

September 4th, 1992

To the Elders of the Church in Vancouver
2255 Quebec St.
VANCOUVER, B.C. V5T 3A1

Dear Brothers;

Thank you for your letter of August 13, 1992. Your letter raised a number of concerns. At our invitation, Brother Chia spent part of a morning with most of the elders and co-workers from Metro-Toronto. Based on the conclusion of your letter, we had hoped to address some of our concerns to Brother Chia. However, Brother Chia was reluctant to address these issues in any depth in the absence of the other elders from Vancouver. Therefore, we would like to present our concerns and to state our stand in writing to you, the elders of the church in Vancouver.

In your letter you recognize two grounds for a local church not receiving a genuine believer - immorality (1 Cor. 5) and denial of the person of the Lord Jesus (2 John). In support of this you cite the writings of Brothers Nee and Lee. You then state: "However, we have not seen the matter of shunning those who cause division (although we certainly do not agree with division)." Brothers, this statement very much concerns us. The New Testament charges us to turn away from those who cause divisions (Romans 16:17), and to refuse a factious man after sufficient admonition (Titus 3:10).

Regarding Romans 16:17, Brother Chia asked our feeling concerning Billy Graham. As we know, Billy Graham has been preaching the gospel for years, helping the denominations. However, he is not attacking the local churches nor making divisions in the local churches. Surely if Billy Graham attended our meetings as a brother we would have no problem receiving him at our Lord's Table. The brother we are dealing with is causing divisions here among the saints. Romans 16 and Titus 3 tell us how to deal with such a brother.

Brother Chia asked us to read the context of Romans 16:17 - can we say that [redacted] is not serving the Lord (Romans 16:18)? Brothers, these verses don't ask us to determine who is and who is not serving the Lord. It is up to the Lord to approve those who are serving Him (Matthew 7:22-23). However, we are asked to mark those who make divisions. Regarding this, Brother Lee says Paul is unyielding and resolute in saying that we must turn away from those who are dissenting, who make divisions... (Footnote 2 to Romans 16:17)

In Romans chapter 14, Paul exhorted us to receive those brothers who differ from us in practice and doctrine. However, in the same book, Paul also charges us to turn away from division makers. Brothers, while we endeavour to practice the receiving of the believers, should we not also practice Paul's word here in chapter 16? The goal of both charges is to preserve the oneness of the Body of Christ.

Furthermore, Titus 3:10 tells us to refuse a factious man after a first and second admonition. Allen Jones referred to this verse in his letter of April 28, 1992. This is not a heretic, but a factious, divisive person. Both are serious. A heretical man attacks the person and work of Christ, the Head; a divisive person damages the oneness of the Body of Christ. The New International Version renders Titus 3:10 as; "warn a divisive person once, and then ... a second time. After that have nothing to do with him". Again Brother Lee says, "In order to maintain good order in the church, a factious, divisive person should be refused, rejected, after a first and second admonition" (Footnote 2 to Titus 3:10). Since you refer to Brother Lee's writings, we wondered why you omit any reference to Brother Lee's exposition of these scriptures.

We hope that you brothers would see from these scriptures the matter of rejecting those who cause division. Our refusal of [REDACTED] due to his causing division here in Metro-Toronto, is an application of these scriptures. Your letter of August 13th recognizes that there is indeed a problem of division here.

Our second concern is related to the matter of the receiving of brothers who are under discipline from other local churches. Your letter implies and Brother Chia's fellowship while here leads us to understand Vancouver's position as follows: "So long as a brother has not caused trouble (division) here in Vancouver, we will receive him (regardless of the trouble he has caused in other local churches)." If our understanding of your policy is incorrect, please clarify. If our understanding is correct, your policy is radically different from the established practice of the local churches.

Brother Nee recognized not only the independence of the local churches, but also stressed the spiritual relatedness of the local churches as the one Body of Christ (The Normal Christian Church Life, pp 53-56). Brother Nee wrote, "If any one is received or refused by a local church, its judgment in the matter must be regarded as absolutely decisive. The local church is the highest church authority. If other churches object to its decision, all they can do is to resort to persuasion and exhortation" (p.53). This is directly contrary to your action related to [REDACTED] when you write: "We respect the decision that you brothers made, but ... we cannot heed your request." You have not regarded the judgment of the local brothers here in Metro Toronto as "absolutely decisive" nor have you "resorted to persuasion and exhortation" of the elders here. Furthermore, when Allen Jones visited Vancouver in April, you were aware of the difficulties the churches here were going through. Yet you did not fully avail yourselves

of this opportunity for fellowship, persuasion and exhortation concerning these matters.

In the following paragraph of The Normal Christian Church Life, Brother Nee then gives the following example: "If a brother who has been disciplined in Nanking removes to Soochow, and **there proves himself to be innocent of the charge brought against him, then Soochow has full authority to receive him**, despite the judgment of Nanking. Soochow is responsible for its actions to God, not to Nanking. Soochow is an independent church and has therefore full authority to act as it deems best. But because there is a spiritual relationship with Nanking, **it is well for the brother in question not to be received before its wrong judgment is pointed out to Nanking**. If Nanking's relationship with the Lord is right, then it will pay attention to what Soochow has to say, but if it refuses to do so, Soochow cannot press anything against Nanking, because Nanking as a local church is directly responsible to the Lord alone and has full authority to decide and act independently of Soochow." (Page 53-54, emphasis added).

Brothers, according to this we should not receive a brother who is under discipline by another locality until:

- 1) he proves himself innocent, and
- 2) the error in judgment has been pointed out to the disciplining church.

In the case of [REDACTED] these principles have not been applied by you brothers as the elders in the church in Vancouver.

On the contrary your actions have emboldened [REDACTED] in his divisiveness. Shortly after the churches here came to a decision regarding [REDACTED], we became aware of his impending visit to Vancouver. Realizing we are one Body, we called you, in confidence, to alert you of his situation. Rather than respecting and applying our decision, it appears that you warmly received this brother. Consequently, on his return [REDACTED] proclaimed "Last Thursday Brother [REDACTED] went to Vancouver. ... Before his arrival two elders here made a long distance call to the Church in Vancouver requesting them not to receive him and not to allow him to attend meetings. However the responsible brothers in Vancouver not only know the truth, they also practice the truth. Gladly they gave hospitality to Brother [REDACTED] and also they took him to Seattle to have fellowship with the church there. Praise the Lord. No one can shut an open door." (Reference #20 of publication circulated by [REDACTED], translated from Chinese).

If the elders in Vancouver had stood with the decision of the elders in Metro Toronto would [REDACTED] not have been helped to realize the seriousness of his actions and to seek a resolution? As it is, he has been strengthened in his divisiveness. According to [REDACTED]'s report not only did the responsible brothers in Vancouver gladly

give hospitality to [redacted], but they also took him to Seattle. Brother Chia, knowing the case of [redacted], we wonder if you fellowshiped with the elders of the church in Seattle regarding [redacted]'s case before you took him to Seattle.

The points above concern your stand related to [redacted] and the churches in Metro Toronto. However, the same principles apply in the case of Joseph Fung. In his case, at least 49 churches have explicitly quarantined Joseph Fung because of his divisive activities, which have been documented. These divisive activities were also confirmed in Scarborough during his two trips here in 1991 and 1992. Based on his utter disregard and outright rejection of the local elders exhortation, Joseph Fung was not received by the church in Scarborough. Even so, the divisive disease of this brother has been manifested in producing a division in Scarborough. Yet you brothers continue to receive/welcome Joseph Fung regardless of the damage he has wrought in other churches. Brothers, what is your view of the Body of Christ? Since we are one body, is not damage to other localities damage to you? Brothers, where do you stand in relation to the oneness of the Body of Christ?

We do not write this letter out of the desire to debate and contend with you. Rather we desire that we could all arrive at the same opinion and judgment according to Christ to preserve the oneness of the Spirit in the unique Body of Christ. The churches in Vancouver and Metro-Toronto have a history of sweet fellowship, despite being separated by a considerable distance. We desire that all the local churches could go on in the harmony of the Spirit. It is in this spirit that we ask you to reconsider your position related to the cases of [redacted] and Joseph Fung. We anticipate an early reply,

In Christ,

David Chao

Kim Soo Chong

Roy Hudgins

Sam Hsu

Allen Jones

Robin Lao

Ron MacVicar

Del Martin

Dan Morris

Paul Onica

Jonathan P'ng

Bruce Pike

Steve Pritchard

Greg Spencer

Nigel Tomes

David Wang