisting the activities of the ministry. And that John

So is controlling. And that we are withholding tapes of the Living Stream Ministry and not distributing them to other churches. My goodness. The whole church in Blackpool and all the churches in England became chaotic. Who caused this chaos? Where did that storm come from? Certainly not from Stuttgart. It fermented rather, I think, in Irving. There was a conspiracy in Irving to destroy us. Who was conspiring? Me? Was I conspiring or rebelling? I was in Taipei to try to help. And I, by accident, went back to Stuttgart and found that trouble had come in to our locality, as well as in to the churches in England.

A brother from England then came and told me about what was happening. This brother, Bill Kirkham, had written a letter full of respect to Witness Lee. It was a five-page letter written November 11, 1986 about matters that had happened during that year. Yes, Witness Lee is right to say that something was fermenting, but the question is: What is fermenting? Who is conspiring? All of a sudden they drop a bomb in England. Listen, Witness Lee said himself that he begged me to go to Taipei, okay? He begged me to go to Taipei. And I went.

And then when I was in Taipei, they dropped the bomb in England against me and against the church in Stuttgart, and against the publishers in Germany, saying that since they're not cooperating, the blessing has not come to England. The LSM, therefore, set up a brother in England. This one brother really was the most problematic one in the whole of England as the head. He also testified here in *Fermentation*. I'm going to spare him tonight, okay? I don't want to be a bad guy telling everybody.

Bill Kirkham's Letter To Brother Lee

I better calm down a little bit. I was shocked. The brother, Bill Kirkham, wrote this letter to Brother Lee and sent me a copy. He said, "Dear brother John, I'm enclosing a copy of the letter which I have just sent to Brother Lee. These matters have been troubling me so much that I felt I had no alternative but to write to our brother. I hope that Brother Lee may have time to write to help clear up this situation. If you have any fellowship regarding it, that you feel would be helpful to me, I would surely appreciate it. I strongly pray that nothing will come between the churches in Europe to cause damage to the Lord's testimony. Your brother in Christ, Bill Kirkham".

Let me ask our dear Brother Lee, who is conspiring? Yes, somebody is conspiring. And, rebellion is fermenting, but what is the source of this fermentation in the recovery?

Bill wrote five pages to Brother Lee. Let me just read to you. The first part is about that dear young man, who was set up to be the head in England. England was so concerned that the LSM got the wrong guy there. There are so many good guys. Why you got the wrong guy? Bill shared concerning him not because they were jealous, but because they were concerned. The second point in the letter is about all the lies spread against me, against the church in Stuttgart, and about the German publishers. The third point—let me read to you the third point. Bill Kirkham says, "In all the years of the Lord's recovery in Europe, we have never had any shadow of division between here and Germany, but now we are hearing things that will cause such a division."

I'm not sure whether or not I should mention the fourth category because it concerns brother Philip Lee. Bill Kirkham writes, "but I think that I must stress that I have never had, nor ever will have any problem or personal feeling against brother Philip, nor have I ever had reason to have had." (I am reading it like this to show you how careful our brother is, because he is desperate.) "In your recent letter to us in Great Britain you told us, you Brother Lee, told us that we should not follow a man, nor should there be any intrinsic element of exalting any human being or promoting any movement, so that the

enemy will have no ground to damage the Lord's recovery with discord any longer. But now here in England the situation is just contrary to what you have said. It is being strongly promoted that we must follow brother Philip Lee absolutely, 100%, and while serving in Living Stream affairs, we should serve in complete obedience without asking any questions. And it was shared that the church life is not up to the standard of the kingdom, but that the office is, so if you want to be in the kingdom life, you should come and serve in the office."

Bill Kirkham said, "Among the things I have heard, Brother Lee, I would like to share with you two or three examples. In general, fellowship with the saints about how we should serve, promoted that we should serve like the saints do in the Living Stream office; that is, when brother Philip speaks, the saints drop everything and run." This letter was sent to Witness Lee. You can read it. The brother was more blunt and frank and straightforward than most brothers, not knowing what's going to happen, that he might get knocked in his head.

Bill Kirkham said, "to help to put the point across more clearly, maybe I should relate the following story to you. This story was used to promote this":

"While working in the tunnel in Taipei, there was a problem with water considered by brother Philip Lee to be a leak and not a problem of ground water. After digging, and searching for some time to discover the source of the water, brother Ray Graver asked a young brother from Manchester, England what he now thought the problem was, in order to test him. The brother thought, 'Well, it was ground water, that may be.' Ray told him, 'If Philip Lee says it's a leak, then it's a leak.'"

This brother from England, I'm sorry to say, is not very tactful. If I were to write this letter I probably would eliminate this story about the leak. But nevertheless, he's honest. At least he wrote it.

Bill Kirkham continued to say to Brother Lee, "This story was an example of how we should follow absolutely. Also, brother Ray Graver told Chris Lee that you told him recently the thing now is to follow Philip Lee 100%."

I think that's enough reading, because it's too much junk. If a person cannot take these things, is he fermenting? Conspiring? Rebelling? You judge. Now you are not the jury, you're the judge. I let you be also the judge. You judge if I am conspiring, and if you want to execute me, you can come down and hang me.

What was the reply from Brother Lee to this letter from Bill Kirkham? Witness Lee replied with two pages. This is the first page. The second page is the signature. Let me read to you his reply to such a grievous, grave letter:

Thank you for the fellowship conveyed in your letter dated 11/Nov/1986 which caught me one day before I left Anaheim for Taipei in November. Sorry, I couldn't find a time to fellowship with you in answering your letter during the four weeks I was there in Taipei. I came back to Anaheim five days ago and am ready to go to Irving tomorrow for winter training. After that I will be back to stay in Anaheim till the beginning of February, then I will go back to Taipei again for three months or more to complete the Chinese Recovery Version of the New Testament. Your prayers and the church's will be much appreciated. This morning I got some time to fellowship about the points in your letter. Above all, I would like to say it would be wise and profitable not to make an issue of anything. However, one thing solid I would like to let you know: The Living Stream does feel burdened to set up a little branch office in London for the distribution of both the video and audio tapes in UK and the continent. Although the Living Stream is not organized with any church, we earnestly expect that all churches, especially the nearby churches,

would render much help in the carrying out of our purpose in the ministry of the Lord. Since brother Chris Lee came to the summer training in Irving and rendered some help in working on the tapes, and since he does have a heart with a burden to carry out this purpose, the Living Stream has asked him to start in this matter in London.” (Which was really in Blackpool—it was started in Blackpool.) “I do look to the Lord that this could be a real blessing for the furtherance of the Lord’s move in His recovery in European countries. Your brother in Christ, Witness Lee.

What would you think if you received such a letter? In the meantime, the whole church in Blackpool was destroyed to the ground. Destroyed to the ground. One sister wept continuously for eight to nine months. Nothing was done to rectify any situation and meanwhile they were still boasting about continuing at that time for “the furtherance of the Lord’s move”. And am I rebelling? Conspiring? Are we rebelling in Stuttgart? Only the Lord knows who is really conspiring.

Stuttgart Young People Shunned in Irving 1986

Meanwhile, still in 1986, our saints went to the training in Taipei. We sent about 25 to 30 young people there. They were the best of our young people. If we are conspiring, we wouldn’t send anybody there. I would send the worst of our young people. Of course, in the church life, everybody is the best, okay? They began to tell our young people from Stuttgart, who were in Taipei, “Stuttgart stinks like garlic. Don’t go back to Stuttgart.”

Listen, we sent our young people there to Taipei to be trained, not for you to tell them that they stink. Maybe the trainers smell the fermenting there, their own fermenting. I don’t know if fermenting has an odor or not—I am not an expert, you know. They told our young people, “Don’t go back to Stuttgart. Stuttgart stinks like garlic.” That shocked our young people. That’s worse than my telling Jim Batten that if you baptize people in Germany, they’re going to baptize you. What is worse, tell me? You judge. Na Ning, you challenged me tonight—you judge what is worse?

I never told people Taipei stinks. But they told our young people: “Stuttgart stinks.” Using this word: “stinks”—oh, my goodness. When I heard that, I wondered what did those five brothers smell who came to Stuttgart? The five brothers. Maybe they smelled something in Stuttgart, but at least if we stink, please tell me. But the German saints liked the stinking Stuttgart. They probably were used to the stink in Stuttgart so they came back. They wanted to come back. So they are disobedient now - we tell you not to go back, yet you want to go back—you are really this bunch of rebellious people, contaminated by John So.

So our young people wanted to go back, they wanted to go to the training in Irving on the way to stinking Stuttgart. They wanted to go to the Irving training. Fine, you know, go. Even though it was said that we stink, we still let them go to Irving. So the training in Taipei ended on the 15th. These dear young people were so tired out after the training, you know, digging and the full schedule—my goodness—they all lost weight. They wanted to rest in Anaheim. They made arrangements with the church in Anaheim to take hospitality with them. Al Knoch says, “Yes, praise the Lord. We’ll take you”. My, my, my, “the office” found out about this.

What? Anaheim is going to give hospitality to the Stuttgart young people, and they already made plane arrangements to go to Anaheim? Authoritative word came down, “No, you cannot give hospitality to these saints from Europe.” Poor Al Knoch, he had to come there and tell them, “Sorry dear saints, we cannot give you hospitality.” You know Al Knoch, right? He was so embarrassed. Well, the saints said okay, then we will go straight to Irving. So they changed the ticket again. Each time you change, you have to

pay fifty dollars each, okay? And these people are not very rich, huh? Like the Filipinos here, right? So they change to go to Irving. Then word came again, "Sorry, we cannot take you that early. You should just come one day before the training starts." And they changed again. Then they flew to Irving one day before the training started. When they arrived there in the office to register they were told, "We are not sure whether you could attend the training, come back tomorrow." By that time our young people are boiling already. You cannot realize. They are not just fermenting, they are boiling. They are really boiling.

Special Red Tags for Stuttgart Young People

You know the Germans, right? If they boil, they really boil. So they came the next day, and were told, "Okay, we'll let you in with a special red tag, and you will sit in a disciplinary section right in the back, in a red tag section. You have to sit there to show everybody you're under discipline." Now they are steaming—from fermenting to boiling to steaming. Do you think they can enjoy the training like that? Sometimes if it's not the Lord that contains me, I'll steam up.

One of our leading young brothers there says, "I demand to have an explanation".

Ray Graver said, "I don't know who made this arrangement." What are you doing? Training, or are you playing? Maybe that's part of the new way, I don't know. I've never heard that before. That's something new. Then one brother said this, "Do you really want to know? Do you really want to know the reason?"

"Yes, yes."

"Ask John So."

Ask John So? What did I do? And, if it's really my fault, let me sit there and give me the red tag. What do these young people—these 35 young people—what do they have to do with me? I am not their father. I am not their commander-in-chief. I am not their source. I am not their apostle. Under such circumstances, brothers, tell me who of you would have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches? Jesse, would you have an ear to hear under such a circumstance? And they say I'm rebelling?

You don't know, when these saints came home, they were just angry. It was quite late already, when they came home to Stuttgart. And, I had to calm them down. And, I had to assure them that their experience had nothing to do with the ministry of Witness Lee—but I guess I'm a little mistaken.

I can tell these stories inside out. I can even dream these stories when I am sleeping. Send a tape of this meeting to our dear Brother Lee with my compliments. I have nothing to hide. Too many things happened....

John So Letter to Witness Lee - January 1987

I got the shock of my life. I was already shocked, but then another shock wave came. I wrote Witness Lee a letter. Remember, brothers, at that time, the Lord knows, I still respected Brother Lee. But I am beginning also to boil. I am not a superman, you know. I am not the first class apostle that cannot shed tears. I wrote him a letter, and this is the letter. I wrote him a five-page letter: one, two, three, four, and five. I wanted to explain things to him, and I did not expect an answer from him, because I still respected him. At that time, I still thought maybe he didn't know exactly what was going on.

Let me backtrack a little bit before I go on. We can make a movie of this, you know. Forgive me, I have to let out some air, you know. I wrote him the letter. I answered quite a few of his charges. He read part of this letter in the video that you watched recently. I didn't see the video yet, because I don't think I can stand to see it. But I know that this letter was read from it. Out of five pages, our dear brother showed five lines to give a picture, to give a wrong picture, and a wrong impression: He said, "You see, you see, he changed, he changed. Look, he changed." Why you just show five lines, Brother Lee? I wrote five pages. If you want to show the letter, show all the pages.

Then Witness Lee called me about two months later. This letter was written January 11, 1987. When Witness Lee called me on the phone it was the end of February. He said, "John, Oh, the misunderstandings are so numerous, it is impossible to clear up." I told Brother Lee, "I wrote you this letter just to keep the record straight and that's it. I don't expect you to answer me."

He said, "Yeah, yeah, I knew you would say that, I knew you would say that."

That's it. I was not going to make any more issue out of that. Something was definitely fermenting. But at that time, it was no longer just fermenting. I don't know what's happening. And I don't know on which side it's fermenting.

Let me stop there and backtrack a little bit again, because Brother Lee mentioned in his book that letter signed by all the brothers. He used that, you see. He said specifically, "*John So signed this letter with all those brothers. How come he changed?*"

I will quote from *Fermentation* all that he said about this, then explain what the important factors were that are missing from his story: Witness Lee said,

Furthermore, in his letter to me dated January 7, 1988, John So said that brother Benson Phillips proposed that we write a letter similar to that which the brothers in the States signed during the elders' meeting in Orange County early 1986... In retrospect, [John So said] I regret that I signed that letter and was not faithful to follow conscience.

Actually, shortly after all the brothers had signed such a letter in Orange County, we had some fellowship amongst us here to see if we should do the same, and we definitely felt it was not necessary, and even to some extent not right, to write such a letter. However, to keep the 'one accord', we agreed to Benson's proposal.

Witness Lee goes on to say:

The letter referred to here by John So was signed in the States by the brothers, including three brothers from the church in Stuttgart. Two of the three brothers signed the letter in February 1986 and also signed this letter, on which I am making my remarks, in May of the same year. Between the two signings there was only a short interval of three months. And, John So told me in his letter that "shortly after all the brothers had signed such a letter in Orange County [i.e., the letter signed by them on February 21, 1986], we had had some fellowship amongst us to see if we should do the same, and we definitely felt it was not necessary, and even to some extent, not right to write such a letter." Since they had already had such a strong negative feeling concerning the signing of such a letter, why did two of the three brothers who had signed the letter in the States also sign, with John So, the letter of May 23, acting against their conscience? Could they give a reasonable and logical excuse for their action? If they acted so unreasonably and so illogically, how could others place their trust in them for co-

laboring in the Lord's work? John So offered the excuse that they signed the letter in order to keep the "accord." It is not honest to be in one accord in a pretending way that is against one's conscience. To be in one accord requires that we see the vision concerning the one accord. If one is void of such a vision, yet he pretends to be in one accord with others in order to please others, this is a falsehood, a deceiving behind a mask. It is no wonder that this one would fluctuate from pretending to opposing, and even to attacking others. Nonetheless, John So and sixty-three brothers did sign a letter that praised the five brothers' fellowship with them to the uttermost, and later he said that he signed the letter against his conscience. Could one put in writing such high, praising words as are shown in this letter, in pretense, while he is bothered in his conscience? Why was there no hint of the claimed crisis of conscience expressed then? Rather, John So's remarks contradict his claim of conflict in his conscience."

The Reasonable and Logical Excuse

I wrote to Brother Lee in January of 1988. At that time I told him I was wrong in signing that letter and had violated my conscience. And, I explained to him why. Because when all the brothers were there in the elders' meeting, February of 1986, signing that letter, including a couple of brothers from Germany, we brothers got together in Stuttgart and wondered if we should also follow the churches and sign such a letter? But we felt, "No it's not necessary. If we are really one—we are really one. There's no need to sign such a letter." And besides, people might think, you know what? Do you belong to Witness Lee? They will misunderstand us. So we said, "No, no no, we shouldn't sign it. It is not right." That doesn't mean we are against the one accord.

Please, please, this is the whole trouble, again—I want to say that we are believing so much that if something is said that is just a little bit different, this means, my goodness, that that one is against the one accord. Don't be like this, please. Let's learn something out of this. Don't have a chicken heart. Do you know what a chicken heart is? How big? It's a very small heart. It's a very small heart. And then if you still have the cardiosclerosis, that's it. That's the end. If you have a chicken heart, enlarge your heart, please. Let's enlarge our heart a little bit. What actually happened? What happened?

We five brothers got together, and finally one of them suggested at the end of our meeting, "Let's write such a letter to Witness Lee." My goodness, at that time they are promoting so much the one accord—it's not that we are against the one accord, okay? I think that we were just as much for the one accord at that time as others, but we just felt that it is not so right to sign the letter, but we went ahead. We brothers said, "Let's sign it". We signed it. We signed it. I wrote to Witness Lee later and said, "For the sake of one accord we signed it, but really it is not according to our feeling to sign such a letter." I don't mean we are against the oneness, okay? Please, you know that is the whole problem, right? We always try to misunderstand one another instead of understanding? So we signed, we signed.

My goodness, when problems came in Anaheim and in the United States in December 1987, we saw the videos.

Brother Lee told the brothers, I want to remind you that this is your pledge. The good-will letter becomes a pledge. If any of you elders here remember watching that video, Witness Lee pulls that letter out in the midst of the problem there and said to the brothers, "please, you pledged". It becomes a pledge. When the German brothers saw that he made it a pledge, they were very upset. Pledge? What! Did we pledge our lives

to him? We didn't mean that. They were mad. It was I who calmed them down. I said, brothers, don't worry about that. Such a letter really doesn't mean too much.

They were going to write to Brother Lee, all of them, and sign the letter, requesting him to send us back the letter. It was I who stopped them, and tried to convince them, no, no, no. We're going to get into more trouble if you do that. I told him about our feeling concerning signing the letter -- that should be enough. I said there is no need for all of us to write another letter and retract the one that he wants to use as a pledge.

Who is conspiring? There was no conspiracy. There was no conspiracy.

Okay, You remember I told you about the LSM publishers, right? The publishers. Boy, we sent them 4100 pages and we wrote a letter to Philip Lee even wanting to go see him. Okay, we wanted to go see him. The brothers would like to fly there to go see him concerning the books. No reply. Nothing. Then Neuchatel was afraid that their books would also be boycotted in Switzerland so they quickly called and called. That was in June or July. They called and finally around September they got the answer from Benny Danker. "Yes, yes, you may print your Italian and French books in Switzerland under one condition." Uh? "That they are not to be printed in Stuttgart." My goodness. "And if you cannot print them in Switzerland, send them back to Irving. We'll print them for you."

When the brothers in Stuttgart heard that, it was firstly up to here, then it was up to here. Now it was up to here. Finally, it was up to here. They said that's it. This is a proof that they intentionally want to give us trouble. That's it.

What happened? They wrote a letter to Witness Lee in December 1987. I'll read to you that letter.

Letter to Witness Lee from Stuttgart Publishers

Dear brothers, [It's to the LSM with a copy to Witness Lee.]

Since December of last year 1986 we have sent you a total of approximately 4190 camera-ready pages of the following materials which concluded our translation projects started over two years ago, etc, etc. [Those are the Life-Studies and Truth Lessons, etc.] Until the present, we have not heard any word from your office. However, we did hear that the Living Stream Ministry and Benson Phillips have told brother Vincent Jornod of Neuchatel emphatically not to have their French books printed in Stuttgart but in Switzerland. In view of the above facts we see no need to continue operation of the Verlag-der Strom (which is the German publishers.) We therefore kindly ask you to pay the cost of translation, correction, and proofreading, computer typing, paste-up work, phototypesetting, materials, and utilities which amount to DM 137,026.50 Please remit payment as soon as possible to the following account so that we could cover our debts accumulated due to the above mentioned work and close our books properly according to government regulations here.

(We sent them this. What do you expect me to do? What do you expect the brothers in Stuttgart to do?)

Signed Gert Reimer and Jim Frit-Fritz cc Witness Lee

At that time in November of 1987 Brother Lee called me and said, "John, you have to come." That was before we wrote this letter. "Let's have some fellowship." I said I cannot come right now but definitely in January I promise you

I'll come. But things are heating up. It's not fermentation. I don't know what's heating up.

In that December training in Irving of 1987 one of our brothers, an elder from Germany, whose name is Hans Gunter Vop, went to the training there in Irving. One day I received a call from him. I got a call from him. "John, you have to come. You must come because there's so many rumors here going on about Stuttgart, and about you." Stuttgart is the coldest cold windblowers, and all this junk. "You have to come." By that time I felt no. Since there is so much of the rumors about us, because of that I said I will not go.

I wrote Witness Lee a letter January 7 of 1988. You may have a copy to read it.

John So Letter to Witness Lee - January 7, 1988

Dear Brother Lee, originally, I did plan to go to Anaheim to have some personal fellowship with you as you requested by phone early December. (I must say at this time I was not too polite anymore to Brother Lee. If you would consider that as maybe a rebellion, that's fine with me. Consider it as a rebellion. Conspiracy, that is also fine with me. I don't care what you consider it. I just like to be faithful to my feelings and I do not want to play politics.) In my last page, the last word to him I told him, "Please do not think that I'm against you or am opposing you because of my writing you this letter. I do not have the slightest intention to oppose your work or your ministry. Neither do I have any desire to convince any brother. By the Lord's grace, I like to be straightforward and follow my conscience, not to hide anything and not play politics, not to please anyone, or to offend anyone. May the Lord have mercy on all His churches. (I ended the letter that way.)"

No Basic Problems? July 1988

Witness Lee said in *Fermentation*, "In July 1988 he [John So] came to Anaheim, but he did not contact me. One week after his arrival, I called and invited him to come to me. He came the next day. I asked him if there were any basic problems. He told me no. I said that since there are no basic problems, how about if we forget about the past. He agreed, and he told me that he would leave Anaheim within a few days."

This is not correct. I had actually written to him about all the basic issues. Brother Lee kept on saying that I said in his home, "there is no basic problem. We don't have any basic problem." In this letter that I wrote to him -- I even wrote to him, it's written down, and it was sent to him -- I dealt with all the basic problems in that letter. I poured out everything that is on my heart, whether he wants to hear it or not, whether I offend him or not. I'm sorry. I had no intention to offend, but if I was wrong, then I was wrong. I began the letter by telling him about the saints in England when they came back from Irving. I also brought up Bill Kirkham's letter and Brother Lee's reply to the letter that "it is wise and profitable not to make any issue". I told him there in his home, "Bill Kirkham wrote you that letter. It was like somebody's house is on fire and called the fire department and the chief of the fire department says, oh, don't make an issue, and then he hangs up. And not only did you not help the situation in England, you put gasoline into it to widen the fire in England. Then you told others regarding Bill Kirkham's letter that the one who wrote this letter wants something for himself."

After writing this to our dear brother, do you think I would say to him there is no problem? That I have no problem, that everything is all right? At his home, Brother Lee said to me let's draw a line and forget about the past. It's all over. I said, how can it all be over? What have you done? I said to him Brother Lee I have nothing to tell you because what I want to tell you is already in the letter. He said, "Oh, I didn't have time to read the letter". I said that's fine. At that time we were still friendly.

Brother Lee Apologizes On Behalf of LSM

Well, can we have a little bit more time? I'll take another twenty minutes, okay? I told you I wrote this letter to Witness Lee. At the same time, the Verlag wrote this letter to Witness Lee, and he got both of these letters. Then he called me in March, the end of March. Three times he called me. We had a long talk each time in March.

Listen, in the last conversation Brother Lee really did his best to convince me, and he did pay for the publishing work. He paid quickly in March and apologized for what the LSM had done. He paid this with two checks, I think. I don't know because it was not sent to me.

Telephone Conversation With Brother Lee

In a telephone conversation with Brother Lee, April 4, 1988, I was supposed to tell him certain things for the brothers after fellowshiping with them. I said, "the brothers were encouraged that you called, but actually no one has the heart to talk about all the things. They want you to know that the whole issue was never to cut off fellowship with you. They accepted your apology concerning all the trouble caused by your office in relation to the Verlag."

The brothers from England were also there, and they told me to tell Brother Lee that since his LSM branch office in England has caused so much trouble, the brothers in England requested that he do something in writing. Not for an apology. They don't even want an apology from Witness Lee, but they did want him to clear up the things that were spread in order to restore fellowship among the brothers in the churches.

I told him, "The brothers said they accepted your apology concerning all the troubles caused by your office in relation to the Verlag, the German publisher, although they did find it hard to believe that you didn't know what was going on." Witness Lee had continually said that he didn't know. Of course, I'm sorry, I still don't believe he doesn't know. Okay? If he could sit there and know the "conspiracy" in the whole world, my goodness, from the North Pole to the South Pole, east and west, he knows the whole conspiracy and then he doesn't know what his office is doing? I don't believe that too much anymore. Maybe at that time I believed it, but now I'm sorry to say, I don't believe that too much. Maybe a little bit. Maybe. If I try my best.

I told Brother Lee, "They find it hard to believe that you don't know anything about what was going on, because the brothers who came here in May 1986 assured us that everything that went on in the office is in close fellowship with you. They really assured us." Brother Lee, in answer to that said it is not true that everything that went on in the office is in close fellowship with him. Okay. So, you judge if it is or it is not. I don't know who is telling the truth. I don't know.

Nevertheless, we accepted his apology. Brother Lee asked me to convey to the brothers what he said several times to me on the phone, that it was in his heart that they should not close down the Verlag, but continue printing.

The brothers responsible for the Verlag acknowledged this request but they can only do this now on a very, very small scale because all of them, except one, have already gone back to work. We already closed down at that time.

And then concerning England, the brothers from England wanted me to tell him something over the phone, and this is what I told him. Brother Lee wanted to come, and I told Brother Lee that the brothers are not against his coming but that they feel now is not the right time. I said nobody likes to bring up all the things again which is not good for both you and us. It's better to wait for a little time until things cool down. The brothers were afraid of opening old wounds. In *Fermentation*, however, Brother Lee doesn't say this.

He gives people a different and wrong impression instead, saying, "*In the same phone conversation I also told John So that I would go in the spring of 1988 to fulfill my promise to finish the speaking on the second half of God's New Testament economy and to satisfy their repeated invitations to me through the past three years that I might finish the speaking on God's New Testament economy. But he would not agree*" (p. 60-61, *FPR*). Witness Lee tells people that I would not agree, as if we didn't want him to come at all.

Witness Lee even said to me, "If you feel that it is better that I visit later, it's okay. According to my schedule I have time at the end of May or the beginning of June. I also could come after the summer training." I told Brother Lee that I would fellowship with the brothers and that I would be in Anaheim in July and talk about it with him.

In *Fermentation of the Present Rebellion* Brother Lee said, "*During the meeting in Stuttgart, John related his phone conversation with me to the brothers there and, together with some of the other elders, mocked me. This shows the extent to which the opposition had already proceeded...Finally, John tried to force a decision upon them, namely, that they would all sever their ties with the Living Stream Ministry office. John also accused the five brothers who went to Stuttgart from the United States in 1986 of spying on them (cf. the letter to me from thirty-nine churches in Europe and Africa on May 23, 1986, in which they considered the five brothers' fellowship with them 'sweet fellowship')*" (p. 61, *FPR*).

Again, we understood that the motivation of the five brothers coming to Stuttgart was to get us to line up with "the office". We did feel that they were checking us out for this purpose, and, they themselves declared that this was their burden. We did, in fact, have serious problems with their request for us to line up with Philip Lee, in the way they requested it. This is why our feeling changed.

Summer Training 1988

Brother Lee said in his book that when I went to Anaheim in the summer, I wouldn't go see him. There was a reason. Witness Lee promised in our phone conversation that he was going to take care of the situation in England concerning all the issues that were made known to him. And all the brothers in England were quite happy. Nobody was mocking him. It seems that some weight was gone.

Okay, let me show you what Witness Lee did. He said he was going to address the problems. Previously, when Witness Lee had written to Bill Kirkham in answer to his letter, we all just sank -- we sank, okay, we sank, because such a grave, serious letter that Bill wrote was answered in such a way, without addressing the issues, while in the

meantime, everything is crumbling in England and very much due to the LSM. There was certainly no blessing. Still, Bill Kirkham respected Brother Lee at that time, and he wrote again to him. This was the letter:

Dear Brother Lee,

(written on the 16th of January, 1988.)

Thank you for the fellowship conveyed in your letter dated the 17th of December, which I received on January 6th. I do trust and respect your ministry and appreciate your answer to my letter. I see that it is wise and profitable not to make any issue of anything. I together with you look to the Lord for the furtherance of His move in His recovery in Europe. I will do whatever I can to help."

Now, does the brother who wrote this letter sound like someone who wants something for himself as Brother Lee had earlier indicated? Okay. After my conversation in April with Witness Lee, he promised he was going to do his best to deal with the whole situation there in England. This is what he did. This is the way he wrote the letter,

'Dear Brother Bill,

I have to thank you first for your precious letter of the 16th of January 1987. (Listen. This was a reply to a letter written by Bill Kirkham over a year before.) And your word through brother John So in our phone conversation in April 1988 has been conveyed to me when I was in Anaheim, for which I am also grateful to you. I do have a burden of much interest for the Lord that I would have a time to fellowship with you face to face. I do look to the Lord for the right time to visit you again in His mercy and grace. I left Anaheim with my wife for Taipei last week and will stay here probably till the end of May. Then we will go back to Anaheim for the summer training. Your prayer will be much appreciated.'

That is all that he did to clear up the situation in England. When the brothers in England read that letter, they phewwww, what, what, what is this? How are we going to clear up all the divisions and problems and what-not caused by the LSM office in England with that letter. You just tell me. You judge. How can the brothers use that letter to clear up anything? When we saw that letter, we, oh my goodness, what is this all about? What can we do? The brothers were feeling, "I give up, I give up."

Nevertheless, I went there in the summer to the training. I thought that I had nothing to talk to him about anymore. I really had nothing to say to him. My mother-in-law told me, you are not being polite if you don't call him. I said, "Mom, I don't want to play anymore, I don't want to play politics. I have nothing to say."

Brother Lee did call me and asked me to come to his home, and I went. I was not against him in anything. And that was when I told you a little bit of our conversation. And Brother Lee claimed in his book that I say there is no basic problem. That's impossible. I wrote him all the basic problems and our dear Dan Towle accused me and confirmed the same thing in his testimony, and why didn't he also write what he said to me. He said, "John So, you are a dangerous man." Why didn't he write that? He should also testify that. He might get a double star for saying that. I said, "I beg your pardon. I didn't come out for lunch or dinner with you to be accused like that. Would you mind explaining what you mean, I'm a dangerous man...?"

He said, "So many brothers who talk to you all become basket cases." I said, "name one." He named two. He named Ken Unger and he named Ned Nossaman. I said, "they're not basket cases. I just saw them a couple of weeks ago. Who else?" He said, "No more." I said, "You said many." Then I told him. "Well aren't you afraid to talk to me?"

You might become the third basket case.” I said, “I think we better go home before you become a basket case.”

Right after that day that I talked to Witness Lee, he called me and asked me to have fellowship with him at his home. I already had a breakfast appointment with a brother, and Witness Lee told me that he wants me to come over at nine o'clock in the morning. I said, I'm sorry, I will try my best to be early but I could not because I already had an appointment and I could not cut it short just to please somebody. I had no more intention within me to please anybody. Even I myself, I don't know, was up to where?

I went to meet with him at 10:15 and later I found out he was so offended that I let him wait. But I told him that I already had a breakfast appointment. Okay. After talking to Witness Lee (it's useless to talk about the content anymore), that evening I was invited by a family for dinner and lo and behold another couple was also invited. And this sister was one of the most trusted employees of the LSM office and was involved in some misconduct there [related to Philip Lee__Ed]. And after that night of fellowship I couldn't sleep. I couldn't sleep.

The next morning, lo and behold, Brother Lee's son-in-law called me, “I heard you had a talk with Witness Lee. What was the outcome?”

“Well”, I said, “we really didn't talk too much because, we agreed at that time right there not to say anything and I had nothing to say.” I already wrote him a letter. I had nothing to say. So, we had nothing to say. But, I told this brother, “Last night I couldn't sleep because I talked to a certain person, and, I went away after that conversation quite bothered about what I had heard.” I told him I then went to a breakfast appointment with someone this morning, and when I came back my wife said that Brother Lee had called and urgently requested that I call him back. So, we talked again by phone. My heart was quite heavy and very upset.

Brother Lee said, “I heard from my son-in-law that you want to talk to me, that you have some questions to ask me.” I said, “no, it must be a misunderstanding. But I will tell you anyway what happened last night”, and I told him about the conversation I had with the LSM sister. I then said to him, “Brother Lee, I realize now why the churches don't have blessings in all these years” (See Appendix 2).

“Oh, there are lots of blessings.”

I said, “Where?”

“Taipei”.

I said, “I'm not very sure. I'll see it for myself.”

“You should come, come, come right now. Let's have a talk.”

I said, “Brother Lee, I don't have the heart and I'm not in condition to talk to anyone right now. Just wait till my heart cools down. Wait till I can calm down.” I never told our brother that there is “no basic problem”, that everything is all right. I don't remember that I would have said that.

This book said he asked me many times if there was any problem, and that I said no, there was none. This isn't correct. Actually, I told him exactly what I heard and what I knew. I was quite disgusted!

So when we went back to Germany still nothing happened. We never heard from Brother Lee and our concerns were never addressed. Finally, the churches, the brothers in Manchester, the church in Blackpool, and the church also in Stuttgart wrote a letter to Witness Lee to disassociate with some of the things that have been occurring in the LSM, which we feel for the testimony's sake before the Lord, we just have to do. Right or wrong, we'll let the Lord judge.

Letter of Disassociation 1989 John So and nine churches in Europe

"Dear brother Witness Lee,

It has come to our attention recently through several witnesses that gross immorality and some other sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:11 have been committed by your son Philip Lee (who is identified as your Ministry Office) on more than one occasion over a long period of time. This deeply disturbs us. It grieves us even more that you and some of your close co-workers were aware of the situation and yet not only tolerated it but covered it up. What is worse is that, while this was happening, you and your co-workers were promoting and exalting him to the extent that he was able to intervene in the churches' affairs in recent years. The peak of this promotion was evident at your elders' training in Taipei in June 1987. Some of your co-workers were not only themselves under the influence and control of Philip Lee, but were also openly bringing elders and young people of many local churches to come under the same influence and control in your name and for your sake. The five brothers whom you and your Office sent to Europe in your place in May 1986 were trying to do the same here. Our young people who went to your training in Taipei have also testified of the same.

Before God, before the brothers and sisters in the local churches, before the Christian public, and for the sake of the Lord's testimony, we are compelled by our conscience to fully disassociate ourselves from such sins and behaviour in your work".

(signatories were twenty-one brothers from nine churches in Europe who effectually withdrew from the recovery with this letter on September 17, 1989.)

This is in brief the whole thing that had happened.

Lastly, I want to go to one testimony from the book, *Fermentation*, by Chris Lee of England. In all of his testimony, the impression he gives about me is altogether negative. He said that John So was the first one to spread the rumor that a number of those baptized in Taipei was false. If it was a rumor, it surely was not I who started it. Somebody told me, a quite a reliable brother there in Taipei told me, ...and the impression he gave is that John So is supposed to have said that he could raise up an army of brothers in the United States who are unhappy with the training. Supposed to have said! Such kind of testimonies pollute the heavenly court.

Did I or did I not say these things. Such a testimony is a bogus testimony. He said I did not care so much for the condition and faith of the saints. My goodness, I thought, who is not caring for the condition and faith of the saints?

This is what's happening and what had happened. If this is conspiracy, that's fine. I don't know what it is. Okay, I'm not accusing anybody of anything. And here I don't want to defend myself. You forced me to do it. And you don't have to believe me. I don't have tonight hoards of testimonies. I don't think I need them. And I'm not here to vindicate myself.

And let me tell you, the church is not any man's church. It is the church of the saints. You're free to follow Witness Lee, but not in such a way that would damage the testimony of the church. You're free to reject me if you think you will be contaminated. I won't fight for whatever. I don't know what people are fighting for. If you want to receive me, that's fine. If you want to reject me, that is also fine with me. But at least I have been in the Lord's recovery for the last twenty years, and I have seen a few things, and whatever I wrote, I wrote it hopefully to help us come back to the right track. I am not assuming anything, but I do feel that I'm responsible before the Lord just to share a few things that I feel would be useful to correct ourselves. Right?

Don't divide yourselves because of any men. It's not worth it. We are nothing. Nobody's anything. If you don't want me to come back to Manila, I don't live here so don't be afraid of me. I don't think my home is in Manila. It's too hot for me. Too many mosquitoes. And I'm afraid of amoeba. I hope that this little time of fellowship could clear up a few things, and I have no intention for you to take any side or say, oh, he is vindicated. No, forget about it. After you hear this message, forget about it. That's fine with me.

Tonight, even last night preparing this, has been the hardest time of my life because I have no intention to argue about these things. I don't think there is any need for any more questions. If you believe whatever you believe, that's fine. You know. It's ten o'clock. I told you just eighty or ninety minutes. It's a little bit over. Well, thank you for your patience.

John So was driven to a point of complete frustration and disillusionment with LSM and with Witness Lee, and later suffered the defamations in *Fermentation*. In a phone conversation with John, 2005, he did not want to defend himself, but exclaimed, recalling the startling claims of the book, that none of what the book said about him was accurate, referring to the points that were made to accuse him. He wanted no part of addressing matters of the past and did "not want to fight", but after considering in a thoughtful pause the value of addressing the unrighteous matters, he said that if the brothers want to repent, they can give him a call. His Manila report revealed the hidden history of LSM regarding the demise of John So and the European brothers and churches.

Witness Lee's Disingenuous Reporting

Concerning John So

In his book, *Fermentation*, Witness Lee refers to John So only in the most negative light, never allowing that his former co-worker had legitimate concerns. On page 68, for instance, Brother Lee says, "he spoke past midnight, relating to the brothers the rumors and lies he had heard" [as if they were rumors and lies]. In Brother Lee's handling of John So's solemn letter of disassociation, he does not deny the serious charges made against him, Philip Lee, and his co-workers. He essentially condemns John for telling the truth and for the truth spilling out to others:

Less than three weeks after the August 28 meeting, on September 17 [1988], John So and some leading ones of nine churches in Europe wrote a letter to me, accusing me and my close co-workers of covering up and tolerating sins, and thus declaring their disassociation from my ministry. In an attempt to further discredit me, he read over the telephone to a riotous brother in Anaheim their aforementioned private letter of disassociation. In a Lord's Day morning church meeting on October 9, 1988, this brother read that letter to the public. Later the

tape of that meeting was sent to many churches. Numerous letters of protest against the riotous meeting in Anaheim were sent to the elders of the church in Anaheim as a result of this irresponsible distribution of the tape of this meeting. Thus the private letter sent to me was made widely open in order to defame me.

I am sorry to say that Brother Lee was more concerned about being “discredited” and “defamed” than he was about being truthful. The letter, which was not “private” but written “before the brothers and sisters in the local churches and before the Christian public”, was not written with a base intention to “discredit” or “defame” Brother Lee; rather, it was written to tell the truth and disassociate from the “sins and behaviour” in Brother Lee’s work. There had been no response by Brother Lee to the serious concerns that John and the brothers in Europe had, thus John So and the brothers with him finally decided that they should send Brother Lee the letter of disassociation.

Brother Lee made reference to the “irresponsible distribution” of tapes of the “riotous meeting”, yet took no responsibility himself to tell the saints the facts related to the sin, corruption, and divisive activity stemming from his office. Naturally, then, this word got out in other ways, creating a chaotic atmosphere.

Brother Lee disrespectfully refers to a “riotous brother” in Anaheim and denounced him, not disclosing the source of the brother’s grief and the incendiary elements embodied in LSM that provoked many church members to become “riotous dissenters” in Anaheim. Instead of addressing the immoral conduct of his son at LSM and his son’s major role in causing division in the recovery, Brother Lee hid these matters from the saints in his report on “the rebellion” and chose instead to publicly censure brothers like John So, a brother who let it be known that he would not “participate in the unfruitful works of darkness”; rather he would “reprove them.”

Copy of Original Disassociation Letter

www.unfaithfulwitness.org/EuropeanChurchesDepart1989.pdf

Includes 21 names and signatures on three pages, of brothers representing each of nine churches in Europe that supported the letter to Witness Lee

**Stuttgart
Hamburg
Reutlingen
Tilbingen
Phorzheim
Geneva
Lausanne
Neuchatel
Zurich**

www.unfaithfulwitness.org/EuropeanChurchesDepart1989.pdf