

April 1, 2007

Dear Brothers,

We are writing to you out of our deep concern for you brothers because of the great responsibility you bear before the Lord. We have great affection for you in the Lord born out of our service with you over the past thirty years. Because of this extensive record, we are all the more heartbroken by your recent actions that threaten to alter the church in Toronto's standing. Your by-laws violate the proper standing of a genuine local church. If we follow them we will lose our standing as a proper local expression of the one Body of Christ in Toronto. Your attempts to impose a human organization on the saints are sectarian and as such compel us to separate and disassociate ourselves from you. Please read this letter in conjunction with the enclosed "Declaration and Clarification."

Brothers, we are not cutting off fellowship with any of the believers in Toronto, other than those such as Nigel Tomes who have been properly quarantined for divisive activities. We are not abandoning the proper ground of the church, nor are we resigning from the eldership or from membership in the church's corporation. Rather, we are compelled as a matter of conscience in the light of the Word of God to disassociate ourselves from you and your party in order to preserve and maintain the church in Toronto in a proper standing in the oneness of the Body of Christ. Your deviations from the truth of the Scriptures, your departure from the historic roots of the church in Toronto, and the unprecedented steps you have taken to change the church's administration and standing are all sectarian.

A genuine local church, although administrated locally in local affairs, must maintain a good fellowship with all the local churches. Ephesians 2:21 shows the universal side of the church as the Body of Christ; the following verse shows the local side. These two must be joined together. The local side cannot be separated or isolated from the universal side. The church in Toronto enjoyed the sweet fellowship of the churches for decades, but in recent years you have increasingly separated and isolated the church here from the common fellowship among the churches. Apart from the general fellowship of all the churches there is no way for a local church to be in the reality of the Body of Christ. By rejecting this fellowship you have greatly damaged the church in Toronto and, if unchecked, your efforts will destroy the church in this city. This we cannot allow.

"The local churches should fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ. Any local church that does not keep this universal fellowship of the Body of Christ is divisive and becomes a local sect. Some so-called local churches are not genuine and have become divisions; we do not need to fellowship with such 'churches'" (A Brief Presentation of the Lord's Recovery, Witness Lee, p. 44).

An unscriptural claim of autonomy has been used to reject the ministry and leadership in the Lord's recovery. You have asserted your own authority to name apostles for the church. This is against both the Bible (1 Cor. 1:12-13; 3:4, 22; Eph. 4:11-12) and the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. Brothers, you have clearly insisted that the church here is independent and autonomous; you have also openly portrayed the fellowship of the other local churches and the co-workers as outside interference. In so doing, you yourselves have abandoned the proper stand of a local church and lost any ground to exercise leadership in a local church.

"Some may have the attitude that their local church is independent and autonomous and should not be interfered with. This is localism. An independent local church is actually a local sect" (The Constitution and Building Up of the Body of Christ, Witness Lee, p. 96).

In addition, you brothers formed a party in the eldership by excluding us from the practical fellowship of the elders. The term “functional eldership” has been used to indicate to others that we are indeed excluded from the eldership. You have created parties in the church by publicly labelling members of the church as contentious and “LSM-aligned” because they have voiced concerns over decisions you have made which take the church in a sectarian direction.

Your public rejection of the warning letter and quarantine dishonours the word of the many genuine local churches around the globe that testified to the damage caused in their localities by Titus Chu, his ministry, and some of his co-workers. Your rejection impugned the integrity of numerous brothers by discounting their fellowship, the letter of warning, and the quarantine issued by the co-workers in response to the churches. You further cast doubts on their honesty and character by publicly ascribing to them base motives, such as jealousy and ambition, without justification.

You rejected the testimonies of the churches and many brothers without fellowship with the affected churches or brothers. In this, you brothers have departed from our earlier practice of the truth regarding quarantine. When a divisive worker was quarantined by the church in Toronto in the early 1990s, we fully expected that the other local churches would honour our quarantine without further local investigation. Some of you signed letters defending this truth concerning actions in the one Body, calling the response of another church “sectarian” because it did not honour our quarantine. Yet you have now wantonly rejected the quarantine of hundreds of churches and co-workers! Surely this is against the practice of the churches in one Body and is, therefore, sectarian.

The quarantine of Titus Chu was not issued hastily or for the reasons some of you like to ascribe to it. For many years various co-workers, including Witness Lee, tried to help Titus Chu take the blended way, the way of the Body, and to help him overcome his work of isolation. Sadly, these efforts failed. We remained open to Titus for many years despite misgivings, but when we became aware of the damage his ministry had caused to so many other churches around the globe, we realized that we must stand with the quarantine. The problems caused by Titus Chu were not merely local issues but affected many churches in many places, and it was thus not appropriate for the church in Toronto to perform its own local evaluation of the quarantine. In fact, it was beyond our ability to do so. Furthermore, the disingenuous process you pursued over our protests did not address the real issues in the co-workers’ letter of warning. By your actions and your “Determination,” you further isolated the church in Toronto from the fellowship of the churches and have created a great offence to the Body.

You have provided Nigel Tomes with a platform to impugn the motives of faithful saints and threaten them with discipline, as well as to attack both the co-workers and the teaching in the ministry in the Lord’s recovery. Brothers, you became his accomplices in spreading disinformation and improper twisting of words throughout the whole earth. He remains here an elder and a worker in Toronto without censure for his divisive work while you, his fellow elders, also threaten church discipline and expulsion to any who disagree with you, him, or Titus Chu. You maintain this situation even though Nigel Tomes has been quarantined by the co-workers and hundreds of local churches.

Your condemnation of co-workers in the Lord’s recovery and Living Stream Ministry (LSM)—blaming the co-workers and LSM for troubles caused by your own actions, demanding to censor the video trainings, preventing the videos from being viewed in the meeting halls, denigrating those who wish to attend the conferences and trainings given by the co-workers or to receive materials from LSM, and inspiring an atmosphere of distrust of the co-workers and LSM through rumours, innuendoes, and false accusations—is a rejection of the leadership of the ministry in the Lord’s

recovery and the faithful service that supplies the ministry to all the churches. Brothers, the church in Toronto was established through this ministry and has been nourished and cherished by it since its inception. It is shameful that you have chosen to demonize the many faithful brothers who are labouring to continue the very ministry so crucial to the founding and fostering of the church in Toronto.

The church in Toronto began to have the Lord's table meeting in the summer of 1968 following a May 1968 conference given in Toronto by Brother Witness Lee. Brother Lee continued to visit Toronto to give conferences at least once a year for the next several years. In addition, some of his co-workers came here to fellowship and give conferences. We were here in those early years and attended many conferences with Brother Lee and his co-workers. We know, as do some of you, that the church here was founded and nourished through the ministry of Witness Lee, not that of another.

For many years the church in Toronto joyfully participated in the conferences and trainings given by Witness Lee and his co-workers. Many saints attended and many more received the ministry through the videos. We enjoyed a rich supply from the ministry station, the international conferences and trainings, and the printed material published by LSM. Now you have rejected the "seven feasts" and the video trainings, instead embracing the quarantined ministry of Titus Chu. You are leading the saints to follow a man, Titus Chu, who is doing his own independent, divisive work and who uses Nigel Tomes, one of the current elders in Toronto, as his mouthpiece. This is more than sectarian.

The leadership of the church in Toronto has historically led the church in the way of the fellowship of the churches and with the co-workers. Many of you were involved in the eldership for years and know how the brothers, especially those who took the lead in the early years, relied upon this fellowship. We should still follow this example. Yet it is this pattern of fellowship that you brothers now reject.

The local churches have always been administered in their local matters by elders. This is according to the New Testament pattern and the clear words of the Bible concerning church governance (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28). To care for the interests of the saints and the church, we formed a non profit corporation, which according to the law must have directors. However, your by-laws elevate the directors of the corporation over the eldership. Under your by-laws the directors can summarily suspend an elder indefinitely without recourse and can effectively overrule decisions made by the elders by refusing to ratify them. Under your by-laws local elders can formally designate "apostles," contrary to the truth that apostleship is an office in the universal church. Under your by-laws the directors can exercise strong discipline over the saints. Thus, under your by-laws the temporal, secular office of director has been elevated over the eldership, and the elders have been made subject to the directors, effectively establishing a hierarchy with the directors on the top tier. Through these provisions and others your by-laws transmute the proper and spiritual administration of the church into a human and secular organization. This is not according to the Scriptures and is sectarian.

"The Bible has decreed all institutions of the church in a clear way already. We must never have any decrees, whether they are creeds, constitutions, rules, charters, or ordinances outside the Bible, no matter how scriptural they may appear. Otherwise, we will become a sect right away" (The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 7, pp. 1116-1117).

By placing the directors—elected officials established by secular authority—over the God-ordained eldership, you have given the directors extra-biblical power over the elders and the saints. We are perplexed as to how you brothers, whom we have known and laboured with for so many years, could so easily exercise such unscriptural authority and assert your rule over the saints and the church. This abuse of authority is as ugly as it is divisive and sectarian.

Many of the saints have been intimidated by the threats of church discipline you have made against those who disagree with your sectarian direction and your abusive actions in the name of your claimed authority as directors and elders. If they do not obey your edicts, they face your threats of removal. While you insist that others obey you as the local authorities, you reject the authority of the ones the Lord has raised up to take the lead in the ministry in His recovery. The quarantine of Titus Chu was not a local matter, yet you have treated it as such. You have made obedience to yourselves the ground of the church. Your actions betray your claims to authority; your exercise of control is not the biblical, shepherding eldership of a local church (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

Dear brothers, you have changed the nature of the administration of the church in Toronto into a sectarian hierarchy. The by-laws you have promoted are incompatible with the administration and the proper ground of a genuine local church. We cannot participate in such a deviation. We are not resigning from the eldership of the legitimate local church in Toronto, but we refuse to go the sectarian way you are taking.

“For ourselves, we cannot join any sect or remain in one, for our church connection can only be on local ground...” (The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 30, p. 87).


Brothers, we beg you to reconsider your actions and their consequences. We ask you to remember the wonderful fellowship we have enjoyed personally and corporately for so many years and your own joy at discovering the glorious church life. Recall your own felicitations concerning the local churches, the ministry, and the Lord’s recovery. These things should not be discarded lightly.

The sectarian way you are taking can only lead to more division and the loss of much blessing. Consider the history of those in the past who have rejected the scriptural way to practice the church life. Not one group that has separated itself from the general fellowship of the churches in the Lord’s recovery has prospered. Rather, all have suffered great loss and further division. In 1 Corinthians 3:17 there is a strong warning to those who would mar or damage the church. Footnote 17² in The Recovery Version says, *“All those who have corrupted, ruined, defiled, and marred the church of God by their heretical doctrines, divisive teachings, worldly ways, and natural efforts in building will suffer God’s punishment.”* We pray you would yet turn from your error and be preserved from such grave loss.

As elders we bear a great responsibility before the Lord to shepherd the flock according to God (Heb. 13:17). We have chosen our course in fear and trembling only after much prayer and seeking before the Lord. We testify to you that we are enjoying His unspeakable grace and peace in bearing His reproach as we go forth to Him outside the camp (Heb. 13:13). Our conscience is without offence before the Lord in this matter, and we see the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon those who are faithful in this matter (1 Pet. 4:14).

Brothers, the hour is late. We appeal to you to have a thorough dealing with the Lord in the light of His presence and to turn from your present course. We remain your brothers in Christ and write to you in love.

Your brothers in Christ,



Ron MacVicar



David Wang

cc. The churches and the saints in the Lord’s recovery