

QUARANTINE—APPLYING LSM'S 'ONE PUBLICATION' POLICY*

From One Publication to Quarantine in 18 Months

For me the story of the last 18 months begins with 'One Publication' and ends with Quarantine. In May, 2005 I received a draft copy of LSM's "Publication Work..."¹ with a request for feedback. Having a number of concerns, I responded to the "blended co-workers." This initiated an E-mail exchange in which I expressed my reservations. The final 'One Publication' document published June 2005, declared,² "*All the saints and all the churches everywhere should...be restricted to one publication in the Lord's recovery.*" Simultaneously Brother Titus Chu was directed to³ "*stop [his] publications in all languages.*" Brother Dong in Brazil received a similar directive. The "blended co-workers'" letter to Titus stated³ "*multiple publications among us are causing many problems.*" Elsewhere they referred to,⁴ "*the very crucial and central issue at hand—the problems raised worldwide from the propagation of Titus's publications.*" Hence, publications are viewed as "*the very crucial and central issue,*" by the "blended co-workers."

Meanwhile my concerns remained unaddressed. Therefore, acting on Brother Lee's charge that⁵ "*every local church must be a police station and every saint must be a policeman,*" I printed and distributed my, Publication Work...Analysis & Response.⁶ Later, I participated in the Great Lakes brothers' correspondence with the "blended co-workers," requesting an Acts 15-type meeting for fellowship. I also wrote articles addressing the underlying teachings which buttress LSM's 'One Publication' policy. My expectation was that meaningful dialogue would occur. On the contrary I met with denunciation. My Analysis & Response was called⁷ "*Nigel's dissenting document.*" I was told "*these writings are works of darkness that spread spiritual death.*" To keep the story short, since that time matters have escalated, culminating in the "blended co-workers'" Warning Letter⁸ quarantining Titus Chu and certain of his co-workers (Oct. 1, 2006). In retrospect, it seems this Quarantine was destined to follow 'One Publication,' as surely as the letter 'Q' (for quarantine) follows 'OP' (for One Publication.)

The Quarantine Letter accuses Titus and his co-workers of many things. It is useful to focus on the link between LSM's 'One Publication' policy and their quarantine of Titus & co.

"Different Teachings and Dissenting Views" on 'One Publication'

A document⁹ by LSM's Defense and Confirmation Project (DCP) provides the "evidence" upon which verdict of quarantine is based. It is significant that DCP's primary example of alleged "different teachings and dissenting views," relates to One Publication. The first "exhibit" presented by DCP is from my writing, addressing that topic. I wrote:¹⁰

*"In my view, 'one publication' is **not** a scriptural truth (implied or otherwise). Neither is it a "direct application" nor a "healthy extension" of "fundamental scriptural principles." It is the logical implication of the "blended co-workers'" teachings, which contain extra-biblical elements, including:*

1. *There is **a unique "Minister of the Age,"** most recently Brother Witness Lee.*
2. *The "blended co-workers" are **the unique continuation** of Brother Lee's "Ministry of the Age."*
3. *There is **a unique "Wise Master-builder** [who is the acting God]" supervising God's building work on the entire globe.*
4. *The "Master-builder" (Brother Lee or his continuation) oversees **one global company of workers.***

*'One publication' rests on these 4 "pillars," currently espoused by the "blended co-workers," Remove any "pillar," it falls. If these 4 principles, are scriptural, then LSM's 'one publication'-practice follows. If any of these principles are unscriptural, LSM's 'one publication' becomes a **non sequitur.**" [Nigel Tomes, "LSM's Eisegesis..."]*

Notice the central issue is One Publication. I said, "In my view, 'one publication' is **not** a scriptural truth (implied or otherwise)." The LSM-brothers argued,¹¹ on the contrary, that it is a "*direct application*" and "*healthy extension*" of "*fundamental scriptural principles.*" Because of our stand on these points, Titus and I are accused of being "dissenters," who "teach differently."

“Teaching Differently”—Different From What?

The allegation that Titus & co. are divisive is based upon their “teaching differently” measured relative to the current teaching of the “blended co-workers” (e.g. on ‘one publication,’ ‘one Minister of the Age,’ one ‘wise Master Builder who is the acting God,’ one global band of workers, the recovery equals the Body etc.) That is an erroneous standard of evaluation. Employing the wrong reference point, the “blending co-workers” reach an invalid verdict, an erroneous judgment.

Watchman Nee’s famous axiom was “The Bible is our only standard.” When evaluated against the standard of Scripture, Titus & co. are **NOT** teaching differently from the Apostles’ teaching concerning God’s economy. This latter criterion is the proper metric for evaluating who is “teaching differently.” Nor are Titus & co. teaching differently from a balanced reception of the ministries of both Brother Nee and Brother Lee.

“Opposing the Blending Co-workers’ Adherence to...One Publication”

LSM’s “Warning Letter” accuses Titus Chu and his co-workers of “*opposing the blending co-workers’ adherence to Brother Nee’s practice and Brother Lee’s practice and teaching of being restricted in one publication.*” (Point 2f, p. 2)

This is a false accusation. We have never opposed the blended co-workers’ adherence to ‘one publication.’ If the “blended co-workers” feel before the Lord to be restricted in this way, we honor and respect their personal stand. What we oppose is the imposition of this restriction upon other workers (including ourselves) who do not share this view and never endorsed this policy.

‘One Publication’—Merely Reaffirming, Just Declaring?

The initial rationale offered for ‘One Publication’ was that the “blended co-workers” themselves wished to adhere to One Publication. Hence Bob Danker wrote to me:¹² “*The proposed statement ...is a reaffirmation of the desire and intention of the coworkers in the Lord’s recovery to be restricted in one publication work... we, the blending coworkers, would like to affirm to the saints our intention to carry out this aspect of the recovery...*”

LSM’s Kerry Robichaux reassured me,¹³ “*I am certain that among the co-workers...there is no thought that their statement is anything more than a declaration that we desire to be restricted in one publication in the ministry....It seems that the act of putting down in writing their desire to be restricted in one publication in the ministry (following the admonition of our Brother Lee) is easily mistaken...*”

Taken at face value, these words seem innocuous. The LSM brothers portray issuing the statement, Publication Work in the Lord’s Recovery as being “*nothing more than a declaration*” by a group of co-workers that they desire personally to be restricted to one publication. These statements correlate with Brother Ron Kangas’ words,¹⁴ “*The statement is mainly our declaration that we agree with and are one with...Brother Lee, with respect to the one publication work. We are not saying anything new or different. ...To us it is normal as Brother Lee’s co-workers, to speak on his behalf and to echo his word.*”

These justifications for ‘One Publication’ declare these workers are simply “declaring”, “reaffirming”, “echoing”, “agreeing with” and “putting down in writing their desire to be restricted to” one publication. There is “*no thought that their statement is anything more than*” this (to quote Kerry Robichaux). This concept corresponds to the Quarantine Letter’s reference to “*the blending co-workers’ adherence to...being restricted in one publication.*” However, if this is the case, one would expect that other workers would be free to affirm or not affirm, declare or not declare their willingness to be ‘restricted.’ Moreover, if (as stated) the statement was “*nothing more than this,*” other workers should be free to not “affirm” or not “declare” without retribution or stigmatism. Now, 18-months later, the “blending co-workers” falsely accuse us of “**opposing the blending co-workers’ adherence to...one publication.**” We do not oppose **their** personal adherence to ‘one publication.’ That is exactly what they claimed to be doing when justifying this

policy. However, now the “blended co-workers” “tune has changed.” Our refusal to accept their yoke of ‘one publication’ is now interpreted as “opposing.”

LSM’s Systematic Misrepresentation

Concerning ‘One Publication,’ the “blended co-workers” have conducted a systematic campaign of misrepresentation. Contrary to the rationale offered above, the LSM document, “Publication Work...” is **not** merely a “declaration,” a “reaffirmation” or an “echoing” by the “blended co-workers” (as they declared it to be). Even the document itself declared,² *“All the saints and all the churches everywhere should...be restricted to one publication.”* That is more than a self-imposed restriction on the “blended co-workers.” Since releasing their ‘one publication’ policy, the LSM-brothers have systematically sought to impose this restriction on other workers—Brothers Titus Chu, Brother Yu-Lan Dong, Frank Lin, Nigel Tomes, etc.

Even before the LSM-brothers’ (Bob Danker & Kerry Robichaux) offered their rationale for ‘one publication,’ the 21 “blended co-workers” were attempting to enforce their “one publication” policy beyond their own circle. They wrote Brother Titus Chu expressing the opinion,³ *“multiple publications among us are causing many problems.”* Titus was told, *“the real problem being expressed is with your publications as well as Brother Dong’s.”* Hence, the “blended co-workers” concluded, *“we appeal to you to stop your publications in all languages.”* This was merely the first in an escalating series of measures to terminate Brother Titus’ publications. This process has now culminated in a call for quarantine. Yet that is not what the “blended co-workers” claimed when this matter was proposed (see the quotes above.) Isn’t this blatant misrepresentation? Isn’t this a case of “bait and switch”—claim to be doing one thing, while actually doing something else. For the 63 “blended co-workers” to now allege that Titus & co. are *“opposing the blending co-workers’ adherence to...one publication,”* **is another blatant falsehood.** They are not. If the “blended co-workers”—either the “21” or the “63”—wish to apply this restriction **to themselves** in their own publication work, we say “Amen.” However, we reject the “blended co-workers” attempt to unilaterally impose of this “yoke” **on others**, who never endorsed such a policy.

A False Claim—One Publication Not Being Insisted On

While calling for the quarantine of Titus Chu and his co-workers, the DCP authors have the audacity to claim¹⁵ *“The words “insist,” “mandate,” “impose” and “policy” are all foreign to Publication Work in the Lord’s recovery both in tone and in content. In fact...[it] concludes by stating explicitly that one publication ‘should not be insisted on’ as an item of the faith and indicating that the saints and churches that choose not to...be restricted in one publication should still be received as genuine brothers and genuine churches.”* However, we ask: If ‘one publication’ is not being insisted upon, why quarantine of Titus & co.? If it is neither “mandated” nor “imposed,” why are these workers being disciplined? If ‘one publication’ is purely voluntary, then non-compliance should bring no retribution. In that case, why quarantine Titus?

Perhaps, the “blended co-workers” will respond, “this action is related to the ministry.” However, this means that ‘one publication’ **is being insisted upon** as an item of **the ministry**. In that case the “blended co-workers” are “talking from both sides of their mouth.” From one side, they declare *“one publication ‘should not be insisted on’ as an item of **the faith**.”* From the other side of their mouth, they affirm, *“one publication ‘should be insisted on’ as an item of the **ministry**.”* Why then is the first statement explicitly made in LSM’s “Publication Work...”, while the second is concealed? Why the deception? Why not honestly state both sides? Moreover, the saints are instructed to uphold the faith and be ‘one with the ministry’—to apply both these directives!

I’m amazed that the DCP brothers have the audacity to repeat these claims—*“one publication should not be insisted on*—in a document supporting quarantine! Isn’t this a clear case of hypocritical double-talk? While justifying the quarantine of Brother Titus (over the issue of publications,) the DCP authors reiterate that *“that one publication ‘should not be insisted on’ as an item of the faith”* and should not affect our being *“received as genuine brothers.”!* May we ask: How do the DCP brothers expect quarantine to work? Doesn’t “marking,” “refusing,” “rejecting,” and “quarantining” a brother (called for in LSM’s “Warning Letter”) affect our *“receiving [them] as genuine brothers”!* Apparently the “blended co-workers” and the DCP authors don’t see the obvious

contradiction here! On the one hand, they repeatedly affirm "one publication 'should not be insisted on' as an item of the faith" and should not affect our being "received as genuine brothers." Yet, on the other hand, they call for Titus & co. to be quarantined!

"Falsely Attributing...Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery to LSM"

The DCP authors charge Titus & co. with "Attempting to Discredit Living Stream Ministry." They elaborate, saying: "The dissenters' articles, including those written by Nigel Tomes, falsely attribute to LSM many things related to the blended co-workers, DCP, and the present litigation. These include...""Falsely Attributing...Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery to LSM" (DCP p. 7)

Evidently, the DCP authors object to the document, Publication Work... being attributed to LSM. They claim such an attribution is "false." Apparently, they feel it should be ascribed exclusively to the "blended co-workers," as a separate and distinct entity. This charge is easily answered. First there is considerable overlap between LSM and the "blended co-workers." LSM is not a separate and distinct entity separate from the "blended co-workers." Who are the president, directors and manager of LSM? Aren't they the 'inner circle' of the "blended co-workers"? Second, apparently, the DCP authors have forgotten that "Draft Proposal #8" of this document, Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery was distributed to the co-workers (dated, April 7, 2005). Significantly, that "Draft Proposal" was endorsed ("signed") by three parties:

- "[1] The co-workers in the Lord's recovery,**
- [2] Living Stream Ministry,**
- [3] Taiwan Gospel Book Room."** ("Draft Proposal #8")

Hence, it is not I who first ascribed the 'one publication' document, Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery to LSM. The authors of that document, **"the co-workers in the Lord's recovery," themselves ascribe the document**, in its penultimate draft (April 7, 2005) **to both LSM and the Taiwan Gospel Book Room!** The final version (June 30, 2005) of Publication Work... is identical to "Draft Proposal #8" in 95% of its content. Why do the DCP authors accuse us of "**Falsely Attributing...Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery** to LSM." What is "false" about this attribution? Isn't my "attribution" of "Publication Work..." to LSM both fair and accurate? Isn't this a "trumped up charge," devoid of substance? Aren't the DCP authors desperately "grasping at straws"?

The quarantine of Titus is the next logical step in the "blended co-workers'" application of their 'One Publication' policy. 'One publication' is neither a direct or indirect teaching of Scripture. How then can quarantining a worker for rejecting 'one publication' be considered Scriptural? 'One Publication' is based upon the "blended co-workers'" teachings concerning: (1) One unique 'Minister of the Age,' recently Bro. Witness Lee, (2) One unique 'master builder who is the acting God' supervising God's building work, (3) One unique 'continuation' of the Minister of the Age-Master Builder i.e. the "blended co-workers," (4) One global company of workers. These are non-essential, extra-biblical teachings which "go beyond what's written" in Scripture (1 Cor. 4:6). Regardless of the "spin" given to these measures, violating non-scriptural teachings cannot justify excommunication or quarantine. The quarantine of Titus Chu, or any other brother, on this basis is invalid and unjustified.

Nigel Tomes

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NOTES:

* This article is based, in part, on my personal submission to the review panel established by the Church in Toronto to consider LSM's "Warning Letter" of quarantine and accompanying materials. The review panel's conclusions, entitled, Determination & Recommendation of the Review Committee of the Church of the Torontonians (Nov. 5, 2006) have been posted on the "ChurchInToronto.net" website. The views expressed

here are my personal views. They do not necessarily express the views of any other elders, workers or any local church with whom I am associated.

1. "Draft Proposal #8" of this document, Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery (dated, April 7, 2005). was distributed to the co-workers on fellowship@coworkers.net.
2. Quote from the final, published version of Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery (dated, June 30, 2005) Quote from p. 8.
3. Letter from 21 "Blended co-workers" to Titus Chu, dated June 4, 2005, p. 7
4. 21 Blended co-workers' Letter the Great Lakes brothers, dated December 6, 2005
5. Witness Lee, Truth Messages, 1979, p. 10
6. Nigel Tomes, Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery—Analysis & Response (August, 2005) posted on concernedbrothers.com
7. Quotes from a letter from the "S. California Co-workers to all co-workers" dated, September 27, 2005
8. The title in full is: "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." (October, 1, 2006) Signed "on behalf of all the blending co-workers in the Lord's recovery" by 63 brothers representing various continents and countries. Posted on the LSM-approved website, "AFaithfulWord.org." Hereafter, we refer to this document as the "Warning Letter" or "Quarantine Letter."
9. The title is: "Different Teachings and Dissenting Views of Titus Chu and Certain of His Co-workers" by "Defense & Confirmation Project" (October 8, 2006). Posted on, "AFaithfulWord.org," an LSM-approved website. Hereafter, we refer to this as DCP's "Different teachings." A "Draft" version of DCP's document was inadvertently made available through the website, "lastadam.com." The "Draft" version of DCP's document entitled, "The Different Teachings and False Accusations of the Dissenters," is significantly different from the "final" version on several points. Some of these differences are pointed out below.
10. Nigel Tomes, LSM's EISEGESIS – How NOT To Interpret the Bible! posted on concernedbrothers.com
11. See the DCP article Is "One Publication" Scriptural?" on "AFaithfulWord.org"
12. Bob Danker, E-mail to me dated June 25 2005, emphasis added, posted on AFaithfulWord.org
13. Kerry Robichaux's E-mail to me, dated 21 June 2005, emphasis added, posted on AFaithfulWord.org
14. The Ministry magazine, Vol.9, No. 7, July/Aug. 2005, p. 281, emphasis added
15. DCP, "Different Teachings..." p. 6