

A FAITHFUL WORD

S E R I E S F I V E

“In the sleight of men.”

**A
PATTERN
OF
TWISTING**
(Part 1)

**Book
1**

DEFENSE & CONFIRMATION PROJECT

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DCP is a project to defend and confirm the New Testament ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and the practice of the local churches.

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.

Boldface type has been used for emphasis in quoted passages and is not in the original quoted material unless otherwise noted.

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PREFACE

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 2005 a small group of dissenting brothers who fashion themselves “Concerned Brothers” (CBs) launched an anonymously operated Web site to attack the truth and the brothers serving in the ministry in the Lord’s recovery. The contributors to this site twist and misrepresent the co-workers’ words to give their own contentions an appearance of credibility. This alone should cause the saints in the Lord’s recovery to reject the CBs’ writings as works of darkness that are unworthy of their consideration.

The articles in this book illustrate how Nigel Tomes, a frequent contributor to the CBs site, manufactured meanings in the co-workers’ words through distortions of context and outright fabrication. This book contains articles addressing the following points:

- The misuse of half a sentence spoken by Brother Lee concerning a writers’ conference to justify different publications promoting different teachings, when the complete sentence was actually part of his call for the co-workers to be restricted in one publication work and the writers’ conference was only mentioned to illustrate the problems that arose from “lawless” publication work.
- The misuse of Brother Nee’s fellowship to care for the practical need of the publication work by setting up publishing operations in Hong Kong and Taiwan to claim a precedent for multiple publication works in the Lord’s recovery, when Brother Nee’s clearly stated intention was that the Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taiwan Gospel Bookrooms would all function as one.

- The complete fabrication of a statement calling for adding “one publication” to the seven “ones” in Ephesians 4 and false attribution of that statement to James Lee.
- The distortion of a statement made by Minoru Chen to claim that he said that “one publication” is “not a matter of ... biblical or non-biblical,” when what he actually said was that teachings that divide the Body of Christ are indefensible even if they are biblically based.

In the 1980s, Dr. J. Gordon Melton noted that an author of a book attacking the ministry of Witness Lee had “...fairly consistently taken statements, usually individual sentences from the middle of paragraphs, out of context and made them to appear to say things that they were not even talking about.” It is disturbing to see brothers who have been among us employing the same methods to assail the co-workers and to manufacture support from the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee for what are in fact deviations from their teaching and pattern. Such twistings are surely in the principle of the “sleight of men” “with a view to a system of error” (Eph. 4:14) to carry the saints in the churches away from the central lane of God’s eternal economy.

REGARDING CONTENTIONS OF WORDS

In a time when many were deviating from the apostles' teaching, Paul warned his younger co-worker Timothy about those who are contentious over words and diseased with questionings:

1 Tim. 6:4 – He is ¹blinded with pride, understanding nothing, but is ²diseased with questionings and contentions of words, out of which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions.

fn. 6:4¹ – See note 6² in ch. 3. Teachings that differ from the healthy words of the Lord always issue from people's pride and self-conceit, which blind them.

[Note 2 on 1 Tim. 3:6 says: Lit., beclouded with smoke. Pride here is likened to smoke that beclouds the mind, making it blind, besotted with the self-conceit of pride.]

fn. 6:4² – To question and contend about words is a disease. Diseased here is in contrast to healthy in v. 3.

2 Tim. 2:14 – Remind them of these things, solemnly charging them before God not to have contentions of words, which is useful for nothing, to the ¹ruin of those who hear.

fn. 2:14¹ – Or, overthrowing. Lit., catastrophe.

1 Cor. 11:16 – But if anyone seems to be ¹contentious, we do not have such a custom of being so, neither the ²churches of God.

fn. 11:16¹ – The custom of contention, disputation, and debating. Neither the apostles nor the churches tolerated any disputation concerning the apostles' teaching.

fn. 11:16² – That churches here is plural indicates that all the local churches are independent of one another, yet they all act in the same way according to the apostles' teaching.

2 Tim. 2:23 – But ¹foolish questionings and those arising from an untrained mind refuse, knowing that they beget contentions.

fn. 2:23¹ – Or, stupid.

Titus 3:9 – But ¹avoid foolish questionings and genealogies and strifes and contentions about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain.

fn. 3:9¹ – The positive things stressed in vv. 4-8 should be affirmed strongly and consistently, such as our Savior God, Jesus Christ our Savior, the Holy Spirit, God's kindness, love, mercy, grace, and eternal life, with His acts of justifying, saving, washing, regenerating, and renewing. These are the Triune God with His attributes and virtues, plus His divine actions in His eternal salvation; they are things of life, which belong to the tree of life (Gen. 2:9) and produce heirs who will inherit all that God is to them. The negative things dealt with in vv. 9-11 should be avoided, such as foolish questionings, genealogies, strifes, contentions about the law, and factious, opinionated men. These are matters of (deadening) knowledge, which belong to the tree of knowledge and kill their victims. The things of life, which belong to the tree of life, should be stressed, whereas the matters of knowledge, which belong to the tree of knowledge, should be avoided.

These words are sober warnings that apply to the present situation in the Lord's recovery. We should all take heed to the words of wisdom recorded in Proverbs:

Prov. 6:14 – With perverseness in his heart, he is devising evil continually; he injects discord.

Prov. 6:16-19 – [16] There are six things that Jehovah hates; indeed, seven that are an abomination to His soul: [17] haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, [18] a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that hurry to run to evil, [19] a false witness who utters lies, and one who injects discord among brothers.

Prov. 12:22 – Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.

Prov. 13:10 – Through pride comes nothing but strife, but wisdom is with those who receive counsel.

Prov. 16:28 – A perverse man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.

Prov. 26:21 – As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

INTRODUCTION

In 1986 Brother Lee issued a clear call for all of the serving ones participating in the ministry and leadership among the churches in the Lord's recovery to be restricted in one publication. At the same time, he made it clear that we should not receive or reject any individual saint or local church based on whether or not they accept this practice.

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.... The ministry is altogether filled up with a fighting spirit. I do not control any church. All the saints who have left the denominations, the divisive sects, and stand on the proper ground are a local church in their locality. They can express their opinions, but they may have nothing to do with this ministry.

....I have to be faithful to the Lord, faithful to so many of you who have been very much affected by this ministry, and faithful to myself. For this reason, this ministry cannot allow anyone to pretend to be in it and yet still say something different. This does not mean that I ask you to stay away from your local church or that your local church is no longer a local church. What I am fellowshiping about is the impact of the ministry for the fighting of the Lord's interest in His recovery. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, pp. 81-82)

Brother Lee spoke this word in response to problems that had arisen in the churches due to different teachings propagated by some who claimed to participate with him in the ministry. In doing so, he strongly testified that the practice of being restricted in one publication was the common practice in the Lord's recovery since Brother Watchman Nee was raised up in China.

One thing that has caused the Lord's recovery trouble is the fact that we have different publications. If we mean business for the Lord's recovery, we must avoid any kind of involvement in problems. When we were on mainland China, only Brother Nee had a publication, and the Gospel Room belonged solely and uniquely to him. He asked me to help in the publication work. I did write some books, among which were a book on the genealogy of Christ, a translation of part of Pember's *Earth's Earliest Ages*, and some books on the kingdom of the heavens. I never published anything by myself. I always mailed my manuscript to the Gospel Room, which was under Brother Nee and his helper. It was up to their discernment whether my manuscript should be published or not. I liked to have my writings checked as to whether there might be some inaccuracy in the truth.... We only had one publication. Everything was published through Brother Nee's Gospel Room because the publication is really the trumpeting. The sounding of our trumpet is not just in the verbal message but more in the publication. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 161-162)

We should not think that the principles our senior co-worker presented were applicable to that time only. Rather they represented what had been learned and practiced by those taking the lead in the ministry in the Lord's recovery over the preceding half century.

In 2005, as the co-workers in the Lord's recovery were considering how to face a similar rising tide of different teachings that were troubling the saints and the churches, they recalled how Brother Lee conducted himself in the ministry and how he had addressed the same issues two decades before. Out of much fellowship and prayer, the co-workers issued the statement *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* in June 2005, in which they reaffirmed their desire to continue in the practice of being restricted in one publication in the ministry in the Lord's recovery according to the pattern and principles established by Brother Nee and Brother Lee.

In the conclusion of that statement, the co-workers made it clear, as Brother Lee had before, that, while the one *publication*

work in the Lord's recovery is essential to the health and even the continuation of the recovery, it "should not be insisted on" as a basis for fellowship with the saints or the churches:

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)

Notwithstanding this attitude of generality, since the release of the co-workers' statement, a few have risen up to oppose it, not only dissenting about the need to be restricted in one publication, but also teaching differently from the New Testament ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee in other vital matters. The Web site afaithfulword.org, the contents of which are now being published in book form, is necessitated by this very public and sustained opposition to the co-workers' affirmation of Brother Lee's teaching and pattern for carrying out the work in the Lord's recovery in a blended way. Our hope is that these writings will help to instruct, heal and inoculate those saints who may have been shaken by these questionings and to equip all of the saints to inoculate others against this dissenting speaking (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:1-3, 14-15, 23-26; 3:16-17).

To those ends it presents to the brothers and sisters in the Lord's recovery:

- Articles written by servings ones in DCP containing extensive answers to dissenting opinions;

- Contributions from saints not serving in DCP which provide additional insights and understanding;
- Copies of the statements of the co-workers reaffirming their intention to follow the biblical pattern and teaching the Lord has brought to us through the ministry of Brother Nee and Brother Lee; and
- Copies of correspondence sent both before and after the release of *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* demonstrating the co-workers' open fellowship and proper understanding of the principles and truths behind being restricted in one publication.

May the Lord have mercy on us all that we would take the way of practicing the oneness and the one accord to be preserved in His unique recovery for the building up of the Body of Christ in preparation for His soon return.

“MY INTENTION...WAS TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO WRITE”—WHAT DID WITNESS LEE REALLY SAY?

A brother who has publicly opposed the co-workers’ affirmation of Brother Lee’s fellowship that the publication ministry should be carried out through one literature work bases his contention in part on half of one sentence from a message given by Brother Lee in 1986. His misrepresentation of Brother Lee’s fellowship is a terrible and dishonest distortion. The dissenter writes:

If “we were restricted to one publication” why in the early 1980’s did Brother Lee call a “Writers’ Conference”? Brother Lee recalled later: “My intention in calling a writers’ conference was to encourage you to write something...”

The dissenting brother takes this partial quote of a sentence from Brother Lee’s fellowship as grounds for defending separate publication works that sound different trumpets in the ministry by publishing different teachings. This is deceptive to the uttermost.

The quote is found in a message entitled “Basic Principles in the Eldership and the Training of the Full-Timers” under the subheading “Being Restricted in One Publication.” There Brother Lee made a strong plea for all of the leading ones among the co-workers and the elders in the churches to return to the practice of being restricted in one publication. Near the end of that section he said:

... Even though I wrote some books in China, **I never dared to publish anything by myself.** I do not like to have another sounding. **Our sounding must be one, so we must be restricted in one publication.** *My intention in calling a writers’ conference was to encourage you to write something,* but **not in the way that came out. This fellowship may preserve and protect us from doing things lawlessly.** (*Elders’ Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord’s Present Move*, p. 163) [the words in italics are those quoted by the dissenting brother]

Brother Lee’s word was an adjustment to the leading ones in the churches to come back to the historic practice in the Lord’s

recovery of being restricted in one publication work. Yet this dissenting one chops out half a sentence of Brother Lee's word on being restricted in one publication in order to lead his readers to believe that Brother Lee was endorsing independent publishing. The entire burden of Brother Lee's fellowship in this portion of this message was just the opposite.

When Brother Lee says, "This fellowship may preserve us and protect us from doing things lawlessly," he is speaking of his fellowship to the brothers to be restricted in one publication. Brother Lee's mention of the writers' conference was not to encourage the brothers to carry out an independent publishing work, but to remind them of the problems that had arisen because some had taken the opportunity to put out their own teachings in a lawless fashion without fellowship and a proper regard for their effect on the oneness among the churches.

The writers' conference was called in May 1980 at the same time the churches were initiating the defamation actions against *The Mindbenders* and *The God-Men*. The burden of the writers' conference was that some would rise up to write polemics to defend and confirm the truths released through the ministry against those who distorted and opposed the teaching in the Lord's recovery. The thought was never to encourage brothers to carry out separate, independent publication works to advance their own expositions or interpretations of the biblical truths. A major part of that conference was an open and mutual fellowship concerning the various types of writings needed and the topics that should be addressed. It was never Brother Lee's intent that brothers would take the opportunity to promote their own ministries, but because of unchecked ambition on the part of some brothers, that is what came out. His word in 1986 was a corrective to those brothers. His burden is clearly evident in the following word which opened this section of his fellowship to the leading ones:

One thing that has caused the Lord's recovery trouble is the fact that we have different publications. If we mean business for the Lord's recovery, we must avoid any kind of involvement in problems. When we were on mainland China,

only Brother Nee had a publication, and the Gospel Room belonged solely and uniquely to him. He asked me to help in the publication work. I did write some books, among which were a book on the genealogy of Christ, a translation of part of Pember's Earth's Earliest Ages, and some books on the kingdom of the heavens. **I never published anything by myself. I always mailed my manuscript to the Gospel Room, which was under Brother Nee and his helper. It was up to their discernment whether my manuscript should be published or not. I liked to have my writings checked as to whether there might be some inaccuracy in the truth.** It is not a small matter to write a book that expounds the kingdom of the heavens. I liked my material to pass through their checking. This helped and protected me. Brother Yu, the eye specialist, translated some of the mystical books, but he did not publish anything. We only had one publication. **Everything was published through Brother Nee's Gospel Room because the publication is really the trumpeting. The sounding of our trumpet is not just in the verbal message but more in the publication.** (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 161-162)

The following critical points in this word are reflected in the co-workers' fellowship in *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*:

- The historic practice in the Lord's recovery is to have only one publication work. In Brother Nee's time it was the Gospel Room and Brother Lee felt no liberty to carry out his own separate publication work.
- Brother Lee's practice, which we all acknowledge as a pattern for us, was to have any writing he did reviewed by those serving in Brother Nee's publishing work.
- Brother Nee's Gospel Room was the sole publishing work because the brothers recognized that different soundings of the trumpet in the Lord's ministry creates problems.

These points are based on a strong desire to avoid causing confusion and division among the saints in the Lord's recovery. They display a clear understanding of the uniqueness of the Lord's recovery and of the Lord's desire to maintain a testimony of the oneness of the Body of Christ.

Such a concern is not evident in the writings of the dissenting brother. Rather than present the explicitly expressed burden presented in Brother Lee's fellowship, this dissenting brother chose to distort Brother Lee's word through selective editing in order to support his own biased viewpoint. Brother Lee concluded his speaking on this topic by proposing the leading brothers "make some adjustment of the eldership" based on their prayer and consideration of his fellowship to be restricted in one publication (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, p. 164). Using one out of context sentence fragment to justify one's own agenda is not the act of a principled person. Anyone who twists the words of the brothers who take the lead in the ministry among us in this way cannot be trusted and should not be followed.

**WAS THE HONG KONG BOOK ROOM
A SEPARATE PUBLISHER? —
WHAT DID WATCHMAN NEE REALLY SAY?**

A brother who opposes the co-workers' fellowship regarding being restricted in one publication work in the Lord's recovery quotes part of a sentence from an historical account by Brother Lee in *Words of Training*. There Brother Lee recounted the arrangements Brother Nee made to continue the publication work in the face of the pending Communist takeover of China. However, if you read the entire passage, it is clear that based on Brother Nee's direction, the three book rooms were not carrying out separate publication works as the dissenting brother implies; rather, Brother Nee explicitly stated just the opposite. In the following paragraph, the portion in italics are the words quoted by the dissenter to give the impression that Brother Nee set up three separate bookrooms, and the words in bold were intentionally omitted by the dissenter:

In 1950, Brother Nee arrived in Hong Kong and wanted me to come from Taiwan to see him. When he fellowshiped about the matter of issuing publications, he took the opportunity to make some arrangements. It was decided that **the Gospel Book Room would remain one**, yet due to the political situations, it had to conduct business separately in *three places: Shanghai, Taipei, and Hong Kong. Brother Nee was responsible for the bookroom in Shanghai. I was responsible for the one in Taipei, and Brother Weigh was responsible for the one in Hong Kong.* However, **Brother Nee wanted me also to take care of the responsibility for the publications of the Hong Kong bookroom.** (*Words of Training for the New Way*, Vol. 1, pp. 34-35) [the portion in italics is the portion quoted by the dissenter]

If you read the entire paragraph, it is more than apparent that the dissenting brother has extracted half of one sentence in order to build an argument that is diametrically opposed to Brother Nee's intention. He then uses his twisting of Brother Nee's word to accuse the co-workers of lying about the historic

practice of being restricted in one publication work in the Lord's recovery! This type of dishonesty in the handling of the words of the ones ministering among us is reprehensible.

The dissenting author does acknowledge, "Of course, one could argue that all three book rooms were 'one.'" This is further deception. The question is: How can he argue that they were not one, since that was Brother Nee's explicitly expressed intention? By quoting Brother Nee's word selectively and then putting "one" in quotations, he attempts to negate Brother Nee's leading in the matter of publication work so that he can repudiate its continued practice in the Lord's recovery.

Elsewhere Brother Lee elaborated further:

Then he made arrangements, saying, "Now the three political regions—the mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan—all differ from one another. So we will have the Gospel Book Room divided into three: one in Shanghai, one in Taiwan, and one in Hong Kong. **They are not three Book Rooms; rather, they are one.** Due to the political situation, the three places will be on their own financially." He was responsible for the one in Shanghai; he entrusted to me the responsibility for the one in Taiwan; and he asked Brother K. H. Weigh to take charge of the one in Hong Kong. He further charged me, saying, "Brother Weigh also needs your help in bearing the responsibility for the articles." Therefore, in the initial period, the Taiwan Gospel Book Room published books mainly in coordination with the Book Room in Hong Kong. **The two published books together, not separately.** (*The High Peak of the Vision and the Reality of the Body of Christ*, pp. 24-25)

In 1973, Brother Lee made it clear that the purpose of all three book rooms was to reprint Brother Nee's books for the needs of the churches:

He also made an arrangement for the publication work. The publications were always under his oversight. When he and I were in Hong Kong, he made the decision that **there should be a bookroom in Taipei and a bookroom in Hong Kong to publish all of his books.** He himself would oversee the bookroom in Shanghai. He charged me to take care of the bookroom in Taipei, and he arranged for Brother K.H. Weigh

to take care of the bookroom in Hong Kong. **He said that all the books could be reprinted and that all three bookrooms would have a common copyright. Thus, we began to reprint all his books for the need in all the places outside of mainland China.** (*The History of the Church and of the Local Churches*, p. 140)

The salient facts are simply these:

1. Brother Nee's fellowship was that all three bookrooms were to be one.
2. All three bookrooms existed to publish the writings of Brother Nee.
3. The establishment of three bookrooms was merely an administrative arrangement to facilitate the publishing and distribution of the unique ministry in the Lord's recovery.

There is no ground in Brother Lee's recounting of Brother Nee's arrangement of the publication work to justify separate publication works propagating different teachings. It is shameful that anyone would try to perpetrate such deception on the brothers and sisters in the Lord's recovery.

ADDING “ONE PUBLICATION” TO THE SEVEN “ONES” IN EPHESIANS 4 — WHAT DID JAMES LEE REALLY SAY?

In an article charging the co-workers in the Lord’s recovery with carrying out a “campaign” for one publication, a brother who opposes the co-workers’ fellowship regarding being restricted in one publication makes the following statement:

In his spoken message, James Lee went so far as to suggest that “one publication” should be added to the seven “ones” in Ephesians 4. To our knowledge this word, heard by many at the conference and through web-cast, has never been retracted. It does not appear in the published version [see *The Ministry Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 2, March 2003, p. 101].

On the one hand, these few sentences charge James Lee with making “one publication” equal in significance with the seven ones in Ephesians 4:4-6—one Body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. On the other hand, they imply that this statement was cut out of the printed message in *The Ministry Magazine*. Both accusations are false.

A thorough review of the audio of this message¹ shows that James Lee made no such statement. In fact, his mention of the seven “ones” in Ephesians 4 and his mention of Brother Lee’s fellowship about being restricted in one publication were separated by well over one hour (or nineteen pages in the printed version of the message in *The Ministry Magazine*).

¹ The message in question was given at the 2002 Thanksgiving Conference in San Diego. The conference was entitled “Living the Life of a God-man for the One New Man.” James Lee’s message was entitled “Thinking the One Thing, Being Like-Souled, and Speaking the Same Thing as the One New Man with One Person and One Mouth.” It is available from Living Stream Ministry as K02 SDC 04. Many churches already have copies in their tape libraries.

Furthermore, both statements were faithfully polished for publication in *The Ministry Magazine*.

Approximately fifteen minutes into the tape, James Lee says:

And Paul in his epistles stressed this again and again: there is one Body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all... [Literal transcription by DCP staff]

In *The Ministry Magazine* this appears as:

Paul stressed this repeatedly in his Epistles. In Ephesians 4 he wrote, "One Body and one Spirit, even as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (vv. 4-6).... (James Lee, "Thinking the One Thing, Being Like-souled, and Speaking the Same Thing as the One New Man with One Person and One Mouth," *The Ministry Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 2, March 2003, p. 82)

Then at approximately an hour and twenty-nine minutes into the tape, he says:

... the principle of speaking can be applied, can be applied to other media such as our writings, publication, music; these are different forms of our speaking. Even in these speakings we have to be exercised not to present different impression, different appearance, different content. In the recovery, whatever we speak, whatever we write, whatever we put out, we must be under this governing control, speaking the same thing. That is why Brother Lee in the Elders' Training book, he says in the recovery we only have one publication, to eliminate any ground for confusion. Because throughout the recovery we have churches all over the six continents, over 3,000 churches over the earth, if we don't have some kind of a controlling element, we all would just speak our own things, put out our own things. [Literal transcription by DCP staff]

This appears in *The Ministry Magazine* as:

The principle of speaking can be applied to other media as well, such as literature and music. These are different forms of speaking. Even in these speakings we must be exercised not to

present different impressions and appearances. In the recovery, whatever we speak, write, or otherwise put out must be under this governing control of “speaking the same thing.” This is why Brother Lee, in Elders’ Training, Book 8, says that in the recovery we have only one publication work. In this way we eliminate any ground for confusion among the three thousand churches on the six continents. If we do not have some kind of a controlling element, we will all speak our own things.... (James Lee, “Thinking the One Thing...”, *The Ministry Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 2, March 2003, p. 101)

Where did the author of this dissenting writing come up with the thought that James Lee suggested adding “one publication” to the seven “ones”? Just before the one hour and eighteen minute mark of the tape, he says:

And, brothers and sisters, when you travel a little bit, visit the churches all over the earth, what a glory, what a wonder it is wherever you go you hear saints speaking the same thing. We were in Africa recently, we got in Angola, they spoke Portuguese, but they spoke the same thing. We were in South Africa, they spoke the same thing; we were in Kenya, they spoke the same thing; we went to Korea, they spoke in Korean, but they still said the same thing! I really feel this is the wonder of all wonders, this is **greater than the seven wonders of the world**. [literal transcription by DCP staff]

In *The Ministry Magazine* this was shortened to say:

...When we visit the churches all over the earth, what a glory and a wonder it is that no matter where we are, we hear the saints speaking the same thing. I have recently been in several countries in Africa and in the Far East. Regardless of where I went, the saints spoke the same thing. This is a wonder of wonders..... (James Lee, “Thinking the One Thing...”, *The Ministry Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 2, March 2003, p. 97)

It appears that James Lee’s word about all of the saints and all of the churches speaking the same thing being greater than the seven wonders of the world has been twisted in the hands of this dissenting one into a call to add “one publication” to the

seven “ones” in Ephesians 4! And while it is true that his comment about the seven wonders of the world was dropped

from the printed message, that editorial decision in no way changed the meaning of what he was saying. Furthermore, from even a casual reading it should be obvious that being restricted in one publication work was not the subject of Brother James’ speaking in this passage. Rather, he was speaking concerning the apostle Paul’s admonition that all of the believers in the churches should speak the same thing, that is, to speak forth God’s New Testament economy.

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.

Rom. 15:6 – That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus 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.

In fact, the subheading under which the speaking appears (and which was the main point concerning which Brother James was speaking) reads, “Our Needing to Consider *One New Man* in Ephesians 2:15 Together with *One Mouth* in Romans 15:6 and *Speak the Same Thing* in 1 Corinthians 1:10.”

The audio and video tapes of the complete, unedited message were available to the author of this dissenting article had he cared to confirm his rendering of James Lee’s words as accurate. His failure to do so before publishing these untruths on the World Wide Web and republishing them in the journal of one of the churches is reckless behavior that reveals the animus behind his criticism of our brother.

**“NOT A MATTER OF ... BIBLICAL OR NON-BIBLICAL”
—WHAT DID MINORU CHEN REALLY SAY?**

One brother who has opposed the co-workers’ fellowship concerning being restricted in one publication has repeatedly assailed a statement made by Brother Minoru Chen during the 2004 winter training, the *Crystallization-study of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*. In his message Minoru said:

The ministry is the sounding of the trumpet, and this sounding of the trumpet is so that we can war a good warfare in the Lord’s recovery. The sounding forth of the ministry is not just in its spoken form but mainly in its written, or printed, form. The printed ministry today is the sounding of the trumpet. According to Brother Lee, whenever we have many different publication works, it means that there are many trumpet sounds. These many trumpet sounds cause the army of God to be confused. It is not a matter of right or wrong, biblical or non-biblical. It is a matter of whether there is one sound or more than one sound. (Ministry Magazine, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 2005, p. 186)

In context it is clear that the “it” that is “not a matter of right or wrong, biblical or non-biblical” is not the one publication work, but the many trumpet sounds of different teachings. Brother Minoru was saying that brothers cannot defend their trumpeting of different teachings merely by claiming their teaching is biblical. Rather, we must evaluate their teaching based on a higher standard—whether it causes confusion among the saints through having more than one sounding of the trumpet in the Lord’s ministry. In other words, merely to have a biblical basis for one’s teaching is not adequate. If that teaching is a different teaching than the general ministry, the New Testament ministry of God’s economy, it will cause confusion among the saints. All of Minoru’s speaking is an echoing of Brother Lee’s ministry on the need for no uncertain sounding of the trumpet in the Lord’s ministry and Brother Lee’s warnings that different soundings of the trumpet through different teachings would ultimately result in confusion and division.

The dissenting brother's censure of Minoru's statement is based on his own distortion of our brother's speaking. For example, he writes:

When Brother Minoru Chen addressed this issue in the LSM 2004 Winter Training he said: "...it is not a matter of right or wrong, biblical or non-biblical. It is a matter of whether there is one sound or more than one sound." (*The Ministry Magazine*, Vol. 9, issue 1, p. 186) I disagree! With all due respect, it should matter whether 'one publication' is biblical or not!

The same thought is repeated in three other articles. Two of these articles have been reproduced (with slight modifications) in a journal published by one of the churches. In every case it is more than clear that the author of the dissenting articles took Brother Minoru's words out of context and ascribed to them a completely different meaning than what was intended. Minoru was not saying that it does not matter whether "one publication" is scriptural or not, as the dissenting brother tries to say. (To be restricted in one publication is itself solidly based on the New Testament teaching of the apostles, as we have emphatically demonstrated in "Is 'One Publication' Scriptural?"). Furthermore, far from lowering the standard of truth in the ministry, as the dissenting author implies, Brother Minoru's word holds those who minister in the Lord's recovery to a much higher standard. He was saying that merely being "scriptural" or "biblical" alone is not adequate, nor is it a defense for trumpeting different teachings.

The purported conflict between Minoru's fellowship and our taking the Bible as our standard is a "straw man" issue with no substance whatsoever. In fact, Minoru's speaking is an accurate application of 1 Timothy 1:3-4 where Paul told Timothy to charge some in Ephesus not to teach things other than God's economy.

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.

The myths and unending genealogies mentioned in those verses had some basis in the Old Testament. You cannot say that they were entirely unbiblical. Nor can you say that the teaching of the law as the Judaizers in Galatia were doing was unscriptural. Nevertheless, they were a different sounding of the trumpet, distracting the believers from God’s New Testament economy according to the teaching of the apostles.

Minoru’s word is also a faithful application of 1 Corinthians 14:8 which tells us that there should be no uncertain sounding of the trumpet, a point that Brother Lee applied to the need for killing dissenting talk—see the section entitled “One Trumpet in the Lord’s Ministry” in the book *Is “One Publication” Scriptural?—Part 2*.

1 Cor. 14:8 – For also if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?

Such an interpretation also matches Paul’s word in Ephesians 4:14:

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 verse 14 Paul does not speak of the wind of heresy, but he speaks of the wind of teaching. Any teaching, even a scriptural one, that distracts believers from Christ and the church is a wind that carries them away from God’s central purpose. First Timothy 1:3 and 4 reveal that some in Paul’s time were teaching differently. This does not mean that they were teaching heresy; it means that they were teaching something different from God’s New Testament economy. Their teaching was not the teaching of the New Testament ministry. In the New Testament there is one ministry. This ministry is the dispensing of the Triune God into the believers for the building up of the churches. We must beware of any teaching or supposed ministry that teaches something different from God’s economy, that is, that teaches something

other than God's dispensation for the building up of the churches. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 378)

We need to become a full-grown man so that "we may be no longer babes 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" (4:14). Notice that here Paul does not speak of every wind of heresy or false doctrine, but of every wind of teaching. Such teaching may include sound, fundamental, scriptural doctrine. However, even this kind of doctrine may be used by the sleight of men in craftiness with a view to a system of error. Any teaching, even a scriptural one, that distracts believers from Christ and the church is a wind that carries them away from God's central purpose. Teachings that distract us from God's economy are instigated by Satan in his subtlety with the sleight of men, in order to frustrate the building up of the Body of Christ. The teachings systematized by Satan cause serious error and thus damage the practical oneness of the Body life. If this matter were not serious, Paul would not use so many strong terms to describe it. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 747)

Minoru's word was also a faithful respeaking of Brother Lee's ministry concerning the danger of different soundings of the trumpet in the ministry in the Lord's recovery, even through scriptural teachings. In the series of urgent elders' trainings he called beginning in 1984, Brother Lee made it abundantly clear that merely to have biblical teachings is not adequate:

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. At Paul's time it could not be considered heretical to teach the law according to the Old Testament. The law had been given by God and unveiled by God. If I had been there teaching Gnosticism, then I would have been a heretic. On the other hand, if I had been there teaching the law of Moses, no one could have said that my teaching was heretical. In fact, the law of Moses was scriptural. Nevertheless, such teaching would have been different from the teaching concerning God's economy as it was presented by Paul. 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....

If we keep this one basic principle and one basic factor concerning God's economy, we will be well protected. Nevertheless, each one of us needs to be on the alert not to watch over others but to take care of ourselves that we would not be used by the enemy to bring in different thoughts or different teachings that may seem to be scriptural. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, pp. 17-18)

Nevertheless, all of us need to realize that we are in the Lord's recovery. The first characteristic of the Lord's recovery is oneness. Once we lose the oneness, we are through. If we lose the oneness, we are no longer the Lord's recovery. Therefore, we need to see that there is a peril of different teachings and different opinions damaging the oneness.... Opinions may be good, and teachings may be scriptural, yet they may be different. Sooner or later, these matters will create a hidden division. The blessing that always comes down from God to His recovery is based upon the oneness (Psa. 133). If we lose the oneness, we will lose the blessing. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, p. 29)

Some would say that they do not like to follow Paul in their preaching. They would rather preach something new and different. Actually, their preaching does not contain anything new; it is only different. There are some who think that it is a shame to preach, to teach, to speak, or to write the same things that others have. They expect to receive a special glory for themselves by speaking and teaching something different to show that they know something others do not know. All of these attitudes are a shame.

Moreover, dear saints, we need to see that all of these things could be under the cloak that they are for the defending of the truth, for the defending of the faith, or for the further recovery of the biblical truth. Nevertheless, we need to realize that the issue of this kind of teaching has always been a division. Every denomination, every division, and every free group is based upon a certain so-called truth other than the New Testament ministry. To be a Presbyterian means to take the presbytery as the ground to build a Presbyterian

denomination. To baptize people by immersion has been taken as a base to form the Baptist denomination. These items are not the basic and central elements of the New Testament ministry. (*Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, p. 71)

NOT ENOUGH TO TEACH SCRIPTURALLY

Please do not have the peace and assurance that as long as you teach things scripturally that it is all right. It is not all right because your teaching creates division. Even your right teaching creates division. We all must realize that, generally speaking, the different denominations do not teach anything wrong. They have all tried and endeavored to teach the right things, the scriptural things. Eventually, however, the Body of Christ has been cut into pieces....

We should be on the alert and watchful. We do not want the right teaching. We want the teaching which teaches God's economy. Now we can understand Paul's charge in 1 Corinthians to speak the same thing (1:10). What same thing should we speak? Should we speak Bible teaching, how to meet, the way to baptize, the way to edify the saints, the way to help people to be spiritual, or the way to render much help to the Christians that they may grow in life? These are right things to teach. Something from the Bible such as evangelism is altogether right. However, if you do these things and teach them apart from God's economy, you are divisive. You are divisive in right things, in scriptural things, not in wrong things, heathen things, or pagan things. To teach the Bible and to preach the gospel are not pagan. They are altogether right and altogether scriptural, but we must be on the alert as to whether or not we are divisive. Whatever you teach should not be measured by whether it is wrong or right. It must be measured by whether it is divisive or not. Only one kind of ministry builds up and never divides—this is the unique ministry of God's economy. We must be reminded that Paul left Timothy in Ephesus with a charge to tell certain ones not to teach differently and that what they teach should be related to God's economy. (*Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision*, pp. 45-46)

The only way that can preserve us in the recovery is the unique ministry. If we say that we are in the recovery, yet we teach something so lightly, even in a concealed way, that is different from God’s economy, we sow the seed that will grow up in division. Therefore, the only way that we can be preserved in the eternal oneness is to teach the same thing in God’s economy. This kind of teaching is called the New Testament ministry, the ministry of the new covenant. The ministry of the new covenant is only to minister the Triune God, processed, to be dispensed into His chosen people as life and life supply to produce members of Christ to form the Body to express the Triune God. This is the New Testament economy. To teach anything, even good things and scriptural things, which is even a little bit apart from God’s New Testament economy will still issue in division and that will be very much used by the subtle one, the evil one. We must, therefore, be on the alert. (*Elders’ Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision*, pp. 48-49)

We are here for the Lord’s recovery. I am not doing my own work, and you are not doing your own work. We all are bearing one testimony; we all have our shoulders under the “staves” of the “ark.” Since we are all bearing the one testimony, we all should speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10). But the speaking in certain places is leading the saints in the direction that is away from the Lord’s recovery. Such speaking may not be wrong or unscriptural. It may be right and scriptural, but eventually it will lead the saints in a wrong direction.

If we go in a straight line, we shall reach a proper goal. But if our direction is off, eventually we shall reach a goal that is not the goal of the Lord’s recovery. Even after a short period of time, trouble may come to the recovery through your way of speaking scriptural things, that is, through your speaking of good messages. Although there is nothing wrong with your speaking, it may lead others in a wrong direction. If so, eventually that will become a problem to the whole recovery. (*Elders’ Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision*, p. 127)

The New Testament refers to the dissenters in the church. In Romans 16:17 Paul warns us to keep a watchful eye over the dissenting ones. They hold dissenting teachings and make

divisions and causes of falling. They speak with flattering, enticing words and pretend to be helpful. If they did not speak with smooth words, no one would listen to them. Paul charged us to be watchful over the dissenting ones because they like to teach differently and contend for contrary doctrines. However, the test we must apply to any dissenting talk is not the standard of good or bad, right or wrong. Instead, we must ask, "Does this build up or tear down? Does it maintain unity and oneness or cause division? Does it help you to go on or does it cause you to fall?" Before you listened to the dissenting talk you were alive, but after listening for an hour you were deadened, thus proving that such dissension spreads death. Do not examine the dissenters according to the knowledge of right or wrong, for if you do this you will be tasting the tree of knowledge of good and evil. You must test all dissenting opinions according to death or life. After you listen to the dissenting talk, are you alive or dead? If you are truly alive, then listen as much as possible. However, if you experience death, you must go to the Lord and ask Him to cleanse you and to rescue you from that death. During the past decades we have seen many dissenting ones. We need to realize that in no church is the situation always right. However, the issue is not a matter of right or wrong; it is a matter of death or life. Never test dissenting talk by the standard of right or wrong. Always measure it by death or life. Anything that enlivens you and gives you life you may receive. Anything that deadens and kills you you must renounce. (*Life-study of Genesis*, p. 210)

The twisting of Brother Minoru Chen's words by this dissenting writer is shameful. Such a disregard for the truth and even of the ethical treatment of others' words, particularly of the speaking of a brother who has been faithfully ministering to the churches for decades, more than disqualifies this dissenter from being one whose words should be heeded. If a person disputes with others by taking their words out of context and twisting them to mean what they did not say, the saints surely should not trust such a one to expound the proper way to follow the Lord in the practice of the ministry or the church life.