

April 22, 2007

To the churches and the saints in the Lord's recovery:

Through much seeking of the Lord's mind in prayer and mutual fellowship with one another, with the churches, and with the co-workers serving in the ministry in the Lord's recovery, we have been led by the Lord to have a new beginning as the church in Columbus and to begin again the breaking of bread in the Lord's table meeting. We respect the sanctity of the Lord's table and the seriousness of partaking of the elements that represent the blood of Christ and both the physical body and mystical Body of Christ. We also respect the gravity of declaring our standing as the church in Columbus, as the practical manifestation of the Body of Christ in this city.

The Lord's table meeting symbolizes the entire new covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25), in which God dispenses Himself into us as life through the redemptive death of Christ to constitute us members of the organic Body of Christ. Participating in the Lord's table is a declaration that we receive the full efficacy of the death of Christ to enjoy the resurrection life of Christ in oneness with all believers in His one Body. We declare that we gladly receive all believers to participate in the Lord's table based on the fact that the Lord died for them as well as for us.

The Lord's table shows us that the issue of God's full salvation in Christ is the Body of Christ. Therefore, to observe the Lord's table is a declaration that we receive all the members of the Body of Christ as joint participants in the fellowship of the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). The Lord's charge to "discern the body" means that "when we participate in the Lord's table, we must discern whether the bread on the table signifies the one Body of Christ or any division of man," whether that division is by denomination or with a divisive spirit (1 Cor. 11:29 and footnote 3, Recovery Version). To be in the one Body is to be in the common fellowship of all the churches (1 Cor. 1:9). We declare that the Lord's table of which we partake symbolizes the fellowship of His one Body as expressed in our oneness with the local churches throughout the earth.

We affirm that the Lord's table in Columbus and our partaking of it as the church in Columbus follow the principles of receiving all believers and being in fellowship with the churches throughout the earth as the representatives of the one Body of Christ. We declare our standing on the genuine ground of oneness, taking the oneness of the believers in the Triune God as our base (John 17:11, 21, 23; Eph. 4:1-6) and our oneness with all the local churches in the unique fellowship of the Body of Christ as our standing (1 Cor. 1:2).

The church in Columbus cannot exist as an entity separate and apart from the common fellowship of all the local churches. Although time and space limit us, our fundamental relationship with all believers is that we are co-members of one organic Body, and our fundamental relationship with all the local churches is that we are one universal church, the Body of Christ. Any "oneness" that is not based on this organic reality and which is

not manifested in receiving all believers and participating in the common fellowship of all the local churches is not a genuine oneness, but a sectarian one.

We therefore repudiate the false oneness that some sought to impose on the saints in Columbus, a oneness that was based on the authority of man and that usurped the headship of Christ. That false oneness required the saints to obey the “authority” and the demands of certain ones who had themselves rejected the authority of Christ as represented in the Body by the teaching of the New Testament ministry faithfully followed by the co-workers and thousands of local churches on the earth today. These ones made their own authority, not the redemptive work of Christ, the basis of participating in their “table.” They excommunicated 23 saints who, by gathering to listen to audio tapes of the summer training, were deemed to have threatened their authority. Thus, the cup on their table no longer represents the fellowship of the blood of Christ which is common to all believers; rather it is a cup of division and control.

The sectarian ones have sought to establish a local oneness based on the acknowledgement of their authority as something separate and apart from the oneness of the Spirit and the oneness of the universal church in the common fellowship of all the local churches throughout the earth. They have not only neglected the oneness of the Body but have actively sought to tear down this oneness. They have sought to isolate the church in Columbus from the general fellowship of the local churches, publicly pronouncing that they cannot defend those local churches which receive the ministry of the blending co-workers against the charge of being a “cult.” They have sought to sever the church in Columbus from the general ministry in the Lord’s recovery, a ministry carried out in much prayer and fellowship by co-workers around the globe burdened to walk in the same steps and to speak the same thing as Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. They have publicly asserted that a quarantine “truly belongs” on those co-workers, and not on Titus Chu. They have sought to isolate the church in Columbus by errantly asserting their “authority” in matters both essential and non-essential to the faith in order to force the church in Columbus into becoming an autonomous domain to support the divisive work of Titus Chu, as well as their own. Thus, the bread on their table no longer represents the fellowship of the body of Christ, but is a bread of division and control.

All of these actions are sectarian and make it impossible for the church to follow those brothers and still remain a genuine local church as an expression of the Body of Christ. They have removed themselves from the proper ground of oneness and become a sect. We cannot in good conscience join them in their deviation, but must instead continue to stand as the church in Columbus for the Lord’s present testimony. Although some of us have endured false accusations at the hands of our sectarian brothers, we joyfully and boldly testify that by the Lord’s mercy we can, without enmity, re-establish and participate in the Lord’s table in this city.

Our heart cries out for all the dear saints who have been led astray, stumbled, or confused through the recent turmoil. We long that they would all be restored to the flock. Our prayer and our invitation are that our brothers and sisters would return to their inheritance among God’s people that together we might all enjoy the Lord’s jubilee of grace. We

testify that as we have stood for the Lord's interest in maintaining his testimony in Columbus, we have enjoyed His outpoured blessing on the churches in His recovery, a blessing that is first and foremost the bountiful blessing of the eternal life (Psa. 133:3).

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to the Lord for the way in which the saints, the churches and the co-workers have poured themselves out for us in prayer, in fellowship, and in service. We gratefully acknowledge the Lord's shepherding care for us through the members of His Body and rejoice that we can practically participate in the common fellowship of the churches in the Lord's recovery "with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours."