

Toronto Elders' Response to a Letter from Brothers David Wang & Ron MacVicar

A letter (dated 25 Feb. 2007) authored by Bros. David Wang and Ron MacVicar has been published and circulated among Toronto saints. It was also posted on the "lastadam.com" website (March 1, 2007.) The letter manifests a fact that has been increasingly evident—there is a split in Toronto's leadership. This divergence is not a matter of personality or mere outward practices. A fundamental difference in views exists regarding core Biblical teachings and practices. These divergent views about the Church will determine whether we continue as a genuine local church or deviate to become a "worldwide Church" organization.

The two elders, David Wang and Ron MacVicar have indicated clearly that they are fully aligned with LSM's 'blended co-workers.' They endorse the 'blended co-workers'" leadership, teachings and practices which emphasize one "worldwide Church." They have endorsed LSM's quarantine of Titus Chu and Nigel Tomes. In contrast the seven remaining Toronto elders remain steadfastly committed to the vision of the local church (as taught by W. Nee & W. Lee) with "*administration local each answering to the Lord.*" (#824)

Divergent viewpoints within the Church have created difficulties in the functioning of the eldership and directorate. They have also impacted our church-life here in Toronto. These difficulties are reflected in the details of the brothers' letter. However, the details should not distract attention from the crucial issues. Evidently the two brothers (or their representatives) expect to be nominated as directors of the Church Corporation at the business meeting. If so, two alternative slates of directors will be offered, presenting a choice between alternative views. The up-coming business meeting gives church-members the opportunity to make decisive choices affecting the future course of our Church.

The Toronto saints should also know that Bros. David Wang and Ron MacVicar are members of a group seeking an injunction¹ which (if granted) would have prevented the Church corporation from accepting new members at this weekend's business meeting. The courts however threw out that motion. Moreover Bro. David Wang's sworn affidavit offers insights into his view and its practical implications for the Church.

Since bros. David Wang and Ron MacVicar have presented their views, we wish to respond, pointing out the long-term implications if the Church in Toronto takes their way. Moreover, the two brothers make serious accusations of wrong-doing against specific elders. These allegations are either erroneous or gross misrepresentations. We point these errors out and call on the two brothers to apologize and set the record straight.

Brother David Wang's Statements about the Church

The two brothers' letter says, "*Our desire is to continue steadfastly in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles and in the healthy teaching that continues to be ministered through faithful brothers throughout His recovery.*" But what does this statement mean practically, when the veil of spiritual terminology is stripped away? David Wang's submission to the court gives some insights.

In his sworn affidavit, Bro. David says "[we believe the] *Church is one body which exists throughout the world but administers and gathers locally on the basis of geography...*" [Wang, pt. 3, p. 6] Notice this statement omits all mention of the local

church. Direct reference is made only to the universal Church. The local church is not explicitly mentioned. Yet, in the Lord's recovery, our foundational teaching affirms two aspects of the Church—universal and local.

The omission of any direct reference to the local church might be an oversight. However, things are more serious. Bro. David Wang is also on record saying, "*Currently the Church has three meeting halls... [Hall 1, Hall 2 & Hall 3] We give these locations numbers to de-emphasize their importance and individuality because our understanding is that there is only one worldwide Christian church of believers.*" [Wang, pt. 6, p.7] Frankly, we have never heard this teaching before! Is this really our understanding? Is this truly our teaching? Do we really number the Toronto halls because "*there is only one worldwide Christian church*"? Again, the local aspect of the church is conspicuously absent when it is clearly relevant. Isn't our vision of the local church crucial here? Isn't that why we refer to our meeting halls numerically? We believe in the oneness of the local Church—one Church in Toronto. For this reason, we don't refer to three separate local churches meeting on Sheppard, Cecil and Gretna. Moreover the church is not the building, but the believers. However, in Bro. David's speaking it seems all the local churches are subsumed within "one worldwide Church"!

The main point is that Bro. David's sworn testimony de-emphasizes the local church and focuses exclusively on the universal ("worldwide") Church. We also believe in the universal Church, but the Church is not administered universally as one "worldwide" Church. That concept is Roman Catholic. Our core practice is the church's local administration. We say this not to find fault. Rather we believe Bro. David's omission of the Church's local aspect is symptomatic of the "blended brothers'" teachings on this topic. Their unspoken view is of one "worldwide Church" (in the guise of 'the Body') administered globally by the "blended co-workers." That implicit view, shared by Bros. David and Ron, has major implications for the church here.

The 'Blended Co-workers' Exclusive Teachings

The 'blended co-workers' teachings emphasize one 'worldwide church' ("the Body") receiving one ministry (via the '7 feasts'), under one leadership (the 'blended brothers') with one publication (LSM) and one global group of workers (excluding quarantined brothers, Titus Chu, Frank Lin, Nigel Tomes, etc.) These teachings, endorsed by Bros. David and Ron, have serious consequences for the Church in Toronto.

The "blended co-workers'" teachings are exclusive in that they do not countenance any role for others. Since their ministry is the "Ministry of the Age," no other ministry is accepted. Therefore nothing else should be taught or read. LSM's 'one publication' policy follows from this. Moreover they are the "wise master-builders" overseeing God's one work on the entire earth. Therefore, other works should be stopped, other workers quarantined. Since theirs is the unique "flow" and "fellowship" supplying the local churches, all the churches should be open and subject to them, to the exclusion of others. On this basis the quarantine of Titus, Nigel and others is fully justified! Fundamentally, this view does not admit the possibility that other workers, ministers or teachers can be divinely sanctioned. We regard this view as unscriptural.

LSM's Campaign to Force its Views on Toronto

According to our understanding, Bros. David and Ron endorse the "blended co-workers'" view. Hence, if these two brothers were to determine the Church's direction, we

realistically expect them to fully align our Church with LSM's "blended co-workers" teaching and practice. The two brothers object to the statement that "*they are working to control the Church for LSM, the blending brothers...*" Yet, the result of leadership by Ron and David would be observationally equivalent to "control of the Church [by] LSM, the blending brothers..." Is this what Toronto Church-members want?

When local churches fail to comply with the "LSM view," some feel extreme measures—interference, disruption and even litigation--are justified to force compliance. Nearby churches in Mansfield and Columbus have recently experienced these things. Lately, the Church in Toronto has also "found itself on the wrong side" of LSM. The Church hasn't enforced 'one publication.'" Worse yet, they haven't quarantined Titus Chu or Nigel Tomes! What was LSM's response? First, a succession of "blended brothers" visited the GTA to give "trainings." Second, an Internet offensive was launched against the Church on AFaithfulWord.org.

Concerning the "blended co-workers" trainings in the GTA, the two brothers ask; why "[we] cannot celebrate the brothers' visits with us instead of seeing some ulterior motive"? We answer, if there was no ulterior motive, why was there no prior fellowship with Toronto's eldership? Why, when this program was being planned, arranged and/or announced at LSM's Washington DC conference, were Toronto's elders not consulted? Why, when the various "blended brothers" were in the GTA, did they not initiate fellowship with the elders. Surely these facts justify the elders' disquiet.

Is LSM's "Vancouver Manoeuvre" being Replicated?

The two brothers ask why recent GTA "trainings" are viewed as a "sinister plot." Apparently they are more naïve than the "blended brothers." They see the striking parallel between current events here and LSM's "Vancouver Manoeuvre" in the early 1990's. Apparently the two brothers, Ron and David, do not. In Vancouver's case a concerted campaign by "outsiders" ousted Vancouver's elders from the Board and gained control of the Church. This is referred to on AFW.org:

"There are many parallels," the LSM-brothers⁵ acknowledge² "between events that took place in the church in Vancouver in the early 1990's and events currently playing out in the church in Toronto."

These are not our words. They are the words of the bros. Dan Towle *et. al.* at the LSM-affiliate DCP. Given their admission--"*There are many parallels...between Vancouver and...Toronto*"--isn't it prudent of the Toronto elders to secure the Church against a possible "hostile takeover"? The measures embodied in the new Bylaws are designed to do exactly that—defend the Church Corporation against a "hostile takeover" by LSM or any other entity, contrary to Church-members' will. On the other hand, a minority of people sympathetic to LSM view such defensive measures as detrimental. They even characterize these actions as an elders-directors' takeover or seizure of control, rather than a prudent defense. Let us clearly state—we view the new Bylaws as prudent measures to safeguard the interests of the Church.

Who's Trying to Take Over the Church?

The two brothers challenge the 7 elders saying "*Is this not a takeover of the Church by certain individuals for their own purposes?*" The context relates to recent changes³ in the Board of Directors. Our unequivocal answer is "No!" The directors are responsible to manage the corporation in the best interests of Church-members. When they perceive actions by officers which may be detrimental to those interests, the directors should take

action. This has been done. We ask saints to consider—what is the real “takeover threat”—from LSM’s “blended co-workers” OR from Brothers Steve Pritchard and Jonathan P’ng who have served the Church faithfully these many years?

Unfortunately it is increasingly evident that (where a divergence of interests exists) the sympathies of bros. Ron and David lie with LSM, rather than with the Church. The question has even arisen--Have these two elders/director have been acting in concert with LSM’s “blended co-workers”? Was there collusion?

Brother David Wang’s submission to the Ontario Court, now on the public record, presents some relevant information. A number of E-mails reproduced there suggest that David Wang conveyed information related to the Toronto Board to persons connected to LSM (Benson Phillips, Kerry Robichaux, Andrew Yu) and DCP (Dan Towle, Dan Sady, James Kuan) [Wang, pp. 157, 212, Exhibits P & U] So, is director David Wang acting in the best interests of the corporation? Or is he acting as the Toronto-agent of LSM-DCP?

We present this as relevant information (to be elaborated upon later) to assist members in deciding whether to commit the future management of the Church to Bros. David Wang and Ron MacVicar. This weekend members will be asked to decide who should serve them as directors of the Church. Who can best protect the interests of Church from any outside interference? The members can also decide to give the Board additional powers to protect the Church Corporation in the form of new Bylaws.

Who Wants to Remove Saints from the Church?

In their letter, Brothers David and Ron ask, “*Who wishes to remove saints from the Church?*” They are responding to the prediction that electing directors who are “one with the blended co-workers” will “mean the Church in Toronto will close its doors to Titus and his co-workers” and that “the present co-workers--Nigel Tomes, Del Martin, Ian Brinksman, Richard Yeh etc.--and their families will be kicked out.” The two brothers assure us that “*this is not what we intend or want.*” David and Ron declare: “*Let us also make it clear to the saints in the Church that it is not our desire or intention to “kick out” any of the current co-workers.*”

Can Bros. David and Ron Deliver on their Good Intentions?

We do not question the heart of either brother. We appreciate their “desire and intention.” However, we question their ability to deliver according to their good intentions. Let’s be realistic. LSM’s “blended co-workers” have quarantined Brother Titus Chu. They are campaigning to enforce this quarantine in churches around the globe. Bros. David and Ron have publicly proclaimed they agree with this action. In Toronto they are the recognized leaders of the LSM ‘special interest group.’ What will they do to withstand efforts to exclude Titus Chu from Toronto? Nothing!

Now the quarantine of Nigel Tomes has been officially confirmed by the LSM⁵ brothers. They recently declared,⁴ “*The saints should all understand that Nigel Tomes himself was specifically mentioned in...Whistler as one of the divisive co-workers of Titus Chu from whom...we should turn away.*”

Moreover, LSM-DCP has berated Toronto’s elders saying⁴ “*It is a shame that the elders controlling the church in Toronto have not only failed to deal with Nigel Tomes as a divisive brother, but they have given him a platform to carry on his divisive activities with*

the approval of and even representing the leadership." Bro. David Wang declared to Nigel before Toronto's elders "Yes, I consider you quarantined!" (or words to that effect.) No doubt Ron MacVicar agrees with LSM's quarantine of Brother Nigel. Now these two brothers declare, "*it is not our desire or intention to 'kick out' any of the current co-workers (Nigel Tomes....) or their families.*" At best this is wishful thinking. These brothers cannot deliver! Our response is: "You say it's not your 'desire and intention,' that these brothers and their families be 'kicked out.' But you won't lift a finger to stop it! Frankly, we would 'trust a fox to guard the chicken coup,' before we believe you brothers' ability to keep this empty declaration!"

Toronto Elders' Response to Specific Allegations

- "*There was no fellowship about taking over meeting halls*"

Is the resemblance between current events in Toronto and those in Vancouver (which LSM-DCP admits--"*There are many parallels...between Vancouver and...Toronto*") purely coincidental? Why did Samuel Liu introduce himself to an elder as "***the stealer of meeting halls***"? Is it coincidental that Samuel Liu (who orchestrated the "Vancouver Manoeuvre") has been active in the GTA?

- '*Blended co-workers' "did not come more often [because] they were not invited*'

This misrepresents the facts. Over the last decade, virtually every year, specific 'blended co-workers' were invited to Toronto, especially Andrew Yu. He was definitely invited in 2004, 2005 and several subsequent years. The fact is Brother Andrew, and other invited brothers, declined the invitation. The record shows--Blended co-workers were invited. They declined repeated invitations. That's why the recent flurry of visits is so striking, compared to their past indifference and neglect of Toronto.

- "*We would reject such control*" by LSM and the 'blending co-workers'"

Bros. David and Ron are "one with the ministry" of LSM/blending co-workers, endorsing its fellowship, leading and directives (e.g. 'one publication,' quarantine.) Therefore the results of their leadership would be observationally equivalent to "*control by LSM.*" Which LSM/blended co-workers' directive have Bros. Ron and David ever "rejected"? 'One publication'?—No! The quarantine of Titus?—No! The quarantine of Nigel?—No! Their "track record" contradicts this empty promise.

- Alleged "*Controlling Actions*"—use of "*Surveillance Cameras*"

That was not a "surveillance camera." (That's a 'loaded term'.) It is a simple video camera at the back of the meeting room. Video cameras are used on occasions to record the ministry of visiting brothers. Recent examples at Toronto, Hall#1 are messages by Paul Neider, Norm Monahan and Keith Miller. The video camera's recent introduction was for that purpose. It was fortuitous that, during the first video-recorded session, a disruption occurred in which the elders were harangued and accused for two hours. Introducing the camera has helped quell such disruptive behavior since that time.

- *Rick Persad told he needed permission to visit his relative*

This allegation concerning Brother Bob Duncan was made by Rick Persad and repeated by David and Ron. Yes, Bob Duncan did say Rick should get the elders' approval. Whether that requirement is appropriate depends on the specific case. The two brothers assume it's inappropriate in all cases. We disagree. Moreover we ask: How should this matter dealt with? According to the Bible if a brother (Rick Persad in this case) is offended he should go to the brother (Matt. 18). The same applies to Bros. Ron and David, they should

have contacted Bob. However, in this case Brother Bob's (supposed) "mistake" has been broadcast from the roof-tops! It seems the brothers' want to extract their "pound of flesh" from this incident. We repeat David & Ron's word here: "Do such actions testify of the "love for the brothers"?"

- *"Claiming themselves to be more powerful elders"*

Who ever claimed they were "more powerful elders"? This accusation is also based on Bob Duncan's alleged use of "functional eldership" in conversation with Rick Persad. But, did Bob Duncan ever use the phrase "more powerful elders"? If not, isn't this exaggeration? Aren't you making a 'mountain out of a mole-hill'? Again, have Ron and David brought this matter directly to Bob? No!

- *"Threatening Discipline"*

Steve Pritchard's communication with Sister Ria Spee made it clear in writing that no threat was intended or implied. This accusation is a misrepresentation.

- *"Manipulating Saints against attending the FTTA"*

This is a fabricated accusation. Bros. Ron and David allege *"Steve Pritchard and Jonathan P'ng - spent over three hours attempting to manipulate the mind of a young sister who desired to attend the full-time training."* This accusation is entirely baseless. Four participants-witnesses were present. None agrees with this account. Ron and David believed a second-hand report. Again why didn't Ron and David check with those present? Why did they knowingly give a false report? Aren't their false accusations intended to *"manipulate the minds"* of the saints, prejudicing them against Steve and Jonathan?

- *"Rejection of the Video trainings," practicing "censorship"*

The Toronto elders already communicated the reasons for their decision, and the events surrounding this decision. Given the current climate, the elders wrote to LSM in Anaheim requesting permission to preview to message tapes so they could make an informed decision regarding the "Video training." That reasonable request was rejected by LSM without explanation. Therefore it was decided not to use the Church meeting halls for this purpose. Individual saints and families took the video training, which is their prerogative. This is not "censorship." It is the elders' overseeing care.

- Adding New Members by *"Illegal Schemes"* to *"Stack the Vote"*

The two brothers, Ron and David accuse Brothers Steve and Jonathan of implementing *"illegal" "schemes designed to prevent a fair vote by only admitting people...who will help them win the vote to change the by-laws and give themselves power."* Bros. David Wang and Ron MacVicar call this an 'illegal scheme.' They have even taken their brothers to court over this issue, contrary to the Bible (1 Cor. 6:6-7)! The Ontario judge threw out David and Ron's motion, ruling that this is not "illegal." This, most serious accusation been judged false! The judge not only denied Ron and David's motion, she also awarded 'costs' to the Church. This year's new members were nominated and accepted based upon verifiable criteria consistent with the Church Bylaws. The use of measurable criteria limits the arbitrary exercise of power by directors. This is not a 'power grab.' There are many qualified new members, despite these stringent conditions, because the Lord has blessed us the last five years (especially Chinese-speaking saints and young people.) To exclude these qualified new members would dis-enfranchise these saints who deserve a voice in Church affairs. This is not "stacking the vote." We condemn the actions of Bros. Ron and David in taking this to the law-courts! Even though the judge awarded 'costs,' this award

in no way covers the Church's actual legal expenses. David and Ron's legal tactic has damaged the Church's reputation and wasted the saints' offerings to the church.

Conclusion

The up-coming business meeting gives church-members the opportunity to make decisive choices affecting the future of our Church. The Church has been troubled recently by "outside forces" related to LSM. We regard this as unwarranted interference in the local Church here. They want to bring the Church into their sphere of influence, under their global control, creating a "worldwide LSM-church." A minority of church-members (including bros. Ron MacVicar & David Wang) are sympathetic to this view. We reject this LSM view as unscriptural and a deviation from the teachings of W. Nee and W. Lee.

At the up-coming business meeting we urge the Church members to:

- (1) Support the admission of qualified new members to give them a voice in the Church Corporation.
- (2) Elect the set of directors—Steve Pritchard, Jonathan P'ng & David Lio—nominated by the Toronto eldership.
- (3) Pass the new Bylaws designed to protect the Church from outside interference and internal disruption, by giving the directors the means to resolve problems in the Church

We believe these measures will best ensure our continued existence as a biblical, genuine local church among the many local churches. They will also facilitate our Church's mission to be the Lord's testimony here in the city of Toronto.

On behalf of the Toronto Eldership

March 2007

Footnotes

1. A "Notice of Motion" was filed in Ontario Superior Court of Justice by 5 applicants: David Wang, Ron MacVicar, David Chao, Anne Chao and Pat Aurclair against the respondents: Stephen Pritchard, Jonathan P'ng and the Church of the Torontonians. David Wang's Affidavit & exhibits dated Feb 27, 2007.
2. "Has the Truth Changed or Have Some of the Metro Toronto Elders?" Introduction "AFaithfulWord.org" January 22, 2007 Hereafter, AFW.org
3. The context reads: *"Recently...Ron MacVicar was removed as the secretary of the corporation....Now some directors and elders have proposed a slate of directors which excludes David Wang. Just yesterday David Wang was removed as president from the board of directors...**Is this not a takeover of the church by certain individuals for their own purposes?"*** David Wang & Ron MacVicar's Letter
4. Quote from Corrections to Statements Made by the Toronto Elders and Nigel Tomes Conclusion, "AFaithfulWord.org" (Posted Feb. 25, 2007)
5. We use the term "LSM" throughout as a convenient rubric to cover the "blended co-workers" (or "blending brothers"), LSM and DCP since there are close connections and interrelationships between these three entities.