

An Open Letter From the Churches In California

May 15, 1990

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to the churches and all the saints throughout the earth. We are writing to you as leading brothers from forty-five churches in the state of California, USA. On March 9-10, 1990, we gathered together in Anaheim for a time of prayer and fellowship concerning the present situation in the Lord's recovery. During that time we reviewed the history of the present rebellion among us. A number of churches in California have been affected by this rebellion among us, and we have been eyewitnesses to many of its words and events, as well as of the damage it has caused. Through our fellowship together and through four enlightening messages by Brother Witness Lee, we have gained an understanding of the intrinsic problem among us and its scriptural remedy.

After our time together, we felt burdened to write a letter to all the churches to fellowship our realization of the problem and our action to protect the churches from further damage. We also would like to fellowship our encouragement regarding the present going on of the recovery here in California. In spite of the attack of the evil one, the churches and the ministry are going on in one accord for the spreading and building up of the Body of Christ.

Since the fall of 1987, the churches here have suffered under the dissension and rebellion led by four brothers who were once among us: Joseph Fung, John So, Bill Mallon, and John Ingalls. In the beginning many things were done and said by these brothers in a way that was both subtle and hidden. As a result, a number of saints were deceived and thus did not know the true nature of what was taking place. Today, however, there is no question about where these brothers stand. We do not like to see any more of the saints damaged by opening themselves innocently to the words spoke by these brothers. Therefore, we feel that we must warn the churches of the true standing of these four and their followers.

These four brothers 1) have denied the standing of the churches in the Lord's recovery; 2) have produced divisive meetings; 3) have attempted to draw saints away from the local churches to follow after themselves; and 4) have made unfounded and malicious attacks upon some leading brothers in the recovery, and especially upon Brother Lee and his ministry. The details regarding these matters are summarized here and are fully documented in Brother Lee's book *The Fermentation of the Present Rebellion* as well as in their own writings.

In an article written by John So and edited by John Ingalls and Bill Mallon, these brothers said that the ground of the meeting of the church in Anaheim on Ball Road is Witness Lee and his ministry. Thus, they said, that meeting "is NOT" the church in Anaheim.' They accused the saints in the church of usurping the church ground as the Moslems usurp the temple site in Jerusalem. We brothers reject this accusation as false and testify that the church in Anaheim is genuinely on the ground of oneness, as it has been since it began in 1974. To say that because a church receives Brother Lee's ministry, it is not on the church ground is as false as saying that the churches in the New Testament were not on the ground because they received Paul's ministry. To accuse the church in Anaheim in such a way is to accuse all the churches in the recovery of having a wrong standing. Such an understanding is utterly false and surely is divisive.

The speaking of these brothers has produced divisive meetings in a number of places in California. A divisive Lord's table meeting has been set up in Anaheim on Brookhurst Street, near the meeting hall of the church in Anaheim on Ball Road. In Huntington Beach the followers of these brothers have set up a separate Lord's table meeting in division apart from the church's meeting. Other divisive meetings have been established in

Cupertino and in South San Francisco. What was once the church in Rosemead has broken off fellowship with all other churches in the Lord's recovery. Joseph Fung, John So, Bill Mallon, and John Ingalls have attended and given messages in these divisive meetings. These divisions clearly portray the tragic fruit of their work.

These brothers have also held conferences and distributed literature to recruit the saints from the churches in the recovery to follow after them. Although cloaked in spiritual language, their obvious goal is to gain the saints in the recovery, and they have gained a number, while some others have lost all heart for the church life as a result of having contact with them. Recently they have made affirmations that they will fight on in this way to the end. We cannot accept this as something of the Lord. If they have a better way, why do they not go that way, preach the gospel, and build up something positive? Why must they prey on the saints in the recovery?

Finally, they have spoken publicly and printed the most serious of false accusations concerning the leading brothers, and especially concerning Brother Lee. They have accused elders and co-workers of lying, of deception, of covering up certain matters, of conspiring against God, and of rebelling against God. They have charged Brother Lee with replacing Christ as king to rule over the saints; they likened him to Balaam, who prophesied for gain, and accused him of financial corruption; they likened him to Jezebel, who killed the prophets to make herself the unique spokesman for God, and accused him of annulling the function of all the others to make himself the sole oracle of God; they accused Brother Lee of exercising Nicolaitan domination over the saints, holding them in fear and quenching their function; and they accused him of damaging the churches by engaging them constantly in movements, like the Communists, and compared him to Mao Tse Tung.

These four brothers have spoken many other false accusations, but the above examples should be sufficient to make all the saints clear concerning their intention. All these words are not of the nature to maintain the oneness of the Body through fellowship; rather, they are words uttered out of the flesh and are meant only to destroy people's reputation and ministry. From the very beginning of their ministry, their way has been to do things in deliberate avoidance of open fellowship that would maintain the oneness of the Body. We must reject their words, their spirit, and their way in the strongest of terms, as not befitting Christians.

What then shall we do about the situation? First, we must be clear regarding the truth from the Word that applies to this case. From the New Testament we can see the crucial importance of oneness among the Lord's people. The Lord prayed for it in John 17 as His aspiration before His death. Through His process of death, resurrection, and ascension, He produced the one Spirit and the one Body into which we all were baptized (I Cor. 12:13). This one Spirit and one Body are the main factors of the oneness of the Spirit, which we are admonished to be diligent to keep as our basic spiritual possession (Eph. 4:1-6). Then we are admonished to grow and be perfected until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4:7-13). Thus, the genuine oneness began as the Lord's aspiration, became our present possession, and is also our goal as members of the Lord's Body. This genuine oneness is practiced by the proper one accord in the church and among all the churches.

This oneness was tested many times in the New Testament record, but among all the tests, only three things were judged intolerable: heresy, division, and fornication. Only in these three cases does the Word tell us to remedy the situation by quarantining the troubling brothers. Heresy insults the person and work of Christ, division damages the Body of Christ, and fornication damages the man God created for His purpose. Thus, to preserve the Body as a mingling of the processed Triune God with man, these matters cannot be tolerated.

In the case before us, it is clearly evident that these four brothers have caused division in the Body. While they have made various accusations against Brother Lee and others, none of the matters dealt with in their

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accusations are excuses for division. With the controlling vision of oneness, problems should be the cause of fellowship in love with a view to resolution, not the cause of division. Therefore, according to the truth, we cannot justify their actions; rather, we must condemn them. Furthermore, in Romans 16:17-18 and Titus 3:10-11 we are told clearly to turn away from such persons, lest others with simple hearts be deceived by them. Just as in medicine a contagious person must be quarantined, so these divisive men must be quarantined. To quarantine these brothers is not to excommunicate them, but to isolate them in order to preserve the health of the Body.

Therefore, we brothers from the churches in California have quarantined Joseph Fung, John So, Bill Mallon, and John Ingalls from the churches we represent.

We who have witnessed first hand the devastation they have produced earnestly recommend that all the saints avoid contact with such persons. Also, we recommend that each church keep a watchful eye for such divisive activity in their church and exercise appropriate fellowship to protect the saints. It is with great sorrow that we must write concerning these who were once among us, but this action is according to the truth and also according to the facts of the real situation.

We hope that with this precaution, all the churches can go on in a safe way for the building up of the Body of Christ. We brothers in California were greatly refreshed in our vision concerning the need for the genuine oneness and its application by the practicing of one accord in and among the churches and with the ministry. We would like to reaffirm our commitment to go on in one accord with one another and with the ministry in the Lord's recovery for the carrying out of the God-ordained way to build up the organic Body of Christ. Only oneness can satisfy the Lord, the oneness arrived at by our growth and perfecting. For this we need to grow up into the Head and be perfected unto the work of the ministry; then, all the Body will build up the Body. This vision is clearer today than ever before. We brothers give ourselves to this vision and to its practical outworking.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Your brothers, (198 brothers, 45 churches)

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