

## **“Not a Matter of...Biblical or Non-biblical”—What Did Minoru Really Write? What Did Minoru Really Say?**

In the on-going dialogue about LSM’s “One Publication” policy, I have cited brother Minoru Chen’s statement, “It is not a matter of...biblical or non-biblical,” several times. For example in a piece entitled, “**The Bible—Our Only Standard**,” I wrote,<sup>1</sup>

“When Brother Minoru Chen addressed this issue [one publication] 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!**”

I have been roundly criticized for these statements. The LSM-brothers call my presentation,<sup>2</sup> “**his own distortion.**” I am accused of taking “**Brother Minoru's words out of context and ascribed to them a completely different meaning than what was intended,**” and creating “**a 'straw man' issue with no substance whatsoever.**” My presentation is called, a “**shameful "twisting of Brother Minoru Chen's words,"**” which exhibits “**a disregard for the truth and even of the ethical treatment of others' words.**” Obviously the LSM-brothers have a different interpretation. It is clear, from the lines quoted above, I take the subject of Minoru’s speaking to be ‘one publication.’ I understood and still understand Brother Minoru as saying—“**It** [this issue, one publication] **is not a matter of right and wrong, biblical or non-biblical.**”

How do the LSM-brothers understand it? I quote:<sup>2</sup> “*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, Jan. 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.**”*

The indented paragraph is the printed text of Minoru’s message, as it appears in **The Ministry** magazine. Immediately prior to this is a quote from Brother Lee on publications. Minoru introduces that selection as “*Brother Lee’s own words concerning our being restricted to one publication work....*” The extract ends with Brother Lee’s words, “*Our sounding must be one, so we must be restricted in one publication.*” The paragraph by brother Minoru, quoted above, directly follows this. A little later, Minoru says,<sup>3</sup> “*By the Lord’s mercy to a great extent the Lord has preserved His recovery today under one publication.*” I mention this to establish that Minoru’s remarks were made **in the context of the ‘one publication’ question**. How then can the LSM-brothers assert that I have taken “**Brother Minoru's words out of context**”?

### **What does “It” refer to—“Many Trumpet Sounds” OR the ‘One Publication’ Question?**

The point at issue is, what does Minoru’s statement—“It is not a matter of...biblical or non-biblical”—mean in context? How did the listeners (and readers) understand it? The LSM-brothers claim, “*In context it is clear that the “it”...is not the one publication work, but **the many trumpet sounds of different teachings.**”* Please allow me to respond. First, (contrary to the LSM-

brothers,) in context it is **not** transparently clear what the indefinite pronoun—"It"—refers to. The LSM-brothers allege the subject, "It" refers to "**the many trumpet sounds of different teachings.**" However, notice that "**the many trumpet sounds**" are **plural in number**. That's why Minoru's previous sentence says, "**These [plural] many trumpet sounds.**" While the alleged antecedent **is plural**, the pronoun, "It" **is singular**. Something doesn't add up here! It is difficult for me to believe that both brother Minoru (who has excellent spoken English) and LSM's copy-editors would allow such an elementary mistake to pass undetected through their "discerning check." The obvious alternative candidate to the plural subject, "many trumpet sounds," is 'one publication,' **which is singular**. I suggest therefore the LSM-brothers' interpretation is unnatural and forced. Isn't it more natural to understand Minoru's words as: "it [one publication] is not a matter of biblical or non-biblical"? I don't know "**what was intended**" by Minoru, but this is how I understand his words. I would paraphrase the implied meaning as: The crucial question in evaluating this issue [one publication] "*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.*" Regardless of the interpretation now offered by the LSM-brothers, I believe many saints understood Minoru's words in this way.

### **The Question is—"What Did Minoru Really Say?" NOT—"What Did Minoru Write?"**

Thus far we have focussed on the published message. In other instances when the LSM-brothers ask—"What Did Brother X Really Say?"—they refer to the transcript of the spoken message. In the present case they do not—Why not? Surely the transcript of Minoru's spoken message is the proper basis for answering the LSM-brothers' question—"What Did Minoru **Chen Really Say?**" The issue is **NOT—"What Did Minoru Write?"** but, "**What Did He Say?**" On occasion, the "blended co-workers'" printed messages differ significantly from the spoken. Is that the case here? I believe that it is. If I am correct, the LSM-brothers have used 3,000 words, yet they have failed to directly address the question they pose—"What Did Minoru **Really Say?**"

Unlike the LSM-brothers, I don't have access to the whole audio-video catalogue of the "blended co-workers'" messages from the last decade. Nevertheless, in 2004, I heard the web-cast and took detailed notes. My notes quote Minoru saying: "***This [or It] is not a matter like in the Bible there is one publication, but intrinsically it is so.***" I believe I captured the essence of his speaking at this point. If the LSM-brothers wish to dispute this, let them produce the audio version and the transcript! I believe that Brother Minoru **did not say** (in his spoken message) "*It is not a matter of...biblical or non-biblical,*" rather his words—"It is not a matter like in the Bible there is **one publication, but intrinsically it is so,**"—were edited into the published version quoted above. If I am correct, the implicit question addressed in Minoru's speaking was—"Is one publication in the Bible?" Minoru's answer amounts to saying—One publication is **not** in the Bible (explicitly) "**but intrinsically it is so.**" Based upon this understanding, we can ask again—what is the implied antecedent of "It" in his spoken statement? **Again my answer is—'One Publication.'** Note the spoken words we attribute to Minoru are consistent with the LSM-brothers' current position on this issue—that 'one publication' is "intrinsically" Scriptural. I disagree, as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

### **Conclusion**

I heard brother Minoru's message in 2004. Later I read the published version. On both occasions I understood (and still today I understand) Brother Minoru as saying—"It [this issue, one publication] **is not a matter of right and wrong, biblical or non-biblical.**" I feel that is the most natural and obvious way to understand his speaking. I have read and re-read the LSM-brothers' exposition, which argues otherwise. I remain unconvinced. I believe I'm not alone. Moreover, the "blended co-workers'" 'one publication' policy has been characterized by—"It is not **a matter of...biblical or non-biblical.**" The initial justification offered was **not** based upon the Bible. No biblical basis was offered. Rather, it was based upon the practice<sup>5</sup> of Brothers Nee and Lee. Over 9 months later the LSM-brothers have finally provided a purported scriptural basis.<sup>6</sup>

Nigel Tomes,

July 2006

**NOTES:**

1. See, "**The Bible: Our Only Standard.**" One version is posted on the internet at [http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Bible/Bible\\_is\\_our\\_only\\_standard\\_Nigel\\_Tomes.pdf](http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Bible/Bible_is_our_only_standard_Nigel_Tomes.pdf)
2. The following quotes are taken from: "**Not a Matter of...Biblical or Non-biblical**"—**What Did Minoru Chen Really Say?**" which appears on the LSM-sponsored website: [AFaithfulWord.org](http://www.AFaithfulWord.org). The authors are members of LSM's "Defense & Conformation project led by Dan Towle. For simplicity the authors are referred to as the "LSM-brothers."
3. **The Ministry**, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 2005 pp. 186-7
4. See my, "**LSM's EISEGESIS – HOW NOT TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE!**" Posted on the internet at <http://www.concernedbrothers.com/Eisegesis/Eisegesis.pdf>
5. See **Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery** by "the blended co-workers" (LSM, June 30, 2005) This piece starts with Brother Lee's testimony, which is followed by the statement, "According to **the practice** established by Brother Nee in China...". Later it says, "This was **the practice** when Brother Nee took the lead in the ministry and in publication work in China, and it was **our practice** when Brother Lee took the lead in the ministry and in publication work..." and "Since Brother Nee's day we in the Lord's recovery have been restricted in one publication." Based upon this, the document decrees that: "all the saints and all the churches everywhere should similarly be restricted in one publication..."
6. See the LSM-brothers' April 2006 article: **Is "One Publication" Scriptural?** On [www.AFaithfulWord.org](http://www.AFaithfulWord.org). I address this in the piece referenced in note 4