

A Letter to the Responsible Brothers and All the Saints in the Churches in the Russian-speaking World concerning a Turn in the Lord's Move

Dear brothers and sisters! We want to tell you about a turn the Lord is making these days in the Russian-speaking world. This fellowship was presented for the first time in the Responsible Brothers Training in January of this year. All the brothers had a very positive response to this word. Now we want to share this fellowship with all the saints in the Russian-speaking world.

Turns in the Lord's move

The Bible shows that our God is a moving God. God moves in mankind for the carrying out of His eternal economy. In His move God from time to time makes turns. In the Old Testament because of man's fall God made a turn from the created race to the called race. Later God made the key turn from the old covenant to the new covenant, from the chosen people of Israel to the church as the new creation. One of the first and most crucial turns in church history took place in Antioch in Acts chapter 13 – a turn from the Jewish world to the Gentile world.

In the beginning of the 20th century the Lord made several key turns in His recovery. From 1922 to 1949 the Lord used China as a "greenhouse" for His recovery, having raised up brothers Watchman Nee and Witness Lee there. But in 1949 the Lord made a crucial turn as He sent Brother Lee from mainland China to Taiwan. In the early 1960s, after the Lord's recovery had been rooted in Taiwan, the Lord in His sovereignty made another turn in His move, which brought Brother Lee to the United States of America.

The Lord's move in the Russian-speaking world

In 1991, when by the Lord's sovereignty the doors of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe opened up, Brother Lee was enlightened by the Lord to see that Europe must become the direction of the Lord's move. However, in the first training for migrating saints in August of 1991 in Anaheim, due to the great spiritual hunger of the Russian-speaking people, a decision was made to send saints to the European part of Russia. Hallelujah for this turn! In order to take care of the distribution of financial supply among the saints who migrated to the Russian-speaking world and, later, to Eastern Europe and Israel, brother Lee commissioned the coworkers to establish a service in the Body called "the Lord's move to Europe" – LME.

Through prayers, offerings, distribution of the ministry books and the service of coworkers from foreign churches over the past 16 years in the Russian-speaking world, more than 200 churches were raised up with about 4,000 saints in 12 countries of the former Soviet Union. In addition, throughout these countries there are 120 groups who meet but are not yet breaking bread. Not only so, 140 Russian-speaking coworkers who graduated from the Full-time Training in Moscow labor among us. Their service is carried out in five areas of the Russian-speaking world with centers in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Rostov, Yekaterinburg and Kiev. The Lord's move also spread to Armenia, Georgia and the Baltic countries. Work among Russian-speaking saints is carried out also in Israel and European countries among emigrants from the former Soviet Union. The work in the Russian-speaking world is unique because it is a work not of one country but of the one new man; it is a blended work in the Body of Christ, in which English-speaking, Chinese-speaking, Korean-speaking and Russian-speaking saints are involved. By all means, this has been the main factor of the Lord's blessing. Thank the Lord for everything He has done during the past 16 years in the Russian-speaking world through the blended work of the one new man!

The Lord's move in Europe

At the same time the Lord's move in European countries continued by the way of migration of workers. Over the past several years the Lord's recovery has reached 20 countries of Eastern and Western Europe; today there are 30 churches there with over 1,000 saints. The Lord has also raised up several churches in Israel. During the last two years the burden for strengthening and increasing the Lord's testimony in Western Europe has become more and more tangible in the Lord's recovery. Brother Lee said that we need to reach every European country in order to raise up a strong testimony there before Antichrist appears. Recently a special training for saints migrating to Western Europe started in Anaheim. In August of 2007 the first group of saints migrated to London to join with the church there and other churches in Great Britain; during this year saints will go to other countries of Western Europe starting from France. Over the last year Chinese-speaking saints have also begun to meet in several cities in

France for the spread of the Lord's testimony there. A month ago the Recovery Version in the French language was released. By the summer of 2008, groups of trained saints are scheduled to be sent to Germany, Spain, and Ireland as well as other parts of Great Britain. In 2009 groups of saints are due to migrate to Italy, Greece, Portugal, Scandinavian countries, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. The brothers also have a burden to strengthen by the end of 2009 the Lord's testimony in Eastern Europe: in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. The financial supply for much of this work is coordinated by "the Lord's move to Europe."

The Lord's speaking about a new turn through outward circumstances

Yet the focus of the Lord's work for the past 16 years has been the Russian-speaking world, and that is why it is here that two-thirds of all the offerings received by "the Lord's move to Europe" service were spent. Support of coworkers, conferences and trainings, traveling to other cities and other expenses of the work were covered by foreign churches and saints in the Lord's recovery who have been faithfully offering all these years. We are exceedingly thankful to the Lord and all the saints and churches for their sacrifice of love through which the Lord has been able to do so many things for His move among us. We are deeply indebted to all these dear saints. And although in recent years many churches in the Russian-speaking world have been participating in this burden by their offerings, this only partially covered the needs of the work.

Recently the brothers in "the Lord's move to Europe" noticed that over the past 8 months offerings have greatly decreased. This decrease was caused by a number of objective reasons, among which is an increase of expenses for the Lord's move in Western Europe, and other needs in the Lord's recovery. In addition, recently in Russia a new law was issued according to which foreigners are allowed to stay in the country no more than 6 months a year. This will cause many foreign coworkers to go back home. At first all these things seemed to be temporary difficulties, but after repeated fellowship and thorough prayer the brothers realized that the Lord is using these outward circumstances to show His recovery that He is making a turn – a transfer of the burden from the Russian-speaking world to Western Europe for His ultimate move.

Not "made orphans" but prepared by the Lord

Of course, it is not that the Lord's recovery in other countries is now "turning away" from the churches and saints in the Russian-speaking world, "making them orphans." The present turn is not a retreat but a step forward. The Lord is opening a new page in the history of His move in the Russian-speaking world. We believe and hope that through this turn the Lord's move will spread even more and become rooted both in the Russian-speaking world and in Western Europe. Not only so, this turn bears evidence that the churches and saints in the Russian-speaking world have grown to a certain extent and are now bearing responsibility for the work in the Russian-speaking world, including the financial aspect of it.

Looking back we see that the Lord has prepared the churches in the Russian-speaking world for this turn. Through the 96 lesson trainings the saints were perfected, while the churches and responsible brothers began to blend among themselves in groups and coordinate more. Another major step in the preparation of the Russian-speaking world was the gospel move in 2007, as a result of which about 50 new churches were raised up. Care for the new churches is carried out to a large extent by leading brothers of different local churches in blending with the coworkers.

So, the responsibility for carrying out the work and distribution in the Russian-speaking world will now be borne by the churches. This is normal and in the nature of things. Brother Lee testified that the Lord's move cannot be carried out by offerings from other countries for a long time. It is normal in the initial stage due to the small spiritual growth of the saints. But as the saints and churches grow in the divine life, all the work must eventually end up in the hands of the local saints. Practically it means that now the saints will have to pay fully for their participation in conferences and trainings, except for the Full-time Training in Moscow, which will still be paid for by "the Lord's move to Europe." But the main financial burden has to do with supporting the Russian full-time serving ones.

Teams of full-timers and their material support

In the work of the full-timers there will be serious changes. In the fellowship of the brothers it was decided that the full-timers now will labor by teams of 4 to 5 people on campuses in order to gain students for the church life. The churches in the Russian-speaking world need young people very much. Young people are the future of the church! We hope such teams will labor not only in the five main cities

where coworkers have been laboring, but also in a number of other cities where there is a healthy church life with strong leadership, where there are campuses and where the church (or a cluster of churches) are able to render financial support for a team. We hope that all the saints will be open to offer for supporting a team of full-timers even if this team will not labor in their city. This is exactly the way the work is carried out in the churches in the U.S.A. Through the service of the teams the Lord during the past several years has gained many young people in the churches in the U.S.A., and in this way the number of full-time trainees in Anaheim almost doubled to over 300, who are being supplied in life, being built up in the knowledge of the truth, knowing life, and serving. We want to follow this pattern. As far as the visiting and shepherding of the new churches in the cities visited by the January 2007 gospel move are concerned, this burden must be handed over to the local churches. We hope the responsible brothers in your city will tell you all the details.

The number of full-timers and in which cities they will serve will practically depend on the amount of financial support the churches in the Russian-speaking world will be able to render the full-timers. For this there is the need of the participation and effort of all the churches in the Russian-speaking world. We need to realize that without our support there won't be any full-timers and there won't be any teams. In order to have teams of full-timers, all the churches in the Russian-speaking world need to come to a new level of practical participation in the Lord's move in the aspect of material offerings. Brother Lee said that if all the saints in the Lord's recovery faithfully offer 10% of their financial income for the needs of the church and 5% for the needs of the work, all the needs in the Lord's move will be met, and this does not depend on the economic prosperity or welfare of the people in a particular country. Many saints who have greater financial capacity also give to meet many needs throughout the Lord's recovery all over the world. Still, in the Lord's recovery today there are many unmet needs. This means that we all need to bring this matter to the Lord and receive special grace from Him to offer in love in a manner worthy of our generous God and, what is most important, to be faithful in this regard. Then the Lord will bountifully bless His recovery in the Russian-speaking world.

Shepherding the full-timers

Although our desire is that all the full-timers would continue to serve, we realize that, most likely, the churches in the Russian-speaking world at this point won't be able to support more than 140 full-time serving ones. That's why many of them will have to get a job. Because of this it is these full-timers, their wives and their children who are in greatest need of shepherding today. We should not think that full-timers are heroes. The only difference between working saints and full-time serving ones is that full-timers don't have a steady job. May our heart be filled with a feeling of love and care toward these dear saints. We should not pity them but cherish, feed and shepherd them, pray for them and love them. We believe the Lord will shepherd all the churches, all the coworkers, all the full-timers and all the saints during this time.

The key to blessing

This turn in the Lord's move is for the building up of the Body of Christ; therefore, it does not affect the Russian-speaking world alone. It is a matter of the whole Body. This turn is for the growth and building up of the Body as well as for the preparation of the bride. In order to reap blessing during this turn, we need to know what the key is. The key to blessing is this: none of us should put their city in the first place; nobody should put their personal interests and personal needs in the first place. We exalt Christ and give the first place to Him. We put the Body in the first place and not our city, our region, our country or even the Lord's recovery in the Russian-speaking world. The Lord moves through the Body and in the Body. We are a part of the Body, members of the Body, and we are one with this move of the Body. We do not know where we are going, and we don't know what awaits us in the future. But we are blessed because the Lord as the Head directs the Body, and He will come soon. What a glorious hour this is – to be in the Lord's recovery! The Body is moving, the Lord is going forward, and eventually we will be blessed. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Coworkers together with you in the Russian-speaking world.