

An Open Letter to the Responsible Brothers in the Chicago Metro Area in Response to the Blending Co-Workers “Warning Statement”

Revised Wednesday, 18 October 2006
Chicago, Illinois

On the Lord’s Day, October 8, the “blending co-workers in the Lord’s Recovery” issued a statement, dated October 1, that seeks to excommunicate brother Titus Chu and his co-workers from the fellowship in the Lord’s recovery. It states in part:

*We solemnly exhort all the saints to join with us to mark Brother Titus Chu and those who disseminate his divisive views and his dissenting speaking, and turn away from them.... We urge the saints to keep a watchful eye on these contagiously divisive persons and to cease interaction with them.
 (“A Warning to All the Saints and All the Churches,” p. 4. Links to this and other relevant documents are provided at the end of this letter.)*

For some time I have sought both by writing and through personal fellowship to warn the brothers here that the church in Chicago is losing its standing for the oneness of the Body of Christ and becoming, instead, a sect of the blending co-workers and Living Stream Ministry. So far these warnings have had little effect that I am aware of.

With this act of excommunication, however, another—and very critical—step has been taken down this path. While the blending co-workers’ statement deeply grieves me, I nonetheless receive it as an answer to my prayer in recent months that the Lord would manifest to the saints here the real situation of the church in Chicago and of the recovery as a whole. To all of the responsible brothers in this area I would now say, how can any of you in good conscience still deny that the church here is indeed becoming a sect of their ministry?

Concerning the statement itself I will not say much in this letter. I would just remark that it is the fruit of many years of very divisive efforts by the blending co-workers to remove brother Titus from the ministry; his only real sin, in their sight, being his refusal to come under their authority. With last year’s release of “Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery” these brothers made clear—to all who would admit it—their intention to exclude all but themselves from ministering among the churches. Now they are simply carrying out that intention, and to do so they need to discredit brother Titus, a real servant of the Lord, in the eyes of the saints. This type of thing is not at all new; J.N. Darby stated more than a century and a half ago:

I have remarked that it is the art and skill of some men to turn every conscientious man, every one who cannot or will not become an instrument, into a radical or a schismatic. But it is a sad state of things.... With [those who rule in this way] it is only as in a famous Latin passage... When they make a solitude around them, they call it peace.” (Collected Writings of J.N. Darby, vol. 20, “Narrative of the Facts,” p. 22.)

I strongly commend for your reading the letters that the Great Lakes elders and co-workers sent to the blending co-workers, as well as brother Titus’ final response to the blending co-workers. (Direct links are given below.) The first letter from the Great Lakes brothers was sent in June of 2005 and formally requested a time of fellowship about the difficulties among us; by the time the blending co-workers’ responded, *more than five months had elapsed*. This clearly shows that the blending co-workers had no real desire to resolve the problems; even then they refused any meaningful fellowship (though still somehow claiming that they were “open to such a time.”)

The blending co-workers’ statement admonishes the saints to “cease interaction” with all of us who continue to stand with brother Titus. As the elders of the church in Chicago are signatories to that statement it seems clear to me that I am no longer welcome to participate in the church life here. Of course, the same would apply to all of Titus’ co-workers, a number of whom are closely connected with the churches in this area. Moreover, the church in Chicago can no longer fellowship with the church in Naperville and many of the saints there, since that church continues to stand with brother Titus and sponsors an annual conference with him. These are the necessary consequences of that statement, which we cannot ignore.

We must not attempt to pacify the blending co-workers by going along with their statement if we believe it is wrong—that would be to “dissemble” in just the same manner that Peter did (i.e., to “disguise or conceal behind a false appearance,” *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, third edition). In fact, how much is the situation of the church in Chicago today like that of the church in Antioch. The apostle Paul states:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For before some came from James, he continually ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to shrink back and separate himself, fearing those of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also joined him in this hypocrisy [“dissembled likewise with him,” KJV], so that even Barnabas was carried away in their hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11-13).

In the same way, to accede to the warning of the blending co-workers would be to shrink back from fellowship with those whom they consider as “Gentiles.” This is not to keep the oneness, as some claim, but rather to allow these brothers to turn us into a sect of their ministry. In his footnotes to these verses brother Lee says of Peter’s “shrinking back”:

This proves that at that time Peter was very weak in the pure Christian faith. In Acts 10 he had received an exceedingly clear vision from the heavens concerning fellowship with the Gentiles, and he took the lead to practice it. What weakness and backsliding to shrink from eating with Gentile believers out of fear of those of the circumcision! It is no wonder that he lost the leadership among the apostles.

Barnabas participated in Paul’s first ministry journey to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and to raise up the Gentile churches. Even one who had so much fellowship with the Gentile believers was carried away in Peter’s hypocrisy. What a negative influence Peter exerted on others! Surely he deserved to lose his leadership (Recovery Version of the New Testament, pp. 819-820).

Through the ministry of our brother Lee we have indeed “received an exceedingly clear vision from the heavens.” Brothers, we must stand firm for that vision! Our testimony is absolutely not for the blending brothers or for Living Stream Ministry, and regarding this we must be very clear and definite. Our authority must be the word of God alone, our testimony for Christ alone, and our standing for the Body of Christ alone. To declare this is not to be divisive, even if others in the recovery oppose us for taking such a stand; rather, it is to be faithful to the vision we have received.

Some say that brother Titus should “bear the cross” by accepting the demands of the blending co-workers to stop his ministry; they claim that this would be to follow the example of Watchman Nee. In fact, it would be to make us a sect of the blending co-workers and Living Stream Ministry, since it would establish the principle that only their ministry is acceptable for the use of the churches. No servant of the Lord, including brother Nee, could ever do this, and I’m so thankful for brother Titus’ faithful stand in this regard. Watchman Nee himself stated:

Before the Lord we can yield on certain things, but there are other matters in which we can never compromise....There are two points in which we cannot compromise: 1) Denominations are sin; hence, in this we cannot compromise.... Denominations must be condemned. This is the negative aspect. 2)The church is local. This is the positive aspect, in which we neither can ever compromise (Further Talks on the Church Life, pp. 133-134).

In 1977 the church here went through a turmoil very similar to the one it is in today, i.e., a group of brothers came to Chicago and said that it was their responsibility to act as the coordinators of the one new man; they even claimed, just as the blending co-workers do today, that they were acting in the name of brother Lee (who later strongly rebuked them and made it more than clear that such was not the case). The church in Chicago survived then because some brothers here stood firm for the truth against such nonsense. Brothers, today we need to stand firm against the blending co-workers’ statement; we need to clearly stand as the genuine local churches, rather than as the churches of a particular ministry. Perhaps many of you brothers will go along with their statement, but I will not. As brother Titus said in response to the claim some make that he has left the recovery:

I never left; I just never changed.

I have already warned many of you personally regarding our situation. If you are silent now, you bear the responsibility before the Lord and agree with that situation. It will only become more and more bizarre. How much worse does it need to get? Where then will you be in five years, or ten years? You have to think through the consequences both of your actions and of your inaction. May the Lord be with you.

While the church here seems to have rejected fellowship with me, I want you to know that I still receive you all as my brothers in Christ.

For the sake of the Lord’s testimony, David Canfield

P.S.: I hope to release a much longer statement regarding the current situation of the churches within the next week or so, which will give a fuller explanation of my views. Until then you may find the following links helpful. As mentioned above I especially commend for your reading the letters from the Great Lakes brothers to the blending brothers, the first two in particular, each of which is only about a page long.

Links to Relevant Documents

Note: If you are not able to access a page by clicking on the links below you can copy the link into your browser.

1. The Great Lakes Brothers’ Letters to the Blending Brothers:

These letters were sent in response to the blending co-workers’ letter to brother Titus of June 4, 2005 admonishing him to “stop his publication work in all languages.”

A. First Letter, dated June 12, 2005:

http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Great%20Lakes%20Brothers%27%20Letters/GreatLakesBrothers2005_June_12_Letter.pdf

B. Second Letter, dated, September 24, 2005:

http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Great%20Lakes%20Brothers%27%20Letters/GreatLakesBrothers2005_Sept_24_Letter.pdf

C. Third letter, dated, February 28, 2006:

<http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Great%20Lakes%20Brothers%27%20Letters/GreatLakesBrothersREPLYtoBlendedCoworkersFebruary2006.pdf>

D. Fourth Letter, dated, September 10, 2006:

<http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Great%20Lakes%20Brothers%27%20Letters/GreatLakesBrosResponseToBensonPhillipsSept2006FinalVersion.pdf>

2. Brother Titus Chu’s final response to the blending co-workers, July 22, 2006:

<http://www.clevelandonline.org/English/onepublication/July222006response.htm>

3. “Brief Lessons from Church History,” by the author;

<http://www.concernedbrothers.com/History/Brief%20Lessons%20from%20Church%20History%20-%202006-08-021.pdf>

4. The blending co-workers’ “Warning Statement”:

“A Warning to All the Saints and All the Churches in the Lord’s Recovery Concerning Titus Chu and Those Who Promote and Disseminate His Divisive Teachings, Publications, Practices, and Views.”

<http://www.afaithfulword.org/statements/Warning%20Statement%202006-10-01.pdf>

5. A more complete listing of both sides of the correspondence is provided at:

<http://www.clevelandonline.org/English/onepublication/>