

WHY HAVE AN EARLY BUSINESS MEETING IN TORONTO?

The director-elders of the Church in Toronto have called a business meeting for Lord's day, March 4 at 7 pm. Our annual business meeting is usually held in the Summer, typically in June. Some have asked: Why hold an early business meeting? Why have the business meeting now? Why not wait until June?

The simple answer is—the Church in Toronto is under attack. Various forces are seeking to undermine the current leadership of the Church. Therefore the directors need a renewed mandate to pursue their present course. The business meeting gives voting members an opportunity to register a "vote of confidence" in the Toronto eldership. By dealing with the Church's business affairs now (e.g. electing a board of directors, passing new bylaws) the Church will be stabilized. The elder-directors will have a clear mandate to lead the Church. Then we can focus on our real purpose—bearing Christ's testimony here in Toronto.

THE CHURCH IS UNDER ATTACK

Since last year's business meeting, several significant events have seriously impacted the Church. In October the LSM's "blended co-workers" issued a "Warning Letter" of quarantine against "*Titus Chu and certain of his co-workers.*" This letter targets, not only Brother Titus Chu, but also Nigel Tomes, one of the Toronto elders who has laboured here over 20 years. LSM-president, Benson Phillips stated publicly, "*Regarding the Warning statement, we spoke about 3 persons definitely,*"¹ referring to Titus Chu, Frank Lin (Taiwan) and Nigel Tomes. Other co-workers labouring in Toronto and the surrounding area are also implicated.

TORONTO'S REVIEW COMMITTEE

Realising the severity of the situation, Toronto's elders moved quickly following the release of LSM's "Warning Letter" to institute a resolution process along the lines of Acts 15. A Review Committee of elders was constituted. All voting members were given the opportunity to present their views both orally and in writing. After careful and prayerful consideration, the panel of elders issued its "Determination and Recommendation" (November 5, 2006) summarizing the views presented and rendering its decision, along with the reasons for the decision. The Board of Directors adopted that Determination. Having arrived at a decision, the Toronto eldership exhorted all the church members to put this issue to rest, abide by that decision, 'maintain the oneness' and continue together in peace and harmony.

The Blended Brothers' Ground Offensive

Unfortunately, the elders' exhortation was not followed. Soon after the decision, 77 saints aligned with LSM sent a letter to the Toronto eldership challenging the determination. LSM's "blended co-workers" were also unwilling to accept the Church's decision. They would not allow the Church in Toronto to proceed peacefully under the elders' oversight. In November, the LSM-brothers launched a concerted attack on Toronto's eldership. Without any prior fellowship with Toronto's eldership, numerous "blended co-workers" were dispatched to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) from Taiwan, Southern California and elsewhere to conduct "trainings" and contact the saints. Brothers Samuel (Chen Si) Liu, Livingstone Lee, Albert Lim, Minoru Chen, Bob Danker, Ron Kangas, Kerry Robichaux and Benson Phillips conducted "vital living trainings" in the Toronto area (Brampton & Richmond Hill) during the past 4 months. A group of Toronto saints acted in concert with these visitors to recruit local saints to these sessions. This high level of recent activity contrasts dramatically with the "blended co-workers'" notable absence from the GTA during the previous decade! Is it coincidental that these visits began immediately after Toronto's decision? We think not.

Along with these visiting VIPs, a supporting cast of elders, responsible-brothers, full-timers and FTT-graduates from other churches keep coming to the GTA. Greg Spencer (Torrance, CA), Tim Knoppe (Wixom, MI), David Sisson & Robert Lim (Vancouver, BC), Victor Sayson (Richmond, BC), Mannem Mathai (Surrey, BC), Bill Sakellariou (Edmonton, AB), Bruce McClay (Calgary, AB) and Rick Persad (Vancouver, BC) were among those reported to be active in the Toronto area recently. Some even came from far away Korea and Taiwan. These brothers' activities—training sessions, fellowship meetings, plus visitation and contact of Toronto saints—occurred without adequate fellowship with Toronto's eldership. Is this how these brothers respect the Church in

Toronto? We regard the activities orchestrated by the "blended brothers" and their supporters, as a concerted effort to influence, undermine and destabilize the Church in Toronto.

LSM's Internet Offensive

Alongside these GTA visits, LSM has launched an Internet offensive. A series of anonymous articles, entitled, "*Has the Truth Changed or Have Some of the Metro Toronto Elders?*" were posted on the LSM-affiliated website, AFaithfulWord.org. Obviously the truth does not change. They allege "*the [leading] brothers in Toronto have [changed].*" This seems deliberately designed to discredit Toronto's eldership.

In their writing, the LSM-brothers charge that "*the leading ones in Toronto today have abandoned their previous standing...These brothers both continue to receive and defend Titus Chu and Nigel Tomes. In doing so, they are...not being faithful to deal with a division-maker among them.*" They are trying to pressure the Church into rejecting Titus Chu, Nigel Tomes and others.

Evidently, the "blended co-workers" do not respect the Church's decision contained in the "Determination & Recommendation." They assert that by reviewing LSM's quarantine decision, the Toronto elders have "*set themselves up as authorities above the testimonies of so many churches and the warning of the co-workers.*" Did they expect the elders here to be mere puppets, who abdicate their responsibility to oversee the church by blindly "rubber-stamping" LSM's decisions? Evidently, through a campaign of overt and covert attacks, the LSM-brothers are trying their uttermost to reverse Toronto's decision. Are they trying to bring the Church into subjection to LSM? Do LSM's "blended co-workers" want to exercise remote control over the Church?

The LSM-brothers repeatedly refer to the Toronto eldership as "*the dissenting ones in Toronto*", "*the dissenting elders*" and "*the dissenting elders in Toronto.*" Moreover, they accuse Toronto's elders of "*rejecting the testimonies of elders and co-workers ...throughout the earth,*" exercising "*their own preference and feeling,*" rejecting "*the principle of the One Body,*" "*taking a different direction,*" "*straying from the path,*" "*deviating from the practice in the Lord's recovery,*" and "*cutting themselves off from the fellowship of all of the churches.*" We are appalled by the ferocity of LSM's public attack. These are serious accusations, designed to undermine the saints' confidence in Toronto's eldership. We can't let this campaign continue unchallenged. It has already produced undercurrents of unrest and discord among the saints. It is distracting the saints from their real purpose—bearing Christ's testimony here in Toronto. Apparently LSM intends to keep escalating their campaign until decisive measures are taken. It's time to make a decision.

A NEEDED MANDATE AND VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

The LSM-brothers appear determined to bring the Church in Toronto under their domination. They have mounted a campaign against the Church, intending to bring Toronto "back into the LSM-fold." It seems they can't tolerate the possibility the Church won't "toe-the-line" in strict conformity with their control. Apparently these brothers no longer respect the scriptural principle that the local church is properly led by the local eldership. What happened to Brother Lee's principle concerning the church: "*Administration local, each answering to the Lord*" (Hymns #824)? Rather it seems (in the name of 'the Body') they're acting as 'global elders' exercising remote control over all the churches. Overstepping their biblical bounds, they're trying to enforce LSM's quarantine of "*Titus Chu and certain of his co-workers*" here in Toronto.

It appears these outsiders from S. California and elsewhere want Toronto to close its doors to Titus and kick out the co-workers. They've never laboured here themselves (prior to their recent unsanctioned campaign.) Yet it seems they want the Church to reject brothers who've faithfully laboured here for decades, so Toronto can be under their domination. Do they want the Church to throw out the full-timers (Nigel Tomes, Del Martin, Ian Brinksmann, Richard Yeh etc.) and their families? Are they seeking to lock these brothers out of the meeting halls and prevent them from serving among the saints? Will the LSM-brothers then install their loyalists to run the Church according to their whim? Do the Toronto saints want the Church remotely controlled from California?

Rather than allow the Toronto saints to endure LSM's escalating attack, the Toronto eldership has placed this important decision before the voting members of the Corporation. Under these abnormal circumstances, the members have an important responsibility in determining the direction of the Church in Toronto. The choice is clear:

- OPTION ONE: The members can decide that the Church should be fully subject to the “blended co-workers,” carrying out their directives and wholly adopting their “LSM program.” They can do this by nominating and voting for a set of directors who are “one with the blended co-workers” and aligned with LSM. That means the Church in Toronto will close its doors to Titus and his co-workers. In this case we anticipate the present co-workers—Nigel Tomes,² Del Martin, Ian Brinkman, Richard Yeh etc.—and their families will be kicked out.
- OPTION TWO: The members can endorse the set of directors (elders) nominated by the Toronto eldership. By doing so they give the Toronto eldership a “vote of confidence,” providing a mandate for the Church to maintain its present direction as a genuine local church, taking *‘the Bible as our unique standard,’* answering to the Lord and led by the local eldership. In this case, the Church will continue to be served by the current “full-timers” (subject to the elders’ oversight.) The Church will carry on receiving the ministries of Titus Chu and his co-workers (as long as they’re deemed profitable.) The Church will also maintain fellowship with other genuine local churches, both nearby and further away. These points correspond to core biblical principles taught by W. Nee and W. Lee. We call on the members to stand with the Lord, with the Bible, with the Truth and with the Church.

In this latter case the Church will still receive the riches of Watchman Nee’s and Witness Lee’s ministries as we have done for many years. This was made clear by the Toronto Review Committee, which said: *“Over many years, we have enjoyed and benefited much from the ministries of Bro. Watchman Nee and Bro. Witness Lee, which have been used by the Lord to build up the church here. Though they have gone to be with the Lord, their writings are still with us. The foregoing recommendation should not deter us from continuing to receive spiritual supply from and be inspired by all the riches of our heritage. We exhort the saints to be constituted with these riches and we will endeavour to continually minister these riches to the saints in the church.”*

The choice is clear. LSM’s campaign (both on the ground and on the Internet) to undermine and overthrow Toronto’s present eldership needs to be answered—the sooner, the better. A definite decision is needed concerning the stand and future direction of the Church in Toronto. A timely business meeting in the near future will facilitate an early resolution of these issues.

NOTES:

1. Brother Benson Phillips’ sharing in Washington DC, US Thanksgiving, (Saturday, Nov. 25, 2006) Code: K06 DCC04. The fact that the LSM-brothers categorize Nigel together with Titus Chu can be seen in the following quotes from an LSM-sponsored website, AFaithfulWord.org (AFW.org):
 - *“Why do [Toronto’s elders] now stand with those, including both **Titus Chu and Nigel Tomes**, who have openly and through innuendo attacked...this [one publication] principle?”*
 - *“Why do [Toronto’s elders] now defend the writings of **Titus Chu and** of those such as **Nigel Tomes?**”*
 - *“...the malicious tone of the unfounded attacks by **Titus Chu and Nigel Tomes** on the leading co-workers in the Lord’s recovery.”*
 - *“...rumors and false reports spread by **Titus Chu, Nigel Tomes, and others.**”*
 - *“The leading ones in Toronto today...both continue to receive and defend **Titus Chu and Nigel Tomes** In doing so, they are...not being faithful to deal with a division-maker among them.”* [Source: *“Has the Truth Changed or Have Some of the Metro Toronto Elders?”* (Parts 1 & 3) posted on the LSM-affiliated website, AFW.org.]
2. Anyone who questions whether this is a real possibility should consider the implications of the LSM-brothers’ statement: *“The leading ones in Toronto today...both continue to receive and defend **Titus Chu and Nigel Tomes** In doing so, **they are...not being faithful to deal with a division-maker among them.**”* [Source: *“Has the Truth Changed or Have Some of the Metro Toronto Elders?”* (Parts 1 & 3) posted on the LSM-sponsored website, AFW.org.] Sceptics should ask themselves: What do the LSM-brothers mean by **“deal with a division-maker among them”**? If it doesn’t mean quarantine, reject or “kick out” the present co-workers (including Nigel Tomes) what does it mean?

