

## THE CHURCH IN VANCOUVER

Meeting at:  
77 East 7TH Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.  
Canada V5T 1M8

Phone: (604) 873-2913  
FAX: (604) 873-6711

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### AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHURCHES AND ALL THE SAINTS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

September 15, 1993

On behalf of the Church in Vancouver and for the benefit of the Lord's recovery, we, the undersigned brothers, would like to inform you of the recent events that have transpired in the Church in Vancouver.

The Church in Vancouver began in 1965, being solidly established upon the pure revelation of the Scriptures as accurately taught by both Brother Watchman Nee and Brother Witness Lee. At the center of this revelation is the oneness of the Body of Christ and of the churches. Brother Lee visited Vancouver at least five times prior to 1973. In 1973 a group of saints, including two of the leading ones who were with us until recently, migrated from Toronto to join the saints who were already meeting in Vancouver. The Church in Vancouver continued to be in mutual fellowship with the other local churches on the earth bearing the same testimony.

In 1986, however, when Brother T.K. Chia returned from the Elders' Training in Anaheim, he told some brothers that he had another way which was different from the way of the Lord's recovery. This kind of undercurrent was present in a more or less hidden way until August 1991 when Joseph Fung came to Vancouver and participated in the Lord's Table. The real situation was progressively exposed from this time onward.

In July, 1992 the leading ones in Vancouver received [REDACTED] who had been disciplined by the churches in the Metro Toronto area. This brother also went with T.K. Chia to a conference which the latter gave in Hall 2 of Seattle without any fellowship with the elders in the Church in Seattle. This served as an encouragement to the dissenting ones in Hall 2 who were already seeking to dissociate Hall 2 from the Church in Seattle. The leading brothers in Vancouver then sought to expose in the Church in Vancouver the letter of concern written by the elders of the Church in Seattle as well as writings sent by the Hall 2 dissenting ones, in a light that would justify the dissenting ones in Hall 2, discredit the elders in Seattle, and discourage the saints in Vancouver from attending the upcoming Labor Day conference in Seattle with Brother Witness Lee.

In August, 1992 T.K. Chia passed through Metro Toronto on his way to and from Brazil, spontaneously encouraging the dissenting ones in Metro Toronto by participating in their fellowship and meetings.

It was very obvious that the leadership in the Church in Vancouver had a totally different perspective concerning the Lord's recovery, the one Body of Christ, the fellowship of the churches, and the truth that had been revealed to us through the New Testament ministry, particularly in respect to turning away from and refusing the divisive ones based on Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10. The leading ones in Vancouver ignored the protests and exhortations their actions elicited from the other churches. They also ignored our repeated pleas and fellowship, urging them to keep the oneness among the churches, to take the way of the Lord's recovery, and to not have anything to do with division.

At the same time, it was also evident that Brother Chia intended to have his own work. In one of our talks with the three leading brothers (February 4, 1993) Brother Chia stated that for twenty years since his arrival in Canada, he had received direct commission from the Lord to establish the churches in various localities and was accountable solely and directly to the Lord.

On the one hand, the negative view and direction of the leading brothers was becoming very apparent. On the other hand, they attempted private negotiations to get us to leave. On February 8, 1993 Brother Borchiy Chang visited Brother Timothy Liu at his home expressing concern for the situation in the church and proposing solutions to the problem. He felt that there ought to be a way to divide the church assets based on the offering records of the saints. He also suggested that since there are no churches in North Vancouver and Richmond, some could leave and start to meet in those places. If some would leave, the Church in Vancouver would even consider giving those saints a sum of money to help them start a meeting. However, we were not prepared to leave.

Under these circumstances we felt we could not go on. The basis on which the Church in Vancouver had been established was being denied. The oneness of the Body of Christ was not being kept. The leading ones did not represent the practice and standing of the church and of many local saints. We could not go along with their leadership at the expense of sacrificing the fellowship with the other churches in the Lord's recovery. We could not agree that their way of speaking concerning dividing the church meeting was according to the truth or would solve the fundamental problem. We could not agree that the church would receive those who make divisions, knowing that it would result in spiritual death and division. Furthermore, we realized that no church had come out to support the stand of the leading ones. In fact, most of the churches in Canada had written to condemn their stand. We felt that it was beyond our duty as well as contrary to our conscience to go along with their leadership. Therefore, knowing this was not just a local matter, but a matter that affects the Lord's entire recovery, we appealed to the brothers in the Lord's recovery for fellowship and help. As soon as we fellowshiped about this matter, we received help from the Body and felt our burden was lighter. From then on, co-workers and full-timers came and labored with us.

On the negative side, according to the Lord's leading, we exposed all the hidden things to the saints in Vancouver in an open letter on March 20, 1993 so that they could know which way to take. On the positive side, the saints became vitalized through morning revival, home visiting, and group meetings. In a very short period of time the number of saints who are positive to take the way of the

Lord's recovery increased to a majority.

On April 7, 1993 the leading brothers gave letters to all the saints in Vancouver requesting everyone to fill out a "Continue to be Society Member Confirmation Form" by April 30, 1993. The purpose of this form was that the leading brothers would be able to exercise their power as the board of directors to screen the qualifications of members and to investigate the amount of support they would have in the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM). This had never been done before in the Lord's recovery. This letter prompted us to reply carefully with a letter to legally protect our voting privilege at the upcoming AGM.

Realizing that they could not obtain the support of the majority of the saints in the Church in Vancouver, Brother Chia initiated fellowship firstly with Brother Titus Chen, then with Brother Robert Lim in early June 1993. These fellowships were to discuss a financial arrangement which would enable Brother Chia and his supporters to start their own work. Brother Chia and Brother David Wong requested that two brothers be appointed as mediators to facilitate the negotiations. Brother Chia said, "Since our way is different and our truth is different, it will no longer be possible to be together as one church." Brother Chia suggested that a sum of money be given to those who would be leaving in recognition of their labor and contributions to the church and as a subsidy for their departure. We in turn would keep the name of "The Church in Vancouver" and continue to meet in the meeting hall. The only condition for such financial agreement was that the ones who would leave would not associate themselves with the divisive ones.

At first Brother Chia proposed that we pay them a sum of \$1.6 million. Later he changed the sum to \$1.3 million. After many hours of negotiations, the mediating brothers set a maximum limit. It was then agreed that \$800,000 be the sum of money to be given.

On Thursday night, June 10, 1993 a special meeting was called by the leading brothers. Notice of the meeting was not given to the whole church, but only to a portion. In that meeting, Brother Chia announced their decision to withdraw from the nomination for the directorship in the upcoming AGM, as well as to resign from the eldership of the church upon receiving the financial arrangement of \$800,000.

The next morning, Brother Chia advised one of the mediating brothers that after further consideration, the leading brothers felt it was not appropriate for them to sign the legal agreement concerning the finances or to resign from the eldership. Following this, rumors were spread that we brothers had initiated an attempt to buy out their eldership and take over the meeting hall with its assets using this agreement. From the very beginning, however, the leading brothers were the ones who initiated the negotiations so that they could leave with some benefits. In the end no sum of money was given.

Since the three leading brothers had decided not to run as candidates for directorship, we were instated as the new board of directors at the AGM on June 13, 1993. The result of that meeting showed convincingly that the majority of the saints meeting in the Church in Vancouver do not agree with Brother Chia's leadership and are standing strongly for the Lord's recovery among all the local churches. Furthermore, the AGM and our being elected as directors precipitated in our obligation to bring the direction of the church quickly back in line with the Lord's recovery.

The turnover proceedings to the new directors took place on the morning of Thursday June 17, 1993. Right after the leading ones turned over the necessary documents they said to us, "We are still the elders of the Church in Vancouver. You will have a room on the second floor of the meeting hall as the directors' office, in which you can conduct your business." They also said, "We have thought it through. There is only one way for a peaceful co-existence. On Sunday mornings you will have one meeting and we will have another meeting. You choose your time slots and we will choose our own time slots. During the weekdays, you can have Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and we will have Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday." That was their way of compromise.

That afternoon, after much consideration we knew we had no choice but to exercise our legal rights. As the new board of directors we felt that the liability and security of the hall and the assets were now up to us. Furthermore, prior to the AGM, the meeting hall was broken into and vandalized. For that reason, the first thing we did after much fellowship and prayer was to change the outside locks of the meeting hall. This was not to lock the dissenting ones out of the meeting hall. In fact the hall was open on the very next day to all the saints in the whole church for the regular Friday night meeting.

On Friday, we went and opened the hall at 4:30 pm two hours before the love feast. We fasted and prayed. At 7:30 pm we took a firm stand during the entire meeting. At the beginning of the meeting we announced to the saints that the Church in Vancouver is a church in the Lord's recovery, that we as the church will take the way of the Lord's recovery, and that we will receive the spiritual leadership and fellowship of the co-workers from the Lord's recovery in the coming year. This decision would take effect that evening. After we announced this, Brother Chia and his followers reacted strongly. He questioned the validity of our statement. He wanted to hear from our own mouth whether as the new board of directors we still recognized the three brothers as elders of the Church in Vancouver. We replied that since the majority of the church members considered that their way was different and their truth was different we, as representatives and custodians of the interest and well-being of the church, could not recognize or accept their spiritual leadership. At about 8:30 pm, as a result of their leadership being denied, Brother Chia read from a previously prepared letter. Afterward he declared that the Church in Vancouver was part of a sect and a system and that they had decided to leave such a sect. He then left the meeting hall with all his followers.

As soon as they left, it seemed the whole turmoil calmed down. We all knelt down and prayed with tears. We can surely testify that during this whole turmoil we did not have any central control as the divisive ones had often accused us of. Rather there was an organic reaction that rose up in the Body of Christ to reject the evil system of error brought in by the divisive ones. We are very thankful to the Lord that in the Lord's recovery there is such a Body consciousness. Our problem is the Body's problem. Our turmoil is the Body's turmoil. Our joy is the Body's joy.

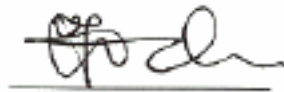
During these five years of turmoil, beginning from 1987, on the one hand there was a loss, but on the other hand the Lord has been gaining His testimony amidst chaos. Now the saints meeting as the Church in Vancouver are going on positively in one accord.

Finally we would like to say that by the Lord's mercy and grace the direction of the Church in Vancouver will be one of striving to keep the universal oneness of the Body of Christ, continuing steadfastly in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, and having nothing to do with divisions or

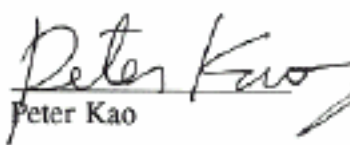
divisive ones. We treasure the New Testament ministry that has rescued us from confusion, is rescuing us from this present evil religious age, and will continue to build us all into His universal Bride and dwelling place, the New Jerusalem.

May all the glory be to the Lord for His gracious sovereignty.

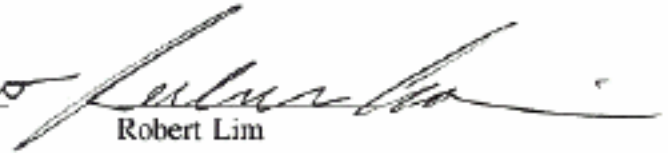
Your brothers in the Lord's recovery,



Titus Chen



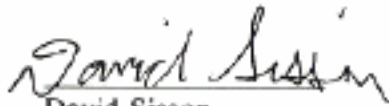
Peter Kao



Robert Lim



Peter Mak



David Sisson