

(Continued from Part 1)

I left you at Hardoon Road in Shanghai during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, right up until the Mao Zedong army arrived during the Long March. They came pouring down, and the United States, by the way, refused to give Chiang Kai-shek any weapons to defend himself against the armies of Mao Zedong, because they believed, and I quote, that this was nothing but an agrarian reform. Chiang Kai-shek could have stopped Mao Zedong if he had any bullets to shoot with, just a little.

Okay. I said to you, and this is rather hard to grasp. Mike, I'm not sure you've ever given this any thought. Great preaching with a mute audience, far richer and higher than anything the institutional church has ever been able to give, actually works a transformation on people's lives. Am I saying that preaching the word of God can transform people? Under those conditions, the answer is absolutely yes. They are the holiest people you will ever meet. The kindest, most gentle, serene. It'll make your teeth ache to want to be like...everything you ever dreamed of a Christian being is what they are. Right up till you scratch them, and then they're just as in the flesh as anybody else called a Christian in this world.

The only time they function is at the Lord's table. They move in from different places. They hear this great preaching. They become increasingly soft and increasingly gentle. One of my professors put it this way. "A mild-mannered man preaching to mild-mannered people, exhorting them to be more mild-mannered." Well, that's a typical church service. This is more. This is some of the greatest truth and revelation the world has ever heard. These are the writings and works of Nee and T. Austin Sparks. T. Austin Sparks held forth longer than Watchman Nee did, and he raised up an incredibly holy, pious people. Again, it will make your teeth ache.

Brother Nee preached this way, and they were such incredible people. You've got to understand that many of these people died under communist rule. Some went to prison; some went back to prison; some went back to prison again. And Nee was eventually in prison. Now, if I'm not mistaken, he was not in prison based on anything that had to do with communism. It was a charge of immorality, and we'll spend the rest of our lives not knowing the answer to that one. But they were after him, and would have found something anyway.

I met these people. The first group I ever met was in Louisville, Kentucky, when I met Beta Sheirik. Now, this is what I didn't understand, and I can only understand it looking back in retrospect. When I walked through that door, who walked through that door was like nothing they had ever seen or heard. Beta felt her prayers had been answered, prayers of a lifetime, that God had finally sent a worker. Well, she was right, but I didn't know that. I was excited about the last work of God on this earth, and I went into that place like a buzzsaw, asking questions. Right, left, and middle, questions that had never been asked before, and nobody else had ever cared. I kept a barrage of questions up for three or four days.

Two things I observed, and a third one I did not observe, but I only came to understand it in retrospect. I want you to know that little group, which Watchman Nee so influenced, and that Beta

was a worker in the Little Flock movement, and I suppose there were some others there, too. In that room, in the home of brother Authouse, in their living room on Sunday, was one of these (podiums), and they had chairs in the living room. They moved the furniture out of the way, put this up here in its place, and they had a meeting, and it was dead rather than dead. It was hell, but it was the longest-standing church in America that had anything to do with the Lord's work in China and England. T. Austin Sparks had spoken there. Another outstanding leader had spoken there. Help me with the names of the two men who married T. Austin Spark's daughters. Richard Ackeroyd, and who was the other one? Okay, let's go with Ackeroyd. Did he take over the work of Austin Sparks when he died? He did not. No, it was a son-in-law or something like that who took over. Okay, say his name again. Richard Ackeroyd.

Now, the first thing I noticed was that they were deader than a doorknob, and now I'm stopping right here, and I'm saying to you, when I ask you to stick with this, I'm saying if it gets that dead, stick with it, because somebody may walk through that door. I did, and I shot those people full of questions, every kind imaginable. I had no idea why they were so startled at me, and sitting there, meeting Beta would have converted anybody to anything. She was one precious city sister. And by the way, that woman knew the cross. Her life was the cross. Richard Ackeroyd split that group, and the Authouses' split it right back. Who split it? I don't know, but there were now two groups, both of which believed in locality. This was 1963.

Well, now I have come to a difficult spot here. You heard me slip a name. Just me, and I don't even know who this guy is. I don't know who either one was. I think I shook hands with him once. Richard Ackeroyd. I'm going to try to tell a story from here on, and I'm going to refer to a gentleman who was the leader. I'm not trying to keep a secret. You don't have to say, "What is he talking about?" Everybody in here knows, but out of respect for him, I don't have any other way to tell the story by his name, or without his name, and I'm not going to use his name, right up until I slip. I'm probably going to do that. I've been trying my best to tell myself, ' Don't do this. ' Now then, you've never heard this story. You don't know anything about it. You don't know anything about it. My wife will not know 90% of it. Alicia, you don't have any idea about this.

Alicia, there's a young lady named Kim, the daughter of Shirley, who is writing the story of Isla Vista, and Bob wrote her an absolutely incredible, beautiful story of how it got started. I mean, it's great. Thank you, Bob, so very much. But when he introduces me at UCLA, he says, "Gene Edwards, who was a teacher in a school in Tyler, Texas." And I went with that. So, you are going to be given the story of my life before I left the institutional church. If I'm going to be called a school picture in Tyler, Texas...I never taught a day in Tyler, Texas, or anything else. I want you to know the story of my life until I left the institutional church. I'm not interested in it. It is... as Paul said... it is done. I have never been interested in it, but if he doesn't know any more than that, I did a really good job of keeping the story of my life from you up until the day I arrived in Isla Vista.

So, I'm going to take up from right there and go back from the time I left the institutional church. When I left the institutional church, I wanted to - get clear on this - I wanted to be part of that witness, that testimony. I was looking for it. I wanted it. I had convictions. I had feelings. I had dreams. I had hopes. And I had not met any of these people. I did not even know that Watchman Nee had been someone in China, and I had read a book, *The Normal Christian Life*, and then Sit, Walk, Stand, and I tried to read *The Spiritual Man*. In fact, I'm probably the first person in the world to have ever read *The Spiritual Man* in English, because I had a Chinese friend who used to be part of the Little Flock, and he had sat there for hours reading it to me. I had enough sense then to know that nobody ought ever to translate that book into English, and brother Nee asked that it never be translated. So as soon as they heard that, everybody wanted a copy, and it is now his second-largest-selling book, even though he was totally opposed to what he wrote, since he wrote it when he was 21. Now you all go out and read *The Spiritual Man*.

Now I'm going to address people who believe in oneness and unity, as the Brethren did, only we're now in Asia. The gentleman, one of the four or five or six workers in Asia, who came to America, and I met him shortly after he began ministering. He'd been here several years before he started ministry. I expect I met him within a year and, shucks, it was glorious. It was absolutely glorious. I was too infatuated, too enthusiastic, and too blind to notice much, but I did notice a little.

Now, I went to the Far East to meet with the Little Flock. I had already been to Louisville, Kentucky, and I had heard many wonderful things. I also want you to keep in mind that preaching the highest gospel in the world does not transform you, except skin-deep, or maybe a little deeper than skin-deep. These are holy people. People pray a lot. Pray more than we do. And that was one of their problems. I'm going to throw in another gimmick. Get those people praying for you, and they'll give money. Have you ever heard that statement? If you haven't, at least you can get it figured out that way. I have a real problem with prayer, and I'm going to lay it down this weekend. I've carried this burden long enough. I'm going to get rid of it.

So, I got there, and we landed in Taiwan, and a coronation line of people met us. Oh, that's so beautiful. 500 people on this side, 500 people on this side. They were just spread out enough. There were others on the trip with me, but the gentleman in charge, the one I will now refer to as the leader, got hold of me, and we went down that line at the airport, and we were doing like this. He was doing this. I was doing this. I was shaking hands and stopping to hug people every once in a while. Very impressed.

We had a conference, then met with them on Sunday morning. On Sunday morning, I went to their meeting. This is a huge meeting place that would hold many people? You never went there? Well then, I make it as big as I want to, can't I? Now, it could easily hold 1,500 to 2,000 people. All the men sat on this side, all the women sat on this side, and every woman in that building had a black doily on their head. I'm going to ask you, how much work does it take to get a group of people where men sit on one side, women sit on the other, and every woman has exactly the same doily on their

head? You want to make a guess? I don't know. You don't do that with one message; that takes some high-tall preaching.

Now, while the conference was going on, and their hospitality was unbelievable, and on Saturday afternoon, every woman in that church was there with a little spray bottle and a rag. I don't know, there must have been 2,000 glass panes on that house, in that building. It wasn't walls, it was glass panes. They were on ladders, and down on the floor, and up bigger ladders, and every one of those panes got cleaned on both sides. These were called services. Well, they had these people who cooked our meals. They had single women who wore those doilies and long robes; they were single, and those women took care of us night and day. We had meals three times a day.

I did not really know what brought him to America, but there was a long string of buildings and rooms, and they put one brother in this room and me in the next under a mosquito net. Then there was the living room, and there was somebody else, and then there was Don Marcy and his wife, whose name I believe was Jule. Well, there was some sort of a fight going on, and they used the living room, which was next to me. Now, I was just then recovering from...Debbie, please do me a favor here. Please read up on disseminated histoplasmosis and find out everything you can about it. I'm going to stop calling it disseminated histoplasmosis because people just look at me and roll their eyes. You're going to discover that it says it is identical to cancer, and it moves through the body the same way. I had just gotten out of bed from disseminated histoplasmosis, but you could just as well call it cancer in the system. It crawled all over my body and ate up just about everything in me.

I was a very, very sick man, but I did not care. You have no idea how much burned inside of me. No, you have no idea how much *burns* inside of me. They sat there in that living room and fought till 2 and 3:00 in the morning, and then we had breakfast at six. I talked to Don Marcy, and he said... forgive me again, but this is Don. I didn't say this. He said, "Gene, they get there in that living room, and they chicken talk to one another all night long." I did not know what was going on. I know there was anger, and that it went on for hours and hours and hours. It was the beginning of problems.

This is 1965. I spoke at the gathering of some 5,000 people there. I spoke to the church there. Then I went to the Philippines, and when they took me off the airplane, they drove me past a place and said, "This is where the other group meets." They took us to court. What kind of Christians are those? I tried my best not to let this register. Then I got back to Hong Kong, met brother James Chen, and attended their meetings there. Now, this was a big church; it was a building where you couldn't tell any difference. I had a balcony. I walked in, and I took my place in the balcony on the right side, and I sat down with all the men, and on the other side of the aisle are all the women, all the little doilies, downstairs men, and here's a man whom God had given a vision of what the church was supposed to be. I'm sitting there, and I remember a Chinese guest came up to the balcony, and he wasn't paying any attention. He sat down here on this side (with the women), and one of the ushers came over, grabbed him, then started pulling him over to this side. He was

confused. He didn't know what to think, and then he noticed the whole crowd. He looked at these people, and then he got over and sat down, and I thought, if that doesn't fit with Chinese, it sure doesn't fit with me. Still, I love those people.

Now, by the time I spoke to that huge gathering and got involved in the church in Hong Kong, I'm sorry, but I don't remember if I preached there or not. Everything in me says I did because of what happened. I had been in Taiwan. I had been and preached in the Philippines. Then the people who were in Taiwan went back to Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and to the Philippines, and to two or three other places, and to Tokyo and some other places I long since forgotten. Suddenly, there came these telegrams. They did everything by telegrams. We want Gene Edwards; do not send him home to America. Is my wife present? Boy, can somebody get her? Just tell her I need her for one minute. I don't want to finish that story without her.

So, I'm sitting up here in a room. I am 31 years old. I am sicker than I can get, and then watch them bring in this leader. Then he said letters, telegrams, phone calls, everywhere. Everybody wants you to stay. I was just about to tell him I was too sick to go, and I had to go home, and he said, "Someone must take over the work in Asia. Somebody must go to the Philippines now. Who shall it be? I'm in a great big room, and there are two people in it. Who shall it be? Who shall it be? So, I thought I had recovered from this because I got out of bed, and like a fool, you know, when you finally get out of bed, you think you're going to be over it. Well, listen, this one never gave up on me, not until this hour. I said, "Okay, I'll go."

"Now, I want you to go to such and such with so and so, and of course, and we call so and so and so. He didn't wait one tenth of a second, and he had me mapped out for the next five years: every year, I want you to fly home to the United States and be with us at our summer conferences. You might as well take Elijah's robe, Elisha's robe, Paul's robe, and Peter's robe and put that thing around me the way I felt right then. I just was not ready for this, saints. When I got to the Philippines, I stayed there for six weeks or two months. I started a church there. That church is still there. They had a Chinese church, which is ridiculous; a Chinese church in the Philippines. They're not made of Chinese; they're made out of Filipinos. So, I started a church for Filipinos, and the language wasn't English; it was Tagalog. And I collapsed. I sent a wire to this brother and said, "I've got to go home. I'm too sick. You're not going to have anything but a hospital bed here."

Now I'm going to play dirty. Real dirty. I'm going to tell the truth. There were three other brothers with me, all whose names you know, Mike, very well, and they were mortified at what they were seeing. But when this gentleman walked in, it was the most wonderful thing in the world. Just great, just fantastic. Then they were all so shocked at anything I did because they were religious people, and I'm not a religious person. They had just chewed me out about something I did, and this gentleman sat down with us for lunch, and I said, "Brother, he and he and he have said that I have been wrong in doing this, that, and the other. What do you say?" Nobody in this world's ever done that to him, and they were mortified. So, he gave his answer: Yes, what you did, Gene, was perfectly acceptable. And I said, "Did you get that? Did you get that? Did you hear that?" Alright,

I just stopped being dirty. That's the end of my being dirty. No, it's not either because those men were so critical of everything he did, and I had kept my mouth shut the whole time. Then he came over to the Philippines with his other brothers, and they had just coated him with butter the whole time. I had a few minutes to get to the airport, and James B... see how much I've learned from these people? You use the first name and the last initial. Alright, he was standing up against a limousine. Was he going to take me to the airport? He turned to me, and he asked me what I thought. And I might as well have had a skywriter to write that in the sky, and then keep going all the way across this Pacific, across California, all the way over to Europe. I said... Well, I bet everything in me knew I was going to get hung for this... I said, "You know, other than their love for one another, I don't see anything here I want to see in America." And man, when I said it, I could tell, James B. is going, "Hot dog. I got him now." Forgive me, but those men were absolutely flushing hypocrites with the way they worked with that gentleman.

So, I got on the plane and flew home, my dear wife and two children... I'll tell you that my wife had packed everything at home, given up our apartment, and was about to be flown to the Philippines, when I sent that telegram to her saying I was too sick to continue everything, and I was too. I was one distraught human being. They had had fights; they had splits, and I think I was beginning to understand then that all the great preaching in the world, if you don't have a life in some way dealt with by means other than preaching, you don't have anything at all.

I got to the meeting, and I was sought out. In fact, I just got home. I was sought out, and a brother said to me, "Gene, our brother, the leader, has asked you not to report back to your trip to the Far East." I am not a fool. He said, "Wait until you get back to report. All of them get back." Well, I knew that writing was like this. It said, "Gene Edwards, you're a persona non grata. You're in; this is where you get off." And I had a crisis that Sunday. That was one of the hardest fault battles of my life. I knew that that movement was about to spread, and I knew that it was about to destroy thousands of lives. I was as clear of that as I am of my own name. I went to the meeting that morning, even though I was forbidden to speak or report, and this word had gotten back to me. Gene didn't say anything about the Far East except for people's love for one another. I was wrong about that part.

Now y'all going to have to forgive me, but I've been... you don't understand... I've been sitting on this since 1965. I was torn and ripped to shreds that morning, and I found out that the church there, a place called Elden Hall, was on the verge of a split because of the way the people had taken over. While I was in the Far East, the others were in the Far East; these men, these white men, these protégés had just been treating everybody horribly. There had been so many people who came in there, idealistically and alive and gung-ho, and they were shocked. One of them came to see me before Sunday, and his name was Paul. Paul and I had gone straight to the bowels of hell together.

So, Paul came over, and he talked to me, and I was just a young man torn to shreds. I went there to become part of the Lord's testimony, and that's all I wanted. I never had any ambitions to be a leader, and I had already heard many times that Gene is the "heir apparent". Well, there was every

reason to believe that, because he hardly ever brought a message to even talk about me. Now, I don't know where he got that idea; I don't understand it, but I had no ambitions that way, and my dreams were crushed. I was talking to Paul just a few days ago; I talk to him about once every five years. He said, "Gene, you remember that day?" I said, "Yeah, I remember that day really well." I'd come home from the meeting. I had slipped to the edge of my chair once or twice. I came that close to standing up and saying something, but thank God I didn't, you'd have never met me if I had.

My apartment was upstairs, on the top floor. I was down like this, my head in my face. Paul came in, and he sat down at the bottom of the stairs. He was amazed that I was just ripped to shreds about what I saw and what was going on over there. So, he came over and sat down at the bottom of the staircase, and I was up there at the top, and I said, "Paul, I have absolutely nothing to live for." He said, "It's worse than that, Gene. You and I are in trouble with an apostle. And when you're in trouble with an apostle, you're in trouble." I remembered that, but I didn't remember what I said to him after. He laughed, and he said, "Gene, do you know what you said after that?" I said, "No." He said, "Gene, this is what you said to me." And this is me speaking. I said, "Yeah, we're in trouble, man. When you're out of Schlitz, you're out of beer." (laughter) That's kind of the way it was with me. I was out. I did something that maybe has separated me from everybody else. Men were leaving by the droves; I didn't leave. I said, "Lord, I'm going to stay here. This is where I was when I last saw you. I'm not moving until I see you." That saved my life. For the next three to four years, I lived in a living hell. I lost the sense of salvation. Some of you have read that in a book, but you've never heard when; I had absolutely no sense of an indwelling Lord, and you've never had that experience that very few people have, and you don't ever want to have it.

I remember one day Paul was in my home, spent the night, and the next day he got up, went into the bathroom to shave, and was singing, and it dawned on me that I had not sung a single word in a year. It was there that I learned one thing I could do: listen to Christian music. There have been many pilgrims who were just at the bottom of it all and could not find their way, and I have said to them, "Go get some Christian music, and just sit there and cry and listen." We had two or three records. Helen and I were poor as a turkey. All my clothes wore out, and I had some good-looking clothes because I had been an evangelist and a preacher. Our undergarments wore out. Our shoes wore out, and I would like to thank General Motors for having made something called a Chevy 2. We did not have a penny in the world to repair that car. Everything on that car was broken, and we couldn't put a penny in it, but doggone, that thing started and moved a little bit every day, and that was the mercy of God.

Now I'm off the subject. No sense of God. I got to back up a little bit. I guarantee you that what I'm about to tell you, there's nobody in the world who knows this story. In those few days that I was there, I'll tell you how I got out. That was the mercy of God. All these men started coming to me, telling me what they'd been through, and it was all horror stories; stories that would continue to be horror stories for the next 40 years. They said to me, "Gene, you've got to stop this man, and you've got to stop this work." And that church was split right down the middle because of the

conduct of what has been going on. You know what I did? I went to every person in that church by name I knew, and I sat down with them, and I said, "It ends here. You get back into that building, sit under that man, and don't move. It's where you belong, and don't you dare split that church, and don't you dare try to stop this work." And somebody was being warned those days, and you know what reward I got for that? I was charged with trying to split the church.

Well, I finally got a job in Altadena. There was another little group meeting. There were several meetings, sort of as satellites to that, and they were just like us. They thought it was the grandest thing in the world. And without my knowledge, they said, "We're in Altadena, and Gene works in Altadena. He's a schoolteacher in a ghetto." I was ill, I'd come home from work, and Helen would drive up to the car and open the door and literally pull me to the bed. I got in that bed, and I stayed there until it was time to go to work the next day. I did not move. I was swollen. I shuffled when I walked. I was in excruciating pain, and my Lord had left me; at least that's the way it felt. And you know what I learned? I learned a lesson: you walk by faith, not by any feelings on this earth. You walk by faith, and that's all I have. By the way, I will say this. I learned that from reading something by Jeanne Guyon. I'm going to tell you something now, and I'll say it again in a minute. Those of you who have trouble with the church, who have problems at home and life like that, we walk by faith. We don't walk by circumstances, nor by how good we feel.

Anyway, this little group of people just did it by the book. They wrote a letter to Elden Hall, and they said, "He lives in this town, and he works in this town, and we want him to meet with us." Boy, if God ever was merciful, I don't know if I'd have been excommunicated or what would have happened to me, but that just pleased everybody. And for the next two years, I met with that group of Christians. At one time, we went to a meal after two years. I took a deep breath, and I walked into Elden Hall, and I was in a meeting, and people stared at me like I was a devil, and I don't think I was fully aware of just how black my name had gotten, but it was par for the course. Mike, it was par for the course; they did this with everybody. Anyway, I picked up a sheet of paper on the table as I walked out. I don't know why I picked that thing up, but I lived to regret it. I had no idea what it was. I don't think I ever looked at it. I want you to understand that I'm trying to explain the current status of God's work on this earth. To this day, you will be told that I am a thief and that I stole from the church because I picked up that sheet of paper.

Back at Elden Hall, you know, one of the things I noticed in the Far East is that when they had elders, you kept them forever. And boy, those men were elders when they weren't elders. A man will become an elder if you give him that title. I don't care if he becomes the devil himself; that man will continue being an elder. Now you know why we don't have elders. That name has been too perverted ever to be able to function in its proper way.

I do not know how to express to you the next few minutes. I was watching a man who had gained absolute control over people's lives at any cost. I was watching men, either in their soul or their flesh, I have no idea, but not in their spirit, ruthlessly throwing people out, taking over other people's works, and fighting to maintain their ministry. I lived in a place called Home Park, and

the phone rang, and it was a guy named Petri. I remember his first name. He said, "Gene, have you heard that Campus Crusade has split? John led it, and they all want the church, and they want you to get out to Kansas immediately and speak to them as their apostle." Now you all don't know what that means. I'll tell you exactly what it means. It means absolutely nothing. It was just the way they were.

So, I drove over to San Bernardino. We had two or three cars, and we were going to rendezvous in Missouri. Two men were sitting in the back. You've heard this story before. One of them was named Hal Lindsay, and the other was Gene Edwards, and we drove for three days and nights fighting over eschatology. Well, we didn't fight. We enjoyed it, and you know, we are still friends. I got there, and I can tell you that that was nothing. It was just foolishness. I got back, and it was late 68. I got a phone call, and it was those men, and they were holding a conference at UCLA, and it was the night before New Year's, and they asked me if I'd like to come over. They're the kind of guys who stay up all night talking, and so I will leave you at UCLA. I didn't know it was going to take this long. I am on my way to UCLA, and it was the day that changed our lives. So, you know what we're going to do? I don't know what we're going to do. That's the end of that. The status of the testimony of the Lord's work, up until 1969.