

September 6, 2019

To the Blending Brothers through Bro. Ron Kangas,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! After much prayer and fellowship, the co-workers in the Southern Philippines are writing to you this letter to lay before you our grave concern regarding brothers Albert Lim and Joseph Lim's misrepresentation, ambiguity, ruinous inconsistency and destructive interference in the work in the Southern Philippines. This has resulted in the prolonging and worsening of the multiple problems that we have been facing here.

Last April 13, 2019 a letter from five brothers namely: Benson Phillips, Ron Kangas, Ed Marks, Joseph Lim and Albert Lim was read to selected co-workers in the Southern Philippines by brother's Albert Lim and Mark Raabe. After the reading of the letter there was the feeling of discouragement and confusion. We were not given a copy of the letter which was supposed to be addressed to us, making it impossible {to} for us to review, reconsider and learn whatever we need to learn from that letter. Later we found out that the co-workers in the Northern Philippines, who were not the subject of the letter were given a copy instead, which confused us more.

The opening paragraph of that letter said:

*"It has come to our attention that that some who consider themselves co-workers in the Lord's recovery are exercising what they assume to be their God-given authority to remove elders in the churches and replace them with others who are appointed by them. This kind of practice, which, we understand, is going on even as we write this letter, is a violation of the fundamental principles in the New Testament. In this letter we want to present to you some excerpts from the ministry of Witness Lee that convey the proper understanding of the relationship between the co-workers (including the Apostles) and the elders of the churches. Please [see] the ministry excerpts attached to this letter."*

We quoted this paragraph because this shows one of our fundamental problems with Joseph and Albert. Whatever it is that has come to your attention, we can only presume that the leading source is Joseph and Albert since they are the ones who have direct involvement with the work here. In view of what happened both before and recently in Iligan and in some other parts of the Southern Philippines, we would categorically say that it is highly inaccurate to portray these happenings as due to "some who consider themselves co-workers in the Lord's recovery (who) are exercising what they assume to be their God-given authority to remove elders in the churches and replace them with others who are appointed by them."

Of the four elders in Iligan who have been removed, the first one (a fulltime elder) was stopped and removed by his fellow elders on allegations of attempted rape. The second Farley Vilan (an elder and a co-worker) was first stopped and removed by his fellow elders (with alleged full authority from Joseph Lim) on the ground of multiple sexual misbehavior. Then he [was] stopped again by Jim Miller and Willie Wise with some workers from here, and the third and final time by the leading brothers here in fellowship with Albert and Ron. In the third and final time Albert said that "although the process is wrong yet the fact is strong, forget about the process, let's go to the facts." The third one (also an elder and co-worker on the ground of previous committal of fornication) was removed by the leading brothers including brother's David Tan, Steve Lim and Richard Juan from Cebu.

Bobby Nanaman one of the elder(s) at that time strongly resisted his removal but was later convinced by the brothers from Cebu.

After this(these) three removals, one elder transferred residence leaving only two functioning elders In Iligan, Bobby Nanaman and Mario Narita. There was a feeling for the need of additional elders, so the co-workers laboring in Lanao (a cluster wherein Iligan is a part) recommended several brothers for the addition, but many were strongly rejected by Bobby Nanaman, approving only two (both of whom are GBPI personnel). So finally, only this(these) two were added, Ephraim Lina and Aldrin Cayod-ong.

Later, Bobby Nanaman was removed (on the ground of spiritual leprosy resulting to dissension and division) through the fellowship of the co-workers mostly from Mindanao and a letter signed by about 50 of them. The co-workers sees this brother, both in heart and action, as a continuation of Bro. Samuel Lee's devious act of sowing division by pitting churches and saints against the co-workers through negative and critical speaking against the work. Several attempts were made to cause him to turn but to no avail. Eventually some elders and coworkers(-) are already considering of not sending their young people to the Training and Conference in Iligan if the situation is not turned(around). Albert later reacted why they were not informed first before the removal, but upon seeing the letter and its signer, he honored the removal. He even said that had they been informed they would have "double force" the removal. He also suggested to "how about" to remove including the three elders, especially the two newly appointed, so the church in Iligan could start with a clean slate. The co-workers here already sensed that these two, Ephraim and Aldrin, were affected and influenced by Bobby Nanaman yet no one acted on that suggestion at that time.

Then come(s) a time when a GBPI personnel inform a coworker from Zamboanga del Norte that they will come to display books during their churches fellowship. At first the co-worker happily agreed but later, he backtracked and refused them from coming after learning that in Lanao del Norte, GBPI has stopped displaying books for several churches fellowship already. This cause(ed) the co-workers to be concerned that the bookroom is no longer objective in their function but was rather influenced by the discord between the elders of the church in Iligan and the work. During the bi-monthly fellowship in General Santos City, this matter was discussed and brother's Deseyo Serra and Antero Castillon brought out Albert's previous suggestion to include in the removal the two newly appointed elder's as the best solution to keep GBPI neutral and not dragged(ing) it into the conflict between the church and the work. The other co-workers were convinced by Deseyo and Antero's fellowship based upon Albert's suggestion and they approved that the two elders be removed. Later, when Emmanuel Bongales arrived from Manila he was informed about the decision and was instructed by the co-workers to go to Iligan with Deseyo and Antero to execute the decision.

In his fellowship with the(x) Deseyo and Antero, Emmanuel opened to them that since Bobby has just been removed, it seems not good to remove another two elders. He also fellowshipped this with the co-workers In Lanao and they suggested to how about add elders, instead of removing. At that time the church in Iligan was already divided into two factions. They suggested to have two brothers from each side (four brothers in all) as additional to the eldership. To this Deseyo replied that we should not be in a hurry in appointing, while Antero said that he has no leading from the Lord. The addition therefore was not carried out. Emmanuel told them that they will be responsible to the Lord about their decision but he would also be responsible to the Lord for not carrying out the original decision by the coworkers. He therefore opened up to them the first decision to remove the two elders and both Deseyo and Antero agreed, so they went to Iligan to execute the decision.

We purposely made this long narration of events to prove that:

1) No elder here has been removed by "some who consider themselves co-workers in the Lords recovery (who) are exercising what they assume to be their God-given authority to remove elders in the churches." The third elder in Iligan who was removed due to previous fornication was done in fellowship by The leading brothers here. The removal of Bobby Nanaman was done in fellowship with a letter signed by about 50 co-workers and later honored by Albert. The removal of Ephraim and Aldrin was decided during the regular quarterly fellowship of the co-workers in General Santos City based on Albert Lim's suggestion. The first elder was removed by his fellow elders and Farley Vilan was first removed through manipulation by his fellow elders with alleged full authority from Joseph Lim.

2) No elder here was appointed as a replacement to the elder/s who was/were removed in a manner mentioned above. We fully agree that such practice is a violation of the fundamental principles in the New Testament. After the passing away of our so-called "senior co-workers," we made a decision in the work here that decisions like appointing elders should be done in fellowship especially among experienced workers rather [than] by someone who presume[d] to possess such authority.

It grieved our hearts to hear, and now, after having a copy, to read again even just the opening paragraph of that letter and we hold our brothers Joseph Lim and Albert Lim responsible for misrepresenting the work here and giving you brothers a false impression based on what we believe is wrong information.

We believe that this also exposed one of our fundamental problem(s) with Joseph and Albert. Often times they get their information about the Work from other sources instead of directly talking to us. No wonder what they often have is one-sided information. Especially with the case of Joseph Lim. We feel that he only likes to get information from the ones that he likes to listen to (like the GBPI personnel) rather that(n) to(from) the workers here. We admit that is a handicap on our part because most of our leading ones are not computer literate and can hardly speak straight English. That is why often times we feel that we are left out in the dark, misunderstood and misjudged. Although Albert have(has) already asked for forgiveness about the removing of Ephraim and Aldrin which he suggested and approved and carried out by the workers here, yet we believe that if this matter of one-sided or even bias(ed) information is not solved we will always have problem with this brothers here in the south.

Another fundamental problem is the ambiguity, inconsistency or lack of straightforwardness in their dealing with us and in their interference in the work here.

As mentioned above, we saw brother Albert's backtracking from his previous word regarding the removing of the three elders, especially the two (Ephraim and Aldrin). A year ago, Bro. Albert gave them the directive to remove the two elders in Iligan City, when they executed it, the letter read to selected workers on April 13, 2019 hinted that they were "lawless and immature apostles". Later when Bro. Albert was confronted concerning his reversal from his position a year ago, Bro. Albert lightly dismissed the matter by saying that he did not remember directing the co-workers to remove the two elders in Iligan City in 2018 though later he apologized because he is for peace.

At an earlier date in April 2019, Bro. Albert sent a text message to a leading co-worker directing him not to appoint or remove elders in the Southern Philippines. He added in his text message that "one can be an apostle in Ozamiz but not in Iligan or in Cebu". This text message was Bro...

Albert's rash reaction to a rumor spread by divisive brothers in Iligan City that some co-workers are going to Iligan to appoint elders. The truth of the matter is that the co-workers went to Iligan City to coordinate for the practical services in the two weeks collegian's training.

The co-workers were not only bothered by his absurd statement but also alarmed by Bro. Albert's ruinous inconsistency. In the first case of removing Bro. Bobby Nanaman from the eldership, Bro. Albert considered it as a legitimate act of apostleship. Then in the second case of removing the two elders, it was considered as an illegitimate act by "lawless and immature apostles". It is safe to say that even without much considerations, one can conclude that these two cases were the same in its nature. These are related and consecutive cases of three elders in the same locality sowing division in the churches by means of public criticism and open rebellion against the work. Such serious actions definitely warrant disqualification from the eldership in the church.

Then adding insult to an injury, despite his blatant inconsistency and absurd statements, Bro. Albert Lim callously directed the co-workers to reinstate the two elders in Iligan City. His directive of reinstating the two elders resulted in the humiliation and open shaming of the co-workers before the saints and the churches. This reinstatement is like the putting of a bright spotlight on their backtracking and reversal from their previous decision.

Nevertheless, bearing the full brunt of the humiliation and shame the co-workers reinstated the two elders right after the two weeks collegian's training held in Iligan City last May 2019. The following Lord's day after the reinstatement there was an open division in the church-life in Iligan City which is still existing until today.

Later on, through his respond(response) to our letter, Bro. Albert Lim unashamedly told us that the problem of division in Iligan should be solve(d) by the elders in Iligan and some qualified workers. During this time the leading co-workers in the Southern Philippines would insist that he has to personally solve the problem of division in Iligan City because it was the direct result of his interference in the previous effort by the co-workers who were genuinely solving the problem in Iligan City.

Another point that caught the attention of the co-workers during the reading of the letter on the night of April 13th was the mentioning of Bro. Joseph Lim as one of the signatories of the letter. The co-workers in the Southern Philippines being an elder of the church in Quezon City and the manager of the Gospel Bookroom of the Philippines in Iligan City.

His standing in the work was put in question because of an event that transpired last February of this year. After the decision was executed by the co-workers in the Southern Philippines in removing the two elders in Iligan City from the eldership, a senior co-worker in the Southern Philippines received a text message from Bro. Joseph Lim. In his text message he explicitly mentioned that he (Bro. Joseph) does not agree with the decision of the co-workers and also the action of the co-workers in using Bro. Albert's name to give some semblance of legitimacy in the decision.

The text also said that he (Bro. Joseph) in thorough fellowship with the leading co-workers in the U.S. are jointly admonishing the co-workers in the Southern Philippines to reconsider their actions...

...and reinstate the two elders in Iligan City. Bro. Joseph Lim ended his text message with a sober warning that if the case of the two elders is not properly handled there will be repercussions coming that will greatly affect the recovery and testimony of the Lord in the Southern Philippines.

The co-workers in the Southern Philippines greatly considered the text message of Bro. Joseph Lima as a direct interference in the decision of the work. His words clearly showed that he went beyond the measure of his rule as an elder in Quezon City and as a manager of the Gospel Bookroom in Iligan City.

A few years back, Bro. Joseph Lim already had a history of interfering in the church affairs in Iligan City. He directed Bro. Tony Sy, an elder in Iligan City to handle the case of removing a fellow elder (Bro. Farley Vilan) in the eldership in Iligan City. When the co-workers exhorted Bro Tony concerning the principle that in practice it is the spiritual responsibility and domain of the work to handle cases related to the removal of an elder. Bro. Tony confessed to the co-workers that it was Bro. Joseph Lim who gave him full authority to investigate the case of Bro. Farley Vilan resulting to his removal from the eldership.

During the first quarter of 2018, at the height of Bro. Aldrin and Bro. Ephraim's public criticism and aggressive opposition to the work, meetings were held by gospel bookroom personnels in which these two elders took the lead being bookroom personnel themselves. An argument occurred in one of the meetings concerning the cancellation of the two weeks collegian's training scheduled for April 2018.

Two bookroom personnels (Bro. Gilbert and Bro. Isabelo) express their opinion during the meeting that bookroom personnels as meeting saints in the local churches should submit to the decision of the work regarding the cancellation of the two weeks training. But the two elders who were taking the lead in the meeting argued strongly that bookroom personnnels should put aside the decision of the work in canceling the training.

When the two weeks collegian's training was canceled, these two elders feigning repentance went to the leading co-workers in Ozamiz City to apologize for their rebellious actions. After apologizing for their actions, these two elders came back to Iligan City and vindictively recommended to Bro. Joseph Lim the dismissal of brothers Gilbert and Isabelo from their service in the bookroom since they took side with the other group. Bro. Joseph sided with the recommendation of these three elders by giving his approval in dismissing the two bookroom brothers. We recognize that as President of the bookroom, the removing of this(these) brothers as bookroom personnel is entirely within Joseph Lim's authority and prerogative. Yet on the other hand, this partial, unjust, and vindictive action committed by the bookroom management to these two brothers could be considered as one of the fermenting factors that led to the division of serving ones in Iligan City. This devious move clearly highlighted Bro. Joseph Lim's close association with the dissenting eldership in Iligan City.

Earlier to this, the co-workers in the Southern Philippines were also confused by the action taken by Bro. Willie Wise in suggesting an English proficiency program to be introduced in the collegians training in Iligan which was clearly a deviation from the main and central burden of the training. In another occasion, Bro Willie Wise directed co-workers not to allow Bro. Vergilio Mamacang to join

...the Middle Age Training in Cebu City despite the fact that this prerogative of screening trainees can only be exercised by the elders of the sending church.

In the past, Bro. Willie also interfered in the case of removing Bro. Farley Vilan from the eldership in Iligan City. The work had earlier decided to bring the case of Bro. Farley to the ministering brothers during the scheduled 2018 PTERO in Malabon. But Bro. Willie together with Bro. Jim Miller in 2017 strongly suggested to the co-workers that the work must come up with an immediate decision in the case of Bro. Farley instead of waiting for the 2018 PTERO. The co-workers felt that the strong suggestion of the two ministering brothers clearly bordered on their interfering in the decision of the work in the Southern Philippines.

The condition and situation of the eldership in Iligan City is the tip of the iceberg with regards to the real problem. The real problem is the sowing of division by Bro Samuel Lee, Bro. Bobby Nanaman, Bro. Ephraim Lina and Bro. Aldrin Cayod-ong in the province of Lanao Del Norte. These brothers are subtly pitting the churches against the work by their critical and negative criticism causing saints to have a negative spirit toward the work. The scope of this problem of division sown by Samuel Lee and adopted by his followers also includes the province of Negros Oriental in which several churches are now affected by division.

Another example of sowing discord by these divisive brothers is by spreading a rumor that co-workers in Lanao Del Norte are appointing elders in Iligan City last April 2019. This rumor was intended to stir up the negative feelings of local saints who are wary of the cycles of appointing and removing elders in Iligan City. The truth is that these co-workers went to Iligan City to coordinate for the collegians two weeks training. This rumor was design(ed) to stir up a negative spirit among the local saints against the co-workers. This resulted in a discord in the coordination among serving ones in Iligan City for the two weeks training.

What is complicating this problem is the oblivious attitude and inconsistency of Bro. Albert in dealing with these divisive brothers. Aggravating the problem is the bias affiliation of Bro. Joseph Lim with the dissenting elders in Iligan City and Bro. Willie's insensible interference in the church affairs in Iligan City. After considering for six years this redundant yearly situation, the co-workers had soberly concluded that Bro. Albert, Bro. Joseph, and Bro. Willie are clearly part of this problem.

Regarding Samuel Lee, the co-workers here knew his person, his intention and his course of action. We do believe that Albert was not oblivious of this fact as evidenced by the letter of warning that he and Mark Raabe wrote for Samuel Lee. Yet again the exercise of ambiguity and inconsistency. He asked six leading co-workers to sign their letter and send it to Samuel, thus making that letter in effect a letter of the work here as represented by the six leading co-workers who signed it. Until today Samuel's follower in Negros will not believe that that letter came from Albert arguing simply that if that letter was him or them, then why is it that their names were not on the signatories, again giving them the ground to accuse the co-workers as liars and fabricators of falsehood.

When Emmanuel and some brothers ask(ed) Albert with some companions to visit Dumaguete together in order to clarify this matter they agreed and went but because of a typhoon the co-

...workers from Mindanao were not able to cross the sea to Dumaguete. Later they found out that instead of clarifying the matter, Albert just told the saints that Samuel is doing fine in the US and is being involved in the services thus, in effect, uplifting Samuel and discrediting the co-workers before the eyes of Samuel's follower in Negros.

Regarding Albert's move to send Samuel back to the US and join the middle age training, we would not question his motive and prerogative on this matter. We are thankful for his desire to take Samuel out of Negros by sending him to the US as a step for healing the situation there. Yet without clarifying his motive to Samuel's followers, it only strengthened the belief that Samuel has sown in them that he is somehow a victim of the vindictiveness and persecution of some of the co-workers due to personal conflict, thus covering the main issue regarding his work of inciting dissention and division. Joseph Lim even suggested for the work here to financially support Samuel and his family while he is training in the US. The answer off(of) course is a strong no and some were even infuriated by such an absurd idea of supporting someone who has caused us so much trouble and pain. For Joseph to make such a suggestion only cause(d) some co-workers to question his real knowledge and standing on the matter and by extension some other matter related to the work here.

This kind of ambiguity, inconsistency and creless interference whether intentional or due to lack of real knowledge is what we believe was the reason why the problem in Negros has lingered for so long until this day and has no sign yet of being solved. Samuel's followers are empowered in their belief that they were right all along and those who opposed Samuel including the co-workers were wrong, thus there is no need for them to admit to any fault which would have opened the way for a genuine reconciliation.

In view of these very serious concerns we mentioned, we the co-workers in the Southern Philippines are laying before you our strong recommendation that the work will no longer invite Bro. Albert Lim to minister the word during the twice a year SOPTERO in Ozamiz City, Likewise, Bro. Willie Wise will no longer be invited to minister the word in the collegian's training and conference in the Southern Philippines. As for Bro. Joseph Lim, the co-workers are looking forward in the near future to speak a frank and exhorting word to him about the serious need that he stays within the measure of his rule.

The co-workers are hoping and praying that this letter will serve to bring about a firm forward step toward a genuine solution to the real problem in the Southern Philippines. We earnestly feel that if this problem will linger for years, our next generation will question our firmness and steadfastness in facing the problem of sowing division in the churches.

Finally, we the co-workers in the Southern Philippines gratefully acknowledged the labor of the brothers from the U.S. in faithfully ministering the word for more than two decades and for your genuine concern for the churches in the Southern Philippines. Under these(this) faithful labor and genuine concern we are persuaded that God is able to keep and guard the good deposit in all the churches. We continually look forward to your coming back in the near future to minister the healthy teachings concerning God's New Testament Economy for the perfecting, growth and maturity of the saints and of the churches in the Southern Philippines.

Sincerely yours,

The Co-workers in the Southern Philippines

