

## DEFENSE & CONFIRMATION PROJECT (DCP)

The Defense & Confirmation Project (DCP) was established to “defend and confirm the New Testament ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and the practice of the local churches.” This mission statement is based on Paul’s words in Philippians 1. In verse 7 he commended the Philippians, saying that “in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all fellow partakers with me of grace.” In verse 16 he said of himself, “I am set for the defense of the gospel.” Concerning the defense and confirmation of the gospel, Brother Lee said, “The defense of the gospel is related, on the negative side, to the perverting and distorting heresies... The confirmation of the gospel is related, on the positive side, to all the revelations of God’s mysteries concerning Christ and the church as unveiled in Paul’s Epistles” (*Life-study of Philippians*, 26, 27).

Paul’s gospel encompassed not only initial salvation but God’s full salvation—judicial and organic—and even all of God’s New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church. In his ministry he struggled to preserve the truth of the gospel amidst both opposition from those outside and turmoils caused by some within the local churches (Gal. 2:5; Acts 20:29-30). His faithfulness to the truth of the gospel brought him much criticism, opposition, and suffering (1 Cor. 4:13; 16:9; 2 Cor. 6:8), as Brother Lee explained:

He did not simply preach that people should believe in Jesus as their Savior so that they might go to heaven. The preaching of such a limited gospel does not entail suffering. In preaching the gospel according to God's economy, Paul renounced religion, law, culture, ordinances, customs, habits, and every kind of ism. The gospel Paul preached slaughtered everything that was apart from God's economy. It slaughtered religion, politics, and culture. In a sense, Paul's gospel slaughters even us. Because Paul preached such a gospel, he was regarded as a troublemaker, a pestilent fellow (Acts 24:5). (*Life-study of Philippians*, 21-22)

When opposition to the Lord’s ministry in His recovery damaged the Lord’s move through the local churches in the late 1970s, Brother Lee called brothers together to consider how to respond. In that fellowship he said, “We must rise up to meet the challenge to the Lord’s present recovery.” He outlined four ways to meet outside opposition. He said that the majority of the effort should go into the way of writing to make the truth and facts clear (Acts 25:11, note 1). He proposed practicing the Christian way of going to meet with opposing ones (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 6:1) and dialoguing with those believers who were open to receive a proper understanding of the teaching and practice of the Lord’s recovery (Acts 17:1-5; 21:36-22:1; 22:21-23:11). Finally, he said that only 5% of the effort should go into the way of appealing to the court system as our “Caesar” in response to defamation, and then only if all other avenues of redress were exhausted (Matt. 18:17b; Acts 16:35-39; 19:37-41; 21:39-40; 22:24-29; 23:27; 25:6-12).

DCP was established based on these guiding principles. The Internet provided a fresh means of circulating falsehoods. As causes of stumbling, these needed responses. However, by late 2001 it had become evident, due to the intransigence of the authors and publisher of a defamatory book, that the DCP office would need to focus on research and perhaps litigation support related to that book. That work, however, was not DCP’s primary mission.

Since that time DCP has undertaken many projects, including:

- Assisting and participating in the dialogues that the co-workers and LSM had with representatives of Fuller Theological Seminary and Christian Research Institute;
- Assisting in researching and writing related to the divisive teachings and practices of Titus Chu in the Great Lakes area and Dong Yu Lan in South America;
- Responding to an open letter that appeared on the Internet in 2007 and to two of that letter’s signers who published statements that were grossly inaccurate in both biblical truth and historical facts;
- Developing several websites, including an-open-letter.org; and
- Developing publications to inoculate others from misrepresentations of the teaching of the ministry in the Lord’s recovery and the practice of the local churches.

Today, DCP’s work is primarily in English and Chinese, although it has collaborated with brothers in Ethiopia, Germany, Poland, France, Spain, Russia, India, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Korea, and many places in Central and South America. DCP’s work includes defending and confirming the New Testament truths via print, video, and the Internet; interacting with scholars and the media; and responding to requests for fellowship from churches and workers related to the defense of the truth.

DCP is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) entity and is not a part of LSM. It operates under the oversight of the co-workers, and whatever it produces for publication is sent to one or more editors in the editorial section of Living Stream Ministry (LSM) for review. In this way DCP adheres to the co-workers' fellowship in *Publication Work in the Lord's Recovery*.

In support of its role in building relationships with others and responding to criticism, DCP researches both print and electronic media concerning relevant:

- biblical topics;
- history and current events;
- legal issues;
- writings about the ministry of Watchman Nee, Witness Lee, and the present co-workers in the recovery; and
- writings of and about the local churches.

This research can include basic background information concerning the writer to understand their frame of reference. Such research is critical to provide accurate information or to respond appropriately.

As Christians, we are called to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). However, it is not only a matter of what we contend for but of how we contend. Our fighting can be carried out only by using weapons of light and of righteousness (Rom. 13:12; 6:13; 2 Cor. 6:7). Misrepresentations or twisting others' words are by nature works of darkness and unrighteousness. In contrast, DCP endeavors to demonstrate that the ministry in the Lord's recovery cuts straight the word of the truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Sadly, some have circulated wild and false rumors regarding DCP. To set the record straight, DCP has never initiated a lawsuit against anyone, is not the "legal arm" of anything, and has never engaged in any kind of clandestine surveillance of the saints. A few critics have found fault with DCP buying up and destroying copies of libelous books. *The Mindbenders* was withdrawn by the author and publisher with a retraction and apology. *The God-Men* was ruled to be libelous by a California court. To remove such books from circulation is a service not only to the Lord's recovery but to the Christian public and the general public (Titus 1:11a).

DCP has been criticized because it maintains files in the DCP office. By far the largest category of files in the office are related to the three litigations that the local churches have been involved with. These constitute a valuable historical record. DCP also has files related to various controversies and to subjects of interest, including Bible teachings, news items, Christian and secular history, and people in fields of interest (theology, apologetics, church history, sociology, psychology, etc.). None of this is nefarious. Fashioning appropriate responses is dependent on accurate records concerning historical events and what has been said and by whom. This is the sole purpose of the files DCP maintains.

Nehemiah 4:18 says that those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem "each had his sword strapped to his side" in case of attack by those who opposed their work (cf. Eph. 6:17). If we read the New Testament carefully, we will realize that on the one hand, the function of the ministry is to supply Christ to the saints for their growth unto the building up of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:16). On the other hand, the apostles fought to guard against the perverting of the truth by those who added to or subtracted from their teaching concerning God's New Testament economy (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7; Rev. 22:18-19). Both of these aspects are prominent in the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John. They are also evident in the ministry of Brother Nee, Brother Lee, and the co-workers in the Lord's recovery today.

In a message given in 1981 Brother Lee likened the Lord's recovery to a nation requiring national defense and public security. In that message he said, "If we study human history, we will realize that the rise and fall of a nation depends on its national defense. If the national defense fails, the nation will perish" (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1981, Volume 2*, 218). He pointed out that such a defense of a nation does not exist for its own sake but is needed to allow economic development through industry, commerce, farming, and education. Similarly, the work of defense and confirmation exists not for itself but to preserve an environment in which the local churches can grow and develop. DCP's charge is to both fight directly and to equip the saints to affirm and defend the full scope of the New Testament revelation concerning God's economy as it has been brought to us through the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. Thus, DCP does not carry on the work of defense and confirmation by itself; this work is the responsibility of every church, including every elder and every saint.