

A FAITHFUL WORD

S E R I E S T W O

“That you all speak the same thing and
that there be no divisions among you.”

**NOT
CARRIED ABOUT
BY WINDS
OF TEACHING**
(Part 1)

**Book
4**

DEFENSE & CONFIRMATION PROJECT

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Phil. 1:7 – Even as it is right for me to think this concerning you all because you have me in your heart, since both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all fellow partakers with me of grace.

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Unless otherwise indicated, the articles in this book are co-authored by Bill Buntain with Dan Sady and staff.

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PREFACE

1 Cor. 1:10 – Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

Eph. 4:14 – That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error.

In dealing with emerging divisions, Paul charged the Corinthians, “Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion” (1 Cor. 1:10). We do well to heed this word today. Recently, some have risen up to damage the oneness among the churches by speaking differently according to their own opinion.

A proliferation of different teachings was the stimulus for the July 2005 printing of *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, an affirmation of the co-workers in the Lord's recovery of their intention to follow the pattern of the teaching and practice of Brother Nee and Brother Lee of being restricted in one publication. Although most of the workers and the churches in the Lord's recovery received the fellowship in this book, a small, but very vocal, minority openly opposed it. Because of the many misrepresentations of both what the co-workers had said in the book and what Brother Nee and Brother Lee had taught and practiced, DCP posted a series of articles on afaithfulword.org to address many of the issues raised.

This series of books reproduces that series of articles. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers of our need to grow so that “we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error” (Eph.

4:14). Today in the Lord's recovery there are some winds of teaching that threaten to carry off some of the saints and even a few of the churches from the practice of the church life in the oneness of the Body of Christ. This is the first of three books that look at some of these winds of teaching, show how they deviate from both the Bible and the New Testament ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee, and expose what is behind them.

This book includes the following two articles:

- "An Application of and Deviation from the Pattern in Acts 15" examines the scriptural pattern for addressing controversies in the church as seen in Acts 15. It then demonstrates the application of Acts 15 by the co-workers in their fellowship and shows that the opposing ones have deviated from the pattern in Acts 15 in their public dissent.
- "Is 'One Publication' an Item of 'Speciality' or 'Generality'?" shows that this question as posed by Nigel Tones embodies serious error. He misapplies the standards of speciality and generality that Brother Lee laid out in *The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life* and ignores the applicability of practicality to the matter of publication work. Furthermore, he misrepresents the nature of the co-workers' fellowship regarding publication work and in his dissent oversteps the biblical limits of practicing generality.

AN APPLICATION OF AND DEVIATION FROM THE PATTERN IN ACTS 15¹

The author of “Analysis & Response” uses the gathering of the leading workers in Acts 15 as a basis for criticizing the co-workers’ fellowship and coordination which issued in *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*. His appeal to Acts 15 is flawed.² In this article we will examine:

1. The Scriptural pattern of Acts 15,

¹ Analysis & Response asks, “Is issuing a ‘Policy Statement’ Scriptural?” This question is itself misleading, as the discussion in “Analysis & Response” does not address that question, but whether the principles in Acts 15 were practiced, which is why this article addresses that issue.

² This article only addresses the misleading portrayal of the co-workers’ practice as contrary to Acts 15 in “Analysis & Response.” It does not address the author’s misrepresentation of the co-workers’ fellowship as a “policy statement,” nor the implications of an organizational structure that appellation implies. In fact, the statement was not some sort of official policy but a repetition of Brother Lee’s fellowship concerning having only one publication work as a practical means of maintaining the oneness among the churches in the Lord’s recovery through one clear sounding of the trumpet through the Lord’s ministry—see *Is “One Publication” Scriptural?* (2).

It also does not address the significant difference between the types of issues being addressed in Acts 15 and the co-workers’ fellowship. The subject of the apostles’ fellowship in Acts 15 was a crucial matter of the faith related to a heresy concerning God’s way of salvation. In contrast, the blended co-workers’ fellowship in *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* is the statement of their collective feeling concerning the best way to carry out the work of ministry in the Lord’s recovery. Accordingly, the co-workers’ statement respects the fact that the issue of one publication is not a matter of the Christian faith and therefore should not be insisted on as a standard for the receiving of saints or the recognizing of the churches (see the article entitled “Is “One Publication” an Item of “Speciality” or “Generality”? in this book).

2. The application of Acts 15 by the co-workers in their fellowship, and
3. The deviation from Acts 15 in the author's publishing of "Analysis & Response."

1. The Scriptural Pattern of Acts 15

The basic facts concerning the account in Acts 15 are as follows:

1. Because of growing problems among the churches regarding a teaching that circumcision was a prerequisite to salvation, Paul and Barnabas, under the direction of the brothers with them, went to Jerusalem to fellowship with the leading ones there (v. 2).

Acts 15:2-3a – [2] And when no little dissension and discussion with them came about through Paul and Barnabas, the brothers directed Paul and Barnabas and certain others among them to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem concerning the question. [3] They therefore, having been sent forward by the ¹church....

fn. 15:3¹ – The going up to Jerusalem by Paul, Barnabas, and certain others was the move of the church, not the move of themselves as individuals. They did not act individualistically apart from the church, but corporately in and with the church. This was the move of the Body of Christ.

2. Because, contrary to the word of Paul and Barnabas, some believers of the sect of the Pharisees said that circumcision was necessary for salvation (v. 5), the apostles and elders came together to consider the matter (v. 6).

Acts 15:5 – But certain men of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed rose up from among them, saying, It is necessary to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

Acts 15:6 – And the apostles and the elders were ¹gathered together to see about this matter.

fn. 15:6¹ – This was a unique conference held by the apostles of the universal church and the elders of the

local church in Jerusalem. These two groups were the leading ones in the Lord's New Testament move on earth. The conference had no chairman; the presiding One was the Spirit (v. 28), the pneumatic Christ, the Head of the church (Col. 1:18) and the Lord of all (10:36). *Much discussion had taken place* (v. 7) indicates that everyone in the conference had the freedom to speak. The decision was made based on (1) the testimony shared by Peter (vv. 7-11), (2) the facts related by Barnabas and Paul (v. 12), and (3) the concluding word given by James (vv. 13-21), who was the leading one among the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (12:17; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9)....

3. In their gathering, the brothers practiced a very open fellowship. After much discussion Peter spoke (vv. 7-11), and finally Paul and Barnabas spoke concerning the work that God was doing among the Gentiles (v. 12).

Acts 15:7a – And when much discussion had taken place, Peter rose up and said to them....

Acts 15:12 – And all the multitude became silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul relating all the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

4. When all had finished speaking (v. 13), James, who was the leading one among the apostles and elders in Jerusalem at that time, pronounced a decision in the matter (vv. 13-21).

Acts 15:13 – And when they finished speaking, James answered, saying, Men brothers, listen to me.

Acts 15:19 – Therefore I judge that we do not harass those from the Gentiles who are turning to God.

5. That decision was “published” in a written statement and sent to the churches throughout the Gentile region, stating that the brothers had “become of one accord” in the matter (vv. 22-31).

Acts 15:22a, 23a – [22] It then seemed good to the apostles and the elders with the whole church to choose men from among them to send to Antioch together with Paul and Barnabas..., [23] writing to them and sending by their hands the following...

Acts 15:25a – It seemed good to us, having become of one accord...

Acts 15:28a – For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...

According to the account in “Analysis & Response,” it would seem that before any decision can be made by the co-workers, each brother who has been consulted on a matter must agree. In other words, “Analysis & Response” replaces the scriptural one accord with unanimity of opinion. In practice this would mean that one opinionated person or small group of workers could prevent any decision from being made unless their views are not only considered, but adopted. However, that is not according to the pattern in Acts 15.

“Analysis & Response” cites Brother Nee’s word in *Church Affairs* that Acts 15 “is the pattern accepted by the church for the past two thousand years,” but it does not tell us what that pattern is according to Brother Nee’s fellowship. In fact, if you read Brother Nee’s rather extended account (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 51, pp. 144-150), it matches the five points we have just described. After much discussion took place, those brothers with more spiritual stature expressed their opinion. When the Lord’s leading through the common feeling among the brothers bearing the highest authority in the work became evident, a decision was reached. At this point Brother Nee says,

The other brothers then needed to learn to accept this opinion. Thus, it says, “It then seemed good to the apostles and the elders with the whole church” (v. 22). This is how the affairs are handled in the church. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 51, p. 148³)

Based upon the measuring stick of Acts 15, the way of open fellowship and much prayer as practiced by the co-workers in the Lord’s recovery stands in stark contrast to the way of public

³ There have been several printings of *Church Affairs* apart from the *Collected Works*; the page numbers in those printings are different.

dissent taken by the author of “Analysis & Response” and the others.

2. The Application of Acts 15 in the Co-workers’ Fellowship

The statement on one publication work was an outgrowth of much fellowship and prayer among the co-workers. Before his death Brother Lee was very concerned about brothers who were building up their own work within the Lord’s recovery. He took steps to try to blend those brothers and their works with the other co-workers. Since that time, the co-workers have likewise tried to pursue the same practice of blending. Times are set aside before or after each of the seven “feasts” for the co-workers to come together to pray and fellowship about matters of concern in the Lord’s recovery. There have also been numerous other gatherings of co-workers in those years. In the seven and a half years since Brother Lee’s passing, the co-workers have come together to pray and fellowship over eighty times, many of these times consisting of multiple meetings and many addressing particularly the problems caused by different teachings propagated through separate publication works. The author of “Analysis & Response” was invited to many of those gatherings. By his own admission he did not gather with the brothers in recent years. In other words, **the blended co-workers did come together according to the principles in Acts 15, but he by his own choice did not attend.**

The one publication work statement passed through nine drafts before it was published. It was the subject of thorough fellowship among the co-workers at a series of meetings in Anaheim on April 4-7, 2005, to which the author of “Analysis & Response” was invited but did not attend. In part because of the absence of the brothers who disagreed with Brother Lee’s teaching and practice on the matter of being restricted in one publication work, a revised draft was sent out for comment to a number of the absent brothers. The author of “Analysis & Response” was among the many workers who were included in that circulation. On June 13, 2005, he submitted a number of challenges to the proposed statement. Several of the co-workers

responded to his concerns, responses that he himself called “helpful.” Some minor adjustments were made to the statement to clarify the brothers’ feeling about some of the issues he had raised. Thus, the brothers pursued a broad and open fellowship to get the feeling of the workers throughout the Lord’s recovery.

Having listened to all of the brothers’ fellowship, the leading co-workers from around the globe, again in accordance with Acts 15, followed the leading of the Spirit, confirmed in the feeling of the vast majority of brothers participating in the fellowship, to issue the statement *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*. In a letter dated September 27, 2005, the co-workers in Southern California reviewed the process all the co-workers had taken in producing that document:

While we were in the stage of fellowship to draft a statement concerning one publication work in the Lord’s ministry, the feeling of many co-workers over the earth was sought. The fellowship offered by each co-worker before publication of the statement was altogether proper and was received in the Lord. After the various comments and suggestions were considered, the final draft was submitted for publication and then released during the summer training in July 2005 under the title *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*. The published statement contains fellowship regarding the blended co-workers’ understanding of the principles and the leading contained in Brother Lee’s fellowship and writings on the publication work in the Lord’s recovery. The statement also contains Brother Lee’s own speaking regarding this matter.

At that point the author of “Analysis & Response” should have followed the example of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15. As Brother Lee pointed out:

The record in Acts 15 shows us the sweet spirit of the Apostle Paul during the conference held there. Mostly he did not say much. After Peter said something, Paul testified to the dear saints in Jerusalem, telling them what the Lord had been doing through his ministry (vv. 7-12). Then James said something to conclude the conference (vv. 13-21). Actually, I

do not believe that the conclusion was satisfactory to Paul. Paul, however, took this decision. This is a good example for us to follow because Paul regarded the fact that the Lord had only one Body. Whatever they were doing there was only under one move to carry out one ministry to produce the one Body that bears one unique testimony. (*Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery*, p. 37)

3. The Deviation from Acts 15 in the Publication of "Analysis & Response"

However, the author of "Analysis & Response," among others, chose not to follow the example of Paul and Barnabas. Instead, the dissenting ones voiced open opposition to the fellowship of the blended co-workers. They portray themselves as defenders of the truth. In fact, the dissemination of "Analysis & Response" is an egregious offense against the oneness of the Body and the Lord's authority in the Body. The "one accord" realized in Acts 15 did not come from a unanimity of opinion, but from all of the brothers dropping their own opinion and accepting the Holy Spirit's leading through the ones exercising the leadership in the Lord's New Testament move. In this light, it is actually the response of the author of "Analysis & Response" to the brothers' fellowship that is in clear contradiction to the pattern in Acts 15. Consider Brother Nee's words concerning Acts 15 from *Authority and Submission*:

Acts 15 records a big conference. Everyone, whether old or young, was free to rise up to speak. Every brother could speak. Later Peter and Paul spoke. Then James made the decision. Peter and Paul gave the facts; James made the decision. There was a lining up even among the elders and apostles. Paul said that he was the least among the apostles (1 Cor. 15:9). There is even a distinction between great and small among the apostles. This is not a matter of someone lining us up. Rather, it involves knowing our proper position. This is the most beautiful testimony and the most wonderful picture. This makes Satan tremble, and this will bring down his kingdom. When we all take the way of

submission, God will judge the world. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 47, p. 162)

As the Southern California co-workers stated in their letter:

For a co-worker to express any disagreement regarding the draft of a certain publication before its dissemination among the saints in the Lord's recovery is altogether proper and may be of the Lord, but for anyone to attack a publication after thorough fellowship among the co-workers and after the publication has been released is surely not in the Lord or of the Lord. The way that some have taken will frustrate, damage, and destroy certain fundamental principles that have been built up in us within the Lord's recovery. (An Open Letter from the co-workers in Southern California, September 27, 2005)

Many other portions from the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee address the principles set forth in Acts 15 regarding maintaining the proper order in the Body of Christ through fellowship, respect for the Lord's leadership of His church exercised through the ones in authority, dealing with self-opinion through the application of the cross, and care for the oneness as the highest principle of the Body.

The Application of Acts 15

We can apply this pattern to ourselves. A decision is not made according to the opinion of the majority. Instead, when the church comes together, all the brothers and sisters can speak and debate. At the end, the elders make a decision. Before the final decision is made, all the brothers can speak. Peter could speak. Paul and Barnabas could also speak. When James spoke, a final decision was reached.

The Decision of the Spiritual Leader Being the Decision of the Holy Spirit

In verse 19 James made the decision: "Therefore I judge that..." Then in verse 28 he said, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." This opinion was actually James's decision. In the end it became the decision of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the entire church. Therefore, we see that the decision of the spiritual leader is the decision of

the Holy Spirit. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 62, pp. 397, 399)

The situation in Acts 15 was neither democratic nor autocratic; it was a situation like the one we have just described. Everyone opened himself in the Holy Spirit and fellowshiped what he had encountered, what he felt, and what he had observed. In the end, James, who was the authority at that time, after hearing all the words, stood up and stated the way they should proceed. **Immediately after James stood up and spoke, no one had anything more to say. This is the principle of authority.**

The elders should know the place the Lord has put them in, whether as the authority, or as those under authority. They should know in what order the Lord has placed them, whether they are the first or the second. They should know the order here. To know the order is to know authority. You have to accept this authority. Otherwise, there will be no possibility for the elders to be coordinated together....

This is not all. Only after the elders are broken will they not argue when they discuss matters. Any argument is a sign of unbrokenness. A broken elder has no argument; he knows in what order he is set. **He can speak out his feeling in a serious way, but after he speaks, if the leading elder continues with his decision, he is able to submit himself to it.** It does not mean that you will not speak out your feeling when you accept the authority. Nor does it mean that when you speak out your feeling you are not accepting authority. Everyone has to learn to have no arguments and to obey. The leading ones may make wrong decisions and wrong moves. But if everyone would take this way, there will still be a coordination and there will still be the blessing. Everyone is still fully one and in harmony. All wrong decisions and wrong moves can easily be adjusted... (*The Elders' Management of the Church*, pp. 124, 127)

All problems in the church can and should be solved through proper and adequate fellowship by praying together sincerely and thoroughly (Acts 15:1-31). The proper prayer and fellowship without pride and self-interest, under the light of the pure word of the Scriptures, will solve every problem among us and preserve us in oneness. (47 speakers,

1993 Blending Conference Messages Concerning the Lord's Recovery, p. 95)

Chapter fifteen of Acts tells us that the Judaizing believers came down to Antioch, which was the very origin of the ministry to the Gentile world, and they brought the problem there (v. 1). That became a real damage to the Lord's ministry, His Body, and also His testimony.

Paul could not tolerate the situation. Under that situation, he could not go on with the Lord's ministry to continue the Lord's testimony among the heathen. Therefore, he and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to have some fellowship to solve the problem. The decision made at the conference at Jerusalem should not be satisfactory to the readers and teachers of the Bible, who know God's New Testament economy. The concluding word given by James was still under the influence of the Mosaic law, due to his heavy Judaic background. The influence of this background still remained, even at the time Paul paid his last visit to Jerusalem (21:20-26). **One point, however, was established in Jerusalem. This point is that the Lord's testimony is one, the Lord's Body is one, the Lord's ministry is one, and the Lord's move is one.** If the Lord's move, the Lord's ministry, the Lord's Body, and the Lord's testimony had not been one, Paul would not have needed to go to Jerusalem, and there would have been no need for them to make a decision which covered not only the Jewish believers but also the Gentile believers.

The decision in Acts 15 was not made merely by the Jewish region or merely by the Gentile region. **Actually, it was a decision made above the regions and beyond the regions. The decision made covered all the churches,** whether Jewish or Gentile. This does not mean that the churches in Judea can keep the law and the churches in the Gentile world do not need to keep the law. This also does not mean that the churches in Judea bear one kind of testimony and the churches in the Gentile world bear another testimony. It is not like the United States where every state has its own laws. According to the basic principle of the New Testament economy, the decision made in Acts 15 is not so satisfactory to us. However, no one can deny that a principle was established which covered all the

churches. The American constitution allows every state to have its own laws, but this decision made at Jerusalem did not allow the churches in different regions to have their own law, which means to have their own testimony. We must see this. (*Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters Concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 29-30)

The One Solution Being the Decree for All the Churches

The one solution made at Jerusalem for the problem of circumcision became a decree for all the churches, both Jewish and Gentile, to keep (Acts 15:1-31). Hence, in relation to the matter of circumcision, all the churches should be the same. After the issuing of such a decree, it would have been wrong to allow the Jewish churches to keep the practice of circumcision while permitting the Gentile churches not to observe it. We should not forget that in the church, in the new man, there is no difference between the Greeks and the Jews, because in the new man Christ is every member (Col. 3:11). **The one solution regarding the problem of circumcision was good for all the churches, making all the churches the same.**

The Judaizers, the Jewish believers, not only stressed the practice of circumcision, but also said that circumcision was a requirement for salvation (v. 1). This was a great heresy. No little dissension and discussion arose between the Judaic believers and those of the proper faith (vv. 2-5). This problem was solved by Paul and Barnabas and certain others among the believers going to Jerusalem from Antioch to have a conference with the apostles and the elders there (v. 2). The Bible shows us that when a question like this arises, the leading ones need to come together to have a conference, to bring everything out into the open. The problem in Acts 15 was solved by Paul and Barnabas going to Jerusalem, having a conference with the apostles and the elders there, and through thorough fellowship, working out a solution that satisfied all the believers in different localities, a solution over which all the churches rejoiced and by which they were comforted (vv. 2, 6-31). This is the way we should solve the problems among us today. I believe that if from the beginning the concerned brothers among us would have had a sincere heart with a pure motive to come together to pray, to study the Word, and to fellowship, their concerns would

have been easily taken care of. However, until now the brothers have been avoiding this kind of necessary fellowship. (*The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy*, pp. 34, 43-44)

IS “ONE PUBLICATION” AN ITEM OF “SPECIALITY” OR “GENERALITY”?

This misleading question, asked in “‘Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery’: Analysis & Response,” is based on Brother Lee’s fellowship in *The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life*. In that book Brother Lee defines these three terms as follows:

1. The speciality of the church life is “the faith,” meaning those essential truths that constitute the basis of our Christian fellowship with one another. In this usage, “faith” does not mean the action of believing (as in Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8; Heb. 11:1), but the object of our believing (as in Titus 1:4; Rev. 14:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).

Rom. 5:1 – Therefore having been justified out of faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. 2:8 – For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

Heb. 11:1 – Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Titus 1:4 – To Titus, genuine child according to the common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Rev. 14:12 – Here is the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

2 Tim. 4:7 – I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

The speciality of the church life is *the faith*. In the New Testament the word faith is used with two different meanings. First, it means the action of believing (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8; Heb. 11:1). We have faith in the Lord Jesus, and this is the action of believing. This is the subjective meaning of the word faith. There is also the second meaning, that is, the objective meaning of the word faith. Faith used in this

way refers to the things in which we believe, the object of our faith, our belief (Titus 1:4; Rev. 14:12; 2 Tim. 4:7). So when we say the speciality of the church life is the faith, we mean the faith which is the object of our believing. This is what we call our Christian faith. As Christians we have a unique faith.

...Thus, the faith is something unique, something specific, something special. Therefore, in the church life we have only one thing that is specific or special. That is *the faith*, our Christian faith, which is composed of the beliefs concerning the Bible, God, Christ, the work of Christ, salvation, and the church. (*The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life*, pp. 7-8)

2. Concerning many other matters, matters outside the saving faith, we should exercise the kind of “generality” Paul speaks of in Romans 14-15, receiving other believers in fellowship who have different understandings of items which are not an essential part of the basics of the Christian faith.

Rom. 14:1 – Now him who is weak in faith receive, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his ³considerations.

fn. 14:1³ – I.e., doctrinal considerations. Except in the matters of idol worship (1 John 5:21; 1 Cor. 8:4-7), fornication, rapaciousness, reviling, and other such gross sins (1 Cor. 5:9-11; 6:9-10), division (16:17; Titus 3:10), and the denial of the incarnation of Christ (2 John 7-11), we must learn not to pass judgments on the doctrinal views of others. As long as one is a genuine Christian and has the fundamental faith of the New Testament, we should not exclude him, even though he may differ from us with respect to doctrine; rather, we should receive him in the same one Lord.

Rom. 14:3 – He who eats, let him ¹not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him ¹not judge him who eats, for ²God has received him.

fn. 14:3¹ – Concerning the receiving of the believers, Paul used eating (vv. 2-3) and the keeping of days (vv. 5-6) as examples. God’s receiving has nothing to do with what we eat or with our keeping of certain days. These are

minor, secondary matters that have nothing to do with our salvation and basic faith. Therefore, we should not despise or judge others in these things.

fn. 14:3² – The basis on which we receive the believers is that God has received them. God receives people according to His Son. When a person receives God’s Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as his Savior, God receives that person immediately and ushers him into the enjoyment of the Triune God and of all He has prepared and accomplished in Christ for us. We should receive people in the same way and should not be more narrow than God. Regardless of how much they differ from us in doctrinal concepts or religious practices, we must receive them. When we receive people according to God and not according to doctrine or practice, we demonstrate and maintain the oneness of the Body of Christ.

Rom. 15:7 – Therefore receive one another, as ¹Christ also received you to the glory of God.

fn. 15:7¹ – Verse 3 of ch. 14 says that we should receive people according to God’s receiving, but here we are told that we should receive people according to Christ’s receiving. Christ’s receiving is God’s receiving. What Christ has received, God has received. Those whom God and Christ have received we must receive, regardless of how they differ from us in doctrine or practice. This will be to the glory of God.

All Christians are the same in the faith, but we may be very, very different in the doctrines. Do you believe that we all will be the same in the doctrines? When will that time be? I can hardly believe that any two of us could ever be absolutely the same in doctrine. Then what shall we emphasize? Shall we emphasize the doctrines? If so, we will become divisive and eventually will be divided. We should not emphasize the doctrines, but only our Christian faith. We can emphasize this because with the faith there is no argument. In the faith we have no problems. We are all the same....

We all have to realize ... that in a local church, as far as all the doctrines are concerned, we should not be so specific,

but general. However, as far as our Christian faith is concerned, we must be specific. Concerning the faith, we must be definite. But as for doctrines such as immersion, sprinkling, head covering, foot-washing, eating, keeping days, marriage, and so many other things, we must be general. If we would not be general, we will surely be divisive. (*The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life*, pp. 14, 30)

3. Those things which are not part of the essential faith but are profitable for the growth in life of the saints and the building up of the church comprise the “practicality” of the church life. As they are not a part of “the faith,” they are not a part of the speciality of the church and therefore not a condition for receiving believers. However, they should be put into practice so that the saints and the churches can be strong and healthy (Phil. 4:9; 1 Tim. 4:15). One item Brother Lee included in the practicality of the church life is “healthy teaching” (pp. 57-58).

Phil. 4:9 – The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Tim. 4:15 – Practice these things; be in them, that you progress may be manifest to all.

However, whether in teaching or practice, it is wise to use the things which are better.... So many things are not within the circle of the speciality, our Christian faith, but in the realm of the practicality, which is for practice....

A FINAL WORD

None of the points that we have covered in the last three chapters are aspects of our Christian faith. However, all of them should be put into practice; otherwise, a local church could never be strong and prevailing. If all of these points are put into practice, a local church will become strong and prevailing. These are not items of our Christian faith. But they must become part of the practicality of the church life. (*The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life*, pp. 24, 70)

Significantly, the author of “Analysis & Response” makes no mention of this third category, “practicality.” Yet having one

publication work in the Lord’s ministry to the churches and the saints is clearly a matter of “practicality.” By the author’s own admission, the co-workers wrote in *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery*: “...one publication is not a matter of the common faith...” Thus, they never presented the matter of being restricted to one publication work in the Lord’s recovery as an essential to the faith, as an item of speciality. In fact, they said the opposite. The author of “Analysis & Response” implies that the co-workers’ affirmation of Brother Lee’s desire to be restricted in one publication work is therefore somehow improper. His reasoning is itself untenable. His dissenting opinion is based on a misuse of Brother Lee’s fellowship in *The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life* in several crucial ways:

1. The standards of speciality and generality are misapplied.
2. The propriety of practicality as an item of the co-worker’s fellowship is ignored.
3. The nature of the co-workers’ fellowship regarding publication work is misrepresented.
4. The biblical limits on practicing generality are overstepped.

We will look at each of these points in turn.

1. The Standards of Speciality and Generality Are Misapplied

Brother Lee’s fellowship on speciality and generality concerns the basis of our receiving of believers into the fellowship of the church. The subject of *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* is not receiving believers into fellowship, but the practicality of carrying out the unique New Testament ministry without confusion. This is a critical distinction the co-workers themselves make.

Finally, all the churches and saints everywhere must understand that the matter of one publication is not a matter of the common faith but something related to the one ministry in the Lord’s recovery. The ministry is the sounding of the trumpet among us in the Lord’s recovery, and there

should be no uncertain sounding of this trumpet, as Brother Lee has mentioned on a number of occasions. However, the one publication should not become the basis of our accepting or rejecting any persons in the communion of faith or in the fellowship of the churches; it should not be insisted on as an item of the faith. If any are not inclined to be restricted in one publication, these ones are still our brothers; they are still in the genuine local churches. (*Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, p. 9)

The first half of *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* concludes with a similar quotation from Brother Lee's ministry, which begins:

THE MINISTRY AND THE CHURCHES

Whether or not a certain church takes the ministry does not decide whether that church is a genuine local church. The title of this message does not say "no uncertain sounding of the trumpet in the Lord's recovery" but "in the Lord's ministry." I am not talking about something in the Lord's recovery, but I am talking about the ministry. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p. 80; quoted on page 9 of *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*)

What could be clearer? In receiving fellow believers and fellow local churches, the matter of how to carry out the publication work is not an item of the faith; that is, it is not a matter of speciality. Whether a brother or a church agrees or disagrees with it, practices or does not practice it, does not affect their standing as our brother or as a church.

However, the ones who serve in the ministry of the Word bear a great responsibility for preserving the oneness among the saints. They should, therefore, adhere to a higher standard. Recognizing this, *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* urges all engaged in such work to be diligent to ensure they are not sowing confusion among the saints by publishing writings that produce questionings through different teachings (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3-4). It warns that confusion and division will surely ensue if different teachings are propagated through different publication works. To neglect this fellowship is to ignore the lessons that

can be gleaned from the New Testament, from Christian history, and from our own history concerning how to carry out the Lord’s ministry.

1 Tim. 1:3-4 – [3] Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things [4] nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God’s economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim. 6:3-4 – [3] If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness, [4] he is blinded with pride, understanding nothing, but is diseased with questionings and contentions of words, out of which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions.

In 1984 Brother Lee called an urgent elders’ training because of a tendency toward division brought in by brothers carrying out their own work within the one work of the Lord’s recovery. The messages released at that time are very instructive for our situation today. In the second message entitled “Lessons Concerning the Oneness of the Ministry” (*Elders’ Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, pp. 26-27, 28-30, 33-34), Brother Lee drew on the scriptural example of Apollos to demonstrate the problem caused by carrying out a ministry that differs even slightly from the general ministry in the churches. From careful study and consideration of the New Testament, it is evident that Apollos’ ministry was a factor in the divisive situation in the church in Corinth and in the degradation of the church in Ephesus, which eventually turned away from Paul. While it is true that Paul did not insist that Apollos follow his leadership in the ministry (1 Cor. 16:12), it is likewise true that Apollos’ failure to adequately bring his ministry in line with the general ministry in the churches contributed to problems in the churches that received his ministry (Acts 18:24; 19:1; 20:17-18a, 30; 1 Cor. 1:10-12; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 1:15; Rev. 2:1a, 4-5).

1 Cor. 16:12 – And concerning our brother Apollos, I urged him many times to come to you with the brothers; yet it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity.

Acts 18:24 – And a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, arrived at Ephesus, and he was powerful in the Scriptures.

Acts 19:1 – Now while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper districts, came down to Ephesus and found some disciples.

Acts 20:17-18a, 30 – [17] And from Miletus he sent word to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. [18] And when they came to him, he said to them... [30] And from among you yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them.

1 Cor. 1:10-12 – [10] Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion. [11] For it has been made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by those of the household of Chloe, that there are strifes among you. [12] Now I mean this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.

1 Tim. 1:3-4 – [3] Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things [4] nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

2 Tim. 1:15 – This you know, that all who are in Asia turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Rev. 2:1a, 4-5 – [1] To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: ... [4] But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love. [5] Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but

if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

It was necessary for Apollos to be merged in with Paul’s ministry, the more the better. Although he may have been very much one with Paul, his case became a problem....

I do not believe that Apollos conducted himself in a way to be one with Paul to the uttermost in God’s New Testament economy (see 1 Cor. 16:12). (*Elders’ Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, pp. 26, 27)

I believe that we can learn from Apollos’s case that there is the possibility of having different flavors, different atmospheres, and different colors, although we may move together, minister together, work together, and all be together in the Lord’s recovery. Apollos was not dissenting with Paul, but his ministry bore a different color and flavor than Paul’s ministry. (*Elders’ Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, pp. 29-30)

The seed that Apollos sowed in Ephesus eventually became the basic factor for the decline of the church. The reason that the church in Ephesus degraded was that it had taken the lead to depart from the teaching of the apostles. To depart from the apostles’ teaching is to depart from the apostles’ vision. With the departure of the apostles’ teaching came the teaching of Balaam (Rev. 2:14), the teaching of the Nicolaitans (vv. 6, 15), and the teaching of Jezebel (v. 20). These three teachings represent the heresies in Christianity. (*The Vision of the Age*, p. 46)

We can detect through various hints that the cause of Ephesus’s decline was its failure to rid itself of Apollos’s seed. From the standpoint of the New Testament, that teaching was a different teaching; it was a different doctrine. (*The Vision of the Age*, p. 75)

Brother Lee repeatedly stressed that every ministry produces its own “fellowship” and that all of the divisions in Christianity can be traced back to different ministries, that is, ministries other than the unique New Testament ministry.

I am burdened to stress this point of the oneness of the ministry because of all the divisions and confusions that

have taken place in the past centuries among the Christians. The most damaging thing among the Christians is the divisions and the confusions. Moreover, all the divisions and confusions came out of one source, and that source is the different ministries. (*Elders' Training Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, p. 12)

DIVISIONS COMING OUT OF DIFFERENT MINISTRIES

Why is it that there were divisions even from the time while the apostles, including Paul and John, were still here on this earth? Divisions began to take place from the last part of the first century and have continued to take place until the present century. There have been divisions after divisions, which have caused all kinds of confusion. What is the reason for all these divisions? They all came about simply because of different so-called ministries.

As those in the Lord's recovery, we must ask ourselves what our realization is of the Lord's ministry to carry out His economy. What is our view concerning the damages that have been brought in through the so-called different ministries? Today every denomination has its own ministry. To be a preacher in a certain denomination, it is necessary for you to be limited to a certain kind of ministry, limited in your teaching, in your preaching, in your doctrine, and even in your behavior. In every denomination, you need to be limited to the ministry of that particular denomination.

We need to be very clear that the foundation of all the denominations and the factor that produces each denomination are their different ministries. If all the Christians today would be willing for the Lord to take away their different ministries, they would all be one. The basic factor of all the divisions, their very root, is different ministries. (*Elders' Training Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, pp. 14-15)

We need to see this principle throughout the entire Christian era. All the troubles, divisions, and confusions came from the one source of the tolerance of different ministries. Many Christian teachers have known the peril of different ministries; nevertheless, they have tolerated them. There has been a tolerance of different ministries. In the

Lord’s recovery, for the long run, we should not believe that this kind of creeping in of the different ministries would never take place. Rather, we must be on the alert. Such a peril is ahead of us. If we are not watchful, if we are careless, in one way or another the enemy would creepingly use some means, some ways, to bring in different ministries. Such a thing would end the Lord’s recovery....

All of us today need to be on the alert. We need to realize that Satan could use any one of us to bring in some other kind of teaching that may be scriptural... We need to be very careful because Satan is subtle. All of us need to be alert not only to watch over others but to watch over ourselves. (*Elders’ Training Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, pp. 16-17)

THE PROBLEM OF MINISTRY

Thus far, I believe we have all been deeply impressed with the need of a vision of God’s New Testament ministry. This training is a training on the ministry. Throughout the twenty centuries of church history, the divisions, confusions, and problems which have taken place among all the Christians were all due to a ministry. Whatever you minister produces something. If you minister the heavens, something heavenly will be produced. If you minister earthly things, surely the issue, the coming out, will be earthly. The many divisions and confusions among the Christians today all come from one source—a ministry. The Presbyterian denomination or division came out of the ministry of the presbytery. The Baptist division came out of the ministry of baptism by immersion. All the different kinds of Christian groups come out of different ministries. A ministry is mainly a teaching. We must realize that the teaching which a Christian teaches ministers something. It may minister something right, something wrong, something high, or something low. A teaching always issues in something. Based upon the issue of your teaching, your teaching may be considered as a ministry. Ministry in the biblical usage means to serve people with something, just as a waiter in a restaurant serves people with the courses of food. To serve others with something is to minister. To minister is not to preach, teach, or speak without serving anyone with anything. We may say that a certain minister who speaks for an hour ministers

nothing to people. This means that according to Christ he ministered nothing, but according to the facts that minister did minister something. He ministered something wrong, something bad, or something low to people. I hope we can see that ministry produces problems, ministry produces division, and ministry produces confusion.

NOT TO TEACH DIFFERENTLY

This is why Paul wrote 1 Timothy in the midst of a confusing environment and after many years of his work with his co-workers. This Epistle is altogether an inoculation. Poison after poison was injected into the Christian church while the church was going on. At the conclusion of his writing ministry, Paul wrote 1 Timothy to inoculate the church against all these poisons. In the opening word of this Epistle, however, Paul did not write in a way that we would think to be so serious: “Even as I urged you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach differently (1:3).” This phrase “not to teach differently” seems so simple. If you merely read this phrase, you will not sense the seriousness of different teaching. We may not think that this is serious, but actually it is more than serious. It kills people to teach differently. To teach differently tears down God’s building and annuls God’s entire economy. We all must realize that even a small amount of teaching in a different way destroys the recovery. There is a proverb which says, “One sentence can build up the nation and one sentence can destroy the entire nation.” You do not need to give an entire message. Just by speaking one sentence which conveys your kind of concept tears down everything. We must realize that ministry is “terrible.” Your speaking can build up or destroy. It is possible that your speaking destroys, kills, and annuls. (*Elders’ Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision*, pp. 41-43)

Our own history also has been marred by brothers carrying out their own work without proper care for the Body as a whole. Many gifted brothers became casualties of their own ambition to carry out their own ministry. We take no joy in saying this. These are our dear brothers, and we grieve that they cut

themselves off from the fellowship of the churches. Their stumbling is a loss to the Lord’s recovery.

2. The Propriety of Practicality as an Item of the Co-Worker’s Fellowship Is Ignored

“Analysis & Response” argues that since the matter of one publication work is not an essential item of the faith, the co-workers should not have presented their feeling concerning it. The implication is that if something is not part of the speciality of the church, that if it is not an item of the common faith, the co-workers should not touch it. That is absurd. The New Testament is full of the apostles’ fellowship concerning how the churches and the saints should go on in a healthy way. Their fellowship touches many items that cannot be considered items of speciality. These items are part of what Paul calls “healthy teaching” and the “healthy words” (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:8).

1 Tim. 1:10 – For fornicators, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and whatever other thing that is opposed to the ¹healthy teaching.

fn. 1:10¹ – *Healthy* implies the matter of life. The sound teaching of the apostles, which is according to the gospel of the glory of God, ministers the healthy teaching as the supply of life to people, either nourishing them or healing them; in contrast, the different teachings of the dissenting ones (v. 3) sow the seeds of death and poison into others. Any teaching that distracts people from the center and goal of God’s New Testament economy is not healthy.

1 Tim. 6:3 – If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness.

2 Tim. 1:13 – Hold a pattern of the healthy words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. 4:3 – For the time will come when they will not tolerate the healthy teaching; but according to their own

lusts they will heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears.

Titus 1:9 – ¹Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the ³teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.

fn. 1:9¹ – The elders are appointed to administrate God’s government in a local church that good order may be maintained in the church. To accomplish this, the elders need to hold to the faithful word, which is according to the apostles’ teaching, that they may be able to stop troublesome talkers and calm a tumultuous situation (vv. 9-14).

fn. 1:9³ – The teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42) eventually became the New Testament. This indicates that (1) the churches were established according to the apostles’ teaching and followed their teaching, and (2) the order of the churches was maintained by the faithful word, which was given according to the apostles’ teaching. The disorder in the church was due mainly to deviation from the apostles’ teaching. To counter this, we must hold to the faithful word taught in the churches according to the apostles’ teaching. In a darkened and confused situation, we must cleave to the enlightening and ordering word in the New Testament — the apostles’ teaching. To maintain order in the church, the apostles’ word according to God’s revelation is needed in addition to the eldership.

Titus 1:13 – This testimony is true; for which cause reprove them severely that they may be ³healthy in the faith.

fn. 1:13³ – The gainsayers (v. 9) and vain talkers (v. 10) were infected with doctrinal diseases and became unhealthy in the faith. They needed the inoculation of the healthy teaching and the healthy word (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3, and notes), which the elders should provide (v. 9) for their healing.

Titus 2:8 – Healthy speech that cannot be condemned, that he who opposes may be put to shame, having ³nothing evil to say about us.

fn. 2:8³ – The healthy teaching with the healthy speech composed of healthy words is the most effective antidote to the opposer’s slanderous speaking. Such light-shedding and life-imparting teaching of the word of the truth always stops the mouth of doctrinal opinion instigated by the old serpent.

It is striking that “Analysis & Response” completely ignores the third section of Brother Lee’s fellowship in the *The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life*. The practicality of the church life refers to those things which, while not items of the faith, will, if practiced, cause the churches to be healthy and to grow and increase. In the Lord’s recovery we rightly treasure the oneness and the one accord. They are the base for the Lord’s blessing of life (Psa. 133:1, 3b) and increase (Acts 2:46-47). The goal of the co-workers in publishing *Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery* is to maintain and strengthen the health in life of the churches and the saints through a diet of healthy words. Such healthy teaching is vitality related to the practicality of the church life.

Psa. 133:1, 3b – [1] Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity! ...[3b] For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: Life forever.

Acts 2:46-47 – [46] And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart, [47] praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.

The co-workers’ fellowship is consistent with Brother Lee’s practice of leading the churches by emphasizing items related to the practicality of the church life. It is also consistent with Brother Lee’s closing word on page 70 of *The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life*.

A FINAL WORD

None of the points that we have covered in the last three chapters [concerning the practicality of the church life] are aspects of our Christian faith. However, all of them should be put into practice; otherwise, a local church could never be strong and prevailing. If all of these points are put into practice, a local church will become strong and prevailing. These are not items of our Christian faith. But they must become part of the practicality of the church life.

As the co-workers expressed in their statement, the practice of being restricted in one publication is essential to the preservation of the integrity of the Lord's ministry among us, which is crucial to the practical oneness among the local churches.

3. The Nature of the Co-Workers' Fellowship Regarding Publication Work Is Misrepresented

"Analysis & Response" mischaracterizes *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* as an official policy insisted upon by the blended co-workers and mandated upon the saints and the churches. "Analysis & Response" uses the word "policy" 33 times and forms of the words "mandate" and "insist" 6 times each. Yet none of these words—"insist," "mandate," or "policy" (or any words of similar force)—are used in *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, except in the one paragraph above where the booklet explicitly states that the matter of one publication work "should **not** be insisted on as an item of the faith." Thus, the very words of *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* are contrary to the mischaracterization of it in "Analysis & Response."

Furthermore, prior to publication of the co-workers' statement, the author of "Analysis & Response" received an extended reply from Brother Kerry Robichaux (among others) concerning his objections to the document on these very points. In that response Kerry unambiguously stated that the matter of one publication is not a matter of the faith, but is related to the ministry in the Lord's recovery; that it is not to be insisted upon as a basis for receiving fellow believers or churches; but that it

represents the co-workers' feeling concerning the best way for the churches to be kept in a healthy condition.

The matter of one publication is not a matter of the common faith at all but something related to the one ministry in the Lord's recovery. There is no reason to confuse the two, nor to apply the standards of the one to the other. We feel that the ministry is the sounding of the trumpet among us in the Lord's recovery and that there should be no uncertain sounding of this trumpet, as Brother Lee has mentioned on a number of occasions. The one publication is not the basis of our accepting or rejecting any persons in the communion of faith; thus, it should not be insisted on as an item of the faith. However, while the common faith is general and inclusive, there must be more discipline and speciality among the ministers of the Word to maintain the one voice in the ministry of the truth.

Kerry also compared the co-workers' fellowship in *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* with Brother Lee's fellowship concerning the God-ordained way.

Further, I do not think that it is accurate to equate the circulation of this statement with an insistence on it. I believe that what the co-workers are doing is akin to what Brother Lee did when he issued the call to the saints everywhere to pick up the God-ordained way. You will recall, I am sure, that he did not insist on this new way, but he certainly promoted it as the best way to bring all the saints into their organic functions as members of the Body of Christ. The new way was to be a matter of choice for the saints and the churches, not something insisted upon. Likewise, being restricted in one publication is a matter of choice for the churches. No one is insisting that the churches everywhere be restricted in one publication. But at the same time, the co-workers can and should help the saints to see the value of one publication in the Lord's recovery, and they should encourage the saints everywhere to exercise this restriction for the sake of the one testimony among us. I understand that some do not wish to see this matter promoted or even spoken, but as co-workers trained by Brother Lee we do well to follow his example and

admonition ourselves and to bring the saints whom we care for into the same practice.

This comparison is very instructive. The God-ordained way is not a matter of the faith; it is not a matter of the speciality of the church. It is, therefore, not a basis for receiving or not receiving believers into fellowship. It is, however, a critical part of Brother Lee's fellowship related to the practicality of the church life; it is his leading concerning the way the churches and the saints should practice in order to be healthy in life and increase in numbers for the accomplishment of God's economy.

Brother Lee did not expect that all of the churches would immediately follow his lead to pick up the practice of the God-ordained way, but that did not deter him from strongly emphasizing it. He did, however, warn the churches and the saints against opposing the Lord's move to bring in the God-ordained way.

A WORD OF LOVE, ADVICE, AND WARNING

I am prepared to meet a situation in which some in the Lord's recovery will not go this way. This will not surprise me. You and I should not consider these ones as strangers and should not cut them off from the recovery. We should still love them, respect them, and not despise them a bit. Do not consider them as another kind of people. Although they have not joined the army, they are still proper citizens.

To those who would not take this way, I would give a word of love, advice, and warning. Do not criticize, do not attack, and do not oppose. If you do, you will suffer the loss. This would mean that you would betray the recovery. You would become a betrayer, a traitor. Some may feel that they are not betrayers or traitors but protectors. According to their concept, they do not want to see that I am the unique leader to control the entire recovery. This is a very good cloak for them to put on. I have been with the recovery for fifty-five years, since 1932. In all these years I have not controlled anyone. I do not have the intention to control anybody or to exercise any control. But we need a proper leadership. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, pp. 126-127)

We realize that if the Lord is to go on to make His recovery prevailing, there is no other way but this present move. However, if a church meeting properly would not take this present new way, then we still respect them as a proper church. We would still keep the fellowship with them, even though they do not feel the need of the new way. Even if they would oppose, we would not reject them. When they say that they are no longer a church in the recovery, then that is their cutting off the fellowship, not us. Do not cut off any church who would not be agreeable to the present new move. If a church opposes a little and yet still recognizes all the other churches on this globe for the fellowship in the Body, we would not only recognize but also respect and regard them as a genuine church among the many local churches. We not only like to, but we also will try our best to maintain proper fellowship with them. Do not be sectarian. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, p. 150)

The churches in Canada and the United States were opened to the Lord's recovery through this ministry, but I have suffered. I saw Brother Nee suffer the same kinds of things. In February 1986 I called an urgent elders' training in which I stressed the one accord, and I made my teaching very clear (see *Elders' Training Book 7, One Accord for the Lord's Move*). I said that being in the army is different from being a citizen. Not everyone in a country is in the army. Gideon eventually had only three hundred who became his army (Judg. 7:7). I went to Taipei in 1984 because I was burdened for an army to be raised up who would practice the God-ordained way. But I do not have the intention or the expectation for all the saints in the recovery to be the same. I pointed out in the 1986 elders' training that if some decide not to take the way of the ministry, they are still members of the church in the recovery. But I also asked these ones not to criticize or oppose, because this would cause trouble and division. (*The Problems Causing the Turmoils in the Church Life*, pp. 11-12)

The blended co-workers' expression of their intention to carry out only one publication work to supply all of the churches is an entirely appropriate form of fellowship within the scope of the

practicality of the church life. On the other hand, it is misleading on the part of the author of “Analysis & Response” to imply that the co-workers failed to consider or address his concerns.

4. The Biblical Limits On Practicing Generality Are Overstepped

By sowing suspicion and discord among the brothers and the churches, “Analysis & Response” contravenes Brother Lee’s fellowship in *The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life* regarding limits to generality. On page 34, in a section subtitled, “The Balance to the Generality,” Brother Lee says:

At the beginning of this chapter I listed all the verses in the New Testament regarding the persons who could not and should not be received into the church life. Do not think the church has to practice the generality to the degree that it has to take all kinds of persons. No, not at all. Yes, we should be general, but still there are certain persons with whom we cannot be general, nor with whom we should be general.

Among those listed as ones the church cannot and should not receive are:

- One who neglects to hear the church (Matt. 18:15-17).

Matt. 18:15-17 – [15] Moreover if your brother sins against you, go, reprove him between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. [16] But if he does not hear you, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. [17] And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to ³you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.

fn. 18:17³ – If any believer refuses to hear the church, he will lose the fellowship of the church and will be like the Gentile (the heathen) and the tax collector (the sinner), who are outside the fellowship of the church.

- Those who cause division (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14).

Rom. 16:17 – Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of ¹stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and ²turn away from them.

fn. 16:17¹ – Referring to being stumbled and leaving the church life. This must be the result of different opinions and teachings.

fn. 16:17² – In ch. 14 Paul was liberal and gracious regarding the receiving of those who differ in doctrine or practice. Here, however, he is unyielding and resolute in saying that we must turn away from those who are dissenting, who make divisions, and who make causes of stumbling. The purpose in both cases is the preserving of the oneness of the Body of Christ that we may have the normal church life.

2 Thes. 3:6, 14 – [6] Now we charge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the things which were handed down to you and which you received from us... [14] And if anyone does not obey our word through this letter, mark this one so as not to mingle with him, in order that he may be ashamed.

- One who is sectarian (Titus 3:10).

Titus 3:10 – A factious man, after a first and second admonition, ²refuse.

fn. 3:10² – In order to maintain good order in the church, a factious, divisive person should be refused, rejected, after a first and second admonition. This is done to stop intercourse with a contagiously divisive person for the church’s profit.

These three categories of persons all do damage to the oneness of the Body of Christ. The propagation of different teachings (1 Tim. 1:3-4) through different publications has already caused damage to the Lord’s Body. The opposition to the co-workers’ fellowship concerning the way to carry out publication work greatly compounds this damage. We are fearful as to where the

dissenting ones' opposition will lead them and those influenced by them.