

CONCERNING HAVING ONE PUBLICATION WORK

The churches in the New Testament were established by and continued in the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). The apostles' teaching brought them into the apostles' fellowship, which was the unique fellowship of the Body of Christ in and with Triune God (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3). Only one teaching was recognized in the early churches—the apostles' teaching. The apostles taught the same thing in every church (1 Cor. 4:17), which was a strong factor in maintaining the oneness and one accord among the churches.

In 1 Timothy 1:3-4 Paul told his co-worker Timothy to charge some in Ephesus not to teach things other than God's economy (cf. 6:3). Earlier, Paul had warned the elders in Ephesus that some among them would rise up to speak perverted things to draw men after themselves (Acts 20:30), and he had written to the Ephesians concerning being carried away by winds of teaching in the sleight of men (Eph. 4:14). Eventually, Paul wrote again to Timothy, telling him that all who were in Asia, of which Ephesus was the leading city, had turned away from him (2 Tim. 1:15). All of this shows that different teachings give rise to division and separation from the Lord's ministry.

In 2005 the co-workers who were carrying out the common ministry in the Lord's recovery put out the booklet *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery* (hereafter *Publication Work*) in response to confusion caused by publications that propagated different teachings. The divisive intent of the workers who were behind these publications soon became manifest as their dissent became more overt. The dissenting ones have written extensively, misrepresenting the contents of *Publication Work*. *Publication Work* does not restrict churches or saints from publishing. It says plainly:

But being restricted in the one publication does not mean, and has never meant, that individual churches are not free to produce and distribute materials for their local needs. (p. 7)

Technology today allows almost any individual to publish whatever he or she desires, and it should not be the intention of the responsible ones in the Lord's recovery to suppress the rights of individuals to express themselves (unless, of course, such expressions are sinful, heretical, or divisive). (p. 8)

Rather, *Publication Work* asks those who represent themselves as ministering ones in the Lord's recovery to keep the oneness and one accord by not putting out their own publications with different teachings. The booklet closes with a quotation from Witness Lee's ministry that includes the following statements:

I am not talking about the churches; I am talking about the ministry. The ministry is one thing, and the churches are another thing. These two things can be differentiated in the Epistles written by Paul. Paul's ministry is one category, and the churches are another category. Paul never tried to force all the churches to follow him in his ministry, but Paul surely had a ministry for the churches. (*Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, p. 76)

Publication Work informs the saints in the churches that there is a common ministry in the Lord's recovery and that this ministry follows the apostles' teaching in the New Testament. Furthermore, it lets the saints know that those who call themselves workers among the churches but who refuse to bring their publications into the fellowship and collective oversight of the co-workers do not represent that common ministry. The full statement is available online at <https://www.lsm.org/onepublication/>.

The scriptural basis of being restricted in one publication work is well documented in “Is ‘One Publication’ Scriptural?” which is posted at <https://afaithfulword.org/articles/Scriptural/>. In brief, this article shows that being restricted in one publication is an application of ten biblical principles:

1. The uniqueness of the teaching and fellowship of the apostles (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:9),
2. The apostles teaching the same thing in every church (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33, 36; 16:1; Rev. 1:12),
3. The Lord's speaking to one church being His speaking to all the churches (Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:11; 2:7a),
4. The oneness of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4; Eph. 2:16; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:13),
5. The one accord (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 15:25; Rom. 15:6),
6. Thinking the same thing (Phil. 2:2; 4:2; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Cor. 1:10b),
7. Speaking the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10a; Rom. 15:6),
8. The one ministry of the New Testament (Acts 1:17, 25; 2 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 4:12; 1 Tim. 1:12),
9. The one work with one goal (Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Cor. 16:10), and
10. Serving in the one flow of the Lord's move (Rev. 22:1; Ezek. 47:1; Acts 15:39).

Although it is scriptural, being restricted in one publication has never been made a condition of being received into the fellowship of the local churches. As *Publication Work* says:

However, the one publication should not become the basis of our accepting or rejecting any persons in the communion of faith or in the fellowship of the churches; it should not be insisted on as an item of the faith. If any are not inclined to be restricted in one publication, these ones are still our brothers; they are still in the genuine local churches. (p. 9)

Here again dissenters have misrepresented matters. No one has been cut off from fellowship for publishing in print or on the Internet, except where what was published is heretical or divisive and there was no repentance after the co-workers made multiple appeals for clearance. This was the case in 2007 and 2009 when co-workers issued warnings not to receive the teachings of certain divisive workers after they had repeatedly entreated those workers not to propagate deviant teachings or carry out a work that manifestly fostered division. No churches were included in the quarantine of the divisive workers, but some churches cut themselves off from the common fellowship of the local churches, thereby becoming local sects. Many have testified that the action of quarantine in these two cases rescued them and restored them to the fellowship of the Body. This fact is a strong confirmation that this action was both proper and necessary.