

March 29, 2009

To all the saints in the Lord's recovery in Colombia,

We are brothers standing for the Lord's testimony in twenty churches and many other localities in Colombia. It has been our great joy to participate in the practical fellowship of the Body of Christ not only among the churches in Colombia but also with all the churches around the globe. For many years, brothers from churches in Colombia gathered together for fellowship and blending semi-annually near Medellín. During these times, we reviewed the content of the current International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones. More recently, saints from throughout Colombia have gathered together for the 96 Lessons training. Each session of the training has been attended by nearly 300 saints from over twenty churches. We have enjoyed a great blessing in life and oneness due to the blending at all of these gatherings. In order to preserve our enjoyment of the Lord's commanded blessing on the oneness (Psalm 133), we must write to you to address an important matter related to the Lord's recovery in Colombia, that is, the divisive and damaging work of Dong Yu Lan.

Over the years, we have enjoyed the benefit of the labor of those who have gone before us in the Lord's recovery, including those who first brought the publications of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee to Colombia. Although there have been difficulties in coordination and many misunderstandings, largely due to the problem addressed in this letter, our appreciation for those who preceded us in the Lord's recovery in Colombia is not diminished. Thus, it is not out of any personal animus that we write to you but out of our care and concern for the churches and saints throughout this nation and beyond.

Having read the letters of warning posted on the Internet by the churches in Mexico and the churches in Spain and being well aware of the related situation here in Colombia, we must also take a public stand for the oneness of the Body of Christ and the one accord among the churches in the Lord's recovery. We must join with the other churches to reject the teachings and practices of Brother Dong's work.

The problems surrounding Brother Dong's work in Colombia fall primarily into three categories:

- Errant and divisive teachings that elevate Brother Dong and his ministry and denigrate the general ministry received by the churches in the Lord's recovery;
- Actual divisions caused by the preference of some for Dong Yu Lan's ministry; and
- Frustrations to the pursuit of the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ.

Errant and Divisive Teachings

Brother Dong's so-called "vision" of Revelation 12 as depicted by the world map is well-known throughout Colombia, having been propagated by Brother Dong and his co-workers for many years. The import of this "vision" is to exalt Brother Dong, his ministry and his work. It deceptively depicts his work as having the unique, divine commission to spread the gospel of the kingdom throughout the whole earth. We reject this errant and divisive teaching along with its self-aggrandizing emphasis. During the 2007 blending conference in Boston, USA, the errors of this teaching were both exposed and corrected. Further, the co-workers in the Lord's recovery charged those spreading this devious and divisive teaching to cease. Despite this correction and the plea of the co-workers to stop, Brother Dong and his workers continue to propagate this errant teaching.

Brother Dong, in a conference in Barranquilla, Colombia, in August, 2008, publicly made many false accusations against the co-workers in the Lord's recovery, stating that they work by the way of deceit and ambition. He further belittled those who received the co-workers saying that they only cared for analyzing the truth but no longer called on the Lord or pray-read the Word and as a result they were sliding into the dead situation of Sardis. From our own direct contact with the co-workers, we strongly testify that these charges against them are false. Brother Dong's public dissemination of these false accusations is a serious offense to the Body of Christ and exposes Brother Dong's disdain for the one work of the Lord's recovery.

In Barranquilla, Dong Yu Lan falsely asserted his authority over the work in the Spanish-speaking world by claiming that Witness Lee set him over that work. It was never Witness Lee's way to establish "Apostles" over regions of the work. In fact, Brother Lee repeatedly taught that there should be only one work in the Lord's recovery and that the practice of workers trying to control a region of the work and keep their work separate from others would ultimately cause division:

Another hidden divisive factor is the tendency to keep separate territories. The Lord's work and move for the accomplishment of God's eternal economy is uniquely one. If we consider any region in which we are participating in the Lord's unique work as our particular territory, this will be a cause or a factor of division. Even the tendency to keep a separate territory should be uprooted... Our local work in our region should be for the Lord's universal Body. In the New Testament we cannot see such a thing as jurisdiction in the Lord's work. (*Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-Ordained Way (2)*, p. 19)

Brother Dong also claimed that Brother Lee prohibited all other co-workers from working in Latin America. Not only did Witness Lee eschew the exercise of such control over the Lord's work and workers, he spoke publicly many times of his aspiration that additional co-workers would go to many places for the Lord's recovery including Central America and South America. From the beginning of his ministry in the United States, Brother Lee expected that many co-workers would go to South America among other places. In 1964, Witness Lee said:

I have the assurance that the Lord is merciful to us. If in addition to this we are faithful to Him, in no more than three years some brothers and sisters will go out for the purpose of the gospel. Some may go to the east coast, Canada, Mexico, or South America, not as missionaries but simply as disciples going out for the gospel. For the Lord's recovery we need to go out. (*Serving in the Meetings and in the Gospel*, p. 64)

Many times afterward, Brother Lee expressed the same hope, desire and intention. In the later years of his ministry, in 1991, he said:

Because the recovery is real and rich in truth, the entire world is open to the recovery. Especially, I would say that all of Central America and South America, with Puerto Rico and the Caribbean Islands, are open to us. We have so many requests from these places for some to come and help them. This has become our burden. (*Elders' Training, Book 11: The Eldership and the God-Ordained Way (3)*, p. 107)

It is clear that Witness Lee never changed his view that the Lord's work should spread unhindered throughout the world. Contrary to Brother Dong's assertions, Brother Lee consistently mentioned in his public ministry that co-workers and others should freely go to South America for the spread of the truth and the gospel.

Brother Dong's teaching in the matters above serves to exalt his own personal work at the expense of the one work in the Lord's recovery. The end result of such teaching can only be division. This has been manifested in many places around the globe.

Division and Frustration

Regrettably, division has occurred in Colombia as a result of Brother Dong's work. In Tuluá supporters of Dong Yu Lan's work tried to propagate his literature to the saints in the church. When the church in Tuluá did not receive Brother Dong's ministry, a small number of the saints, instigated by Brother Dong's supporters, withdrew from the church without explanation and started separate meetings, including a divisive "table" meeting. The Lord's table is a strong testimony of oneness, but in this case, the separate "table" meeting testifies of division based upon certain ones' preference for Dong Yu Lan and his work (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). There have also been problems caused in other churches by the attempted spread of Dong Yu Lan's literature and work.

Through the fellowship of the churches, we became burdened to start the 96 Lessons training in Colombia. Some associated with Brother Dong's work initially objected both to the use of the 96 Lessons training materials and to the participation of the brothers from North America. According to the truth they had no jurisdiction over the churches, and they had no grounds to hinder the fellowship between the brothers from North America and the churches here.

Suppose the saints in the church here [in Los Angeles] feel the need to invite a worker from Texas. They have the full liberty to invite him. If they feel the need to invite another one from Europe, another one from Africa, and another one from South America, they have the full liberty to do so. This is the proper way for us to practice. (*The Life and Way for the Practice of the Church Life*, p. 114)

Nevertheless, through our fellowship with the co-workers we delayed beginning the 96 Lessons training for seven years in the hope that Brother Dong's followers could realize the value of maintaining a broader fellowship with the co-workers in the Lord's recovery. Eventually, however, Brother Dong's supporters insisted that the training could not start in Cali unless the co-workers from North America issued a written official endorsement of Dong Yu Lan's work. To our knowledge, this demand was unprecedented. It betrays an organizational and hierarchical concept that is uncharacteristic of the work in the Lord's recovery; the co-workers do not serve in an official capacity but in the organic fellowship of the Body of Christ. To hold a training ransom to such a demand is absolutely improper; it puts personal interests above the Lord's interest. The objections and demands which hindered the start of the 96 Lessons training in Cali demonstrate that Brother Dong's work had already departed from the truth and was a factor of division in Colombia. The 96 Lessons training, though long delayed, has proven to be very beneficial to the saints in Colombia who are participating in it and has provided fresh impetus to the Lord's move among us.

Brother Dong's followers have used a variety of improper pretexts for preventing saints in Colombia from receiving the general ministry in the Lord's recovery. When the co-workers issued the booklet *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*, many supporters of Dong Yu Lan opposed it and forbade its distribution. In some places saints were openly criticized for using *The Holy Word for Morning Revival*. In 2006, the church in Cali scheduled a conference with Benson Phillips and invited saints throughout Colombia to come. Some who support Dong Yu Lan's work opposed this conference and deterred many saints from attending it. Those who did attend were in many cases subsequently ostracized. Official letters excluding saints from the fellowship of the churches have

been issued by followers of Brother Dong for these and other similar “offenses.” In some cases, the alleged misconduct cited in the letters did not happen; in others, the behavior in question was greatly exaggerated or had already been addressed.

The fundamental problem that has troubled the churches in Colombia is that Brother Dong’s ministry is carrying out a separate work in rivalry with the general ministry in the Lord’s recovery. Brother Dong has often accused others of being ambitious to carry out a work in South America, but in fact it is Brother Dong and his co-workers who are ambitious to have an isolated, private sphere for their work. Thus, they seek to exclude all others and to make the domain of their work their personal boast. Their rival work has sown discord in Colombia and has hindered the churches’ participation in the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ.

Warning Concerning Dong Yu Lan’s Work

As brothers representing churches and serving in the Lord’s work in Colombia, we must warn the saints concerning Dong Yu Lan and his errant and divisive work. When Paul departed from the leading ones in Ephesus, he told them, “And from among you yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore watch...” (Acts 20: 30-31a). Sadly, such divisive activity has happened not only at Paul’s time but also throughout church history and even in the Lord’s recovery where we value and treasure oneness.

Division is a serious matter in the New Testament. Paul shamed the Corinthians over the fact that there were divisions among them (1 Corinthians 1:10-11; 11:18). “Factions, divisions, [and] sects” are listed as works of the flesh in Galatians 5:20. Division is such a serious problem that Paul soberly exhorted the saints “to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them” (Romans 16:17). As Brother Lee pointed out in a footnote on the words “turn away” in this verse:

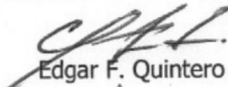
In ch. 14 Paul was liberal and gracious regarding the receiving of those who differ in doctrine or practice. Here, however, he is unyielding and resolute in saying that we must turn away from those who are dissenting, who make divisions, and who make causes of stumbling. The purpose in both cases is the preserving of the oneness of the Body of Christ that we may have the normal church life.


We therefore join with the churches in Mexico, Spain, and elsewhere to mark Dong Yu Lan, his work and his co-workers as “those who make divisions and causes of stumbling.” None of the saints in Colombia should receive this divisive work or those actively promoting it. If any of the saints are approached by those propagating this work, we ask them to bring this matter into fellowship with the leading ones in their locality. We must all be exercised in this matter to be “wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil” (Romans 16:19b).

As your fellow laborers in the kingdom of God, we ask you all to prayerfully consider this matter before the Lord, “the righteous Judge” who will recompense us all in the day of His soon return (2 Timothy 4:8).

For the Lord’s recovery in Colombia,

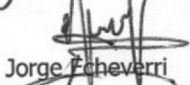
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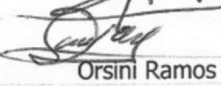

Edgar F. Quintero


Ader Cumplido

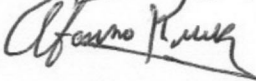
La iglesia en Cali


Jorge Fariás


Jorge Fcheverri


Orsini Ramos

La iglesia en La Ceja

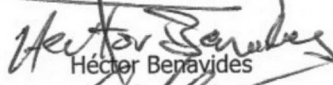

Alfonso Ramírez

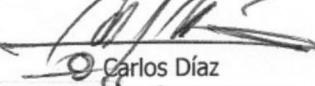
**Creyentes en
Floridablanca
y Bucaramanga**


Heriberto Suárez

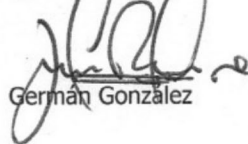
La iglesia en Fundación


Luis Francisco Rodríguez


Héctor Benavides


Carlos Díaz

La iglesia en La Mesa

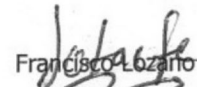

Germán González


La iglesia en Buga

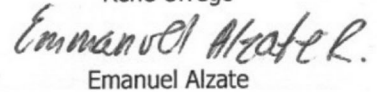

Carlos Ríos


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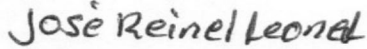

René Urrego


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Gregorio Garcés

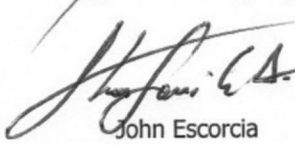
La iglesia en La Tebaida


José Reinel Leonel

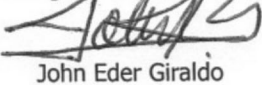
José Reinel Leonel

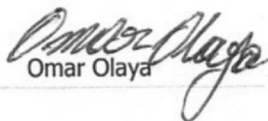

Gentil Rivillas

La iglesia en Magangué


John Escorcia

La iglesia en Palmira


John Eder Giraldo


Omar Olaya

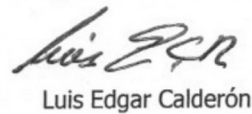
**La iglesia en
Buenaventura**

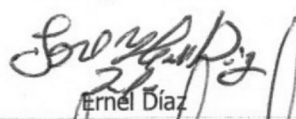

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La iglesia en Florencia


Luis Carlos Gaitán

La iglesia en Manizales


Luis Edgar Calderón


Ernel Díaz

La iglesia en Pasto


Alfredo Martínez


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Creyentes en Medellín


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Antonio Pérez

La iglesia en Pitalito


Andrés Samboní

La iglesia en Pradera

Raúl Andrés Herrera

Raúl Andrés Herrera

La iglesia en Popayán

Ramón Maldonado

Ramón Maldonado

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Creyentes en Quibdo

Simón Hinestroza

Simón Hinestroza

La iglesia en Salónica

Ocarlo Delgadillo

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**Creyentes en Santa
Marta**

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La iglesia en Tuluá

Ermed García

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La iglesia en Yumbo

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Harold Rizo

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