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Feature

One Faith (One Body of Doctrine)

FF Chong

In his epistle to the church in Ephesus, Paul teaches that there is only one faith (Eph 4:5). One reason for such a reminder is against the backdrop of the growing heretic influence on the church (Eph 4:14). Paul exposes the harmful effects of the heresies, against which the church must stand firm. Since there is only one faith, any other which falls outside the boundary of the apostolic teachings would be deemed heretic. However, it would be pointless advice if in the first place, the church has not put in place the one doctrine (one faith).

This one doctrine cannot be altered and abolished after its establishment. Paul instructed Timothy to remain in Ephesus to charge some that they should preach no other doctrine (1 Tim 1:3). 'To charge' indicates 'to command' in a military sense. The subordinate must be subservient enough to obey whatever charge is issued. This instruction of Paul goes to show that the doctrine of the early church is to be kept wholeheartedly with the strictest adherence demanded. The whole church must come together not only to spread the doctrine but to preserve its divine origin.

The charge is on 'teach no other doctrine'. This advice to Timothy surfaces the presence of false prophets in the church. They preach a deviant doctrine, which is contrary to the apostolic doctrine (cf. Acts 2:42; 1 Tim 6:3-4). Their doctrine is far detached from the glorious gospel of the Lord (1 Tim 1:11). Apparently, what they taught is against the gospel of salvation. They must be stopped from preaching another gospel. The apostles' doctrine deserves the highest respect. There is no exception. No one, including Paul himself (Gal 1:6-7), can function above the apostles' doctrine.

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul urged the saints to stand against those who come with a message contrary to the doctrine (Rom 16:17). They must note those who come in with another gospel. This means that the correct set of doctrines must have been taught to the church, and under no circumstances should it be amended. So, there must have been a set of commonly acceptable beliefs established in the church. Otherwise, there would be no premise for them to identify the conflicting message, not to mention defending it.

The apostolic belief unites the church. God's children are expected and must be determined to follow it through obediently. Deviation from the established truth (2 Pet 1:2) is just as bad and guilty as bringing in offences (Rom 16:17) to the community of God. Peter uses the term 'offences,' which is a word with a strong negative connotation. Its meaning is inseparably fused together with the ideas of desecration and destruction. No wonder, Paul bravely points out that these people do not serve the Lord but themselves. They come in with a clear intention to deceive.

Likewise, John, in his first epistle, unreservedly warns the church to test the spirits. The reason given is that there have been many false teachers who have gone out into the world (1 Jn 4:1). One of the ways to test is based on the apostolic standard: 'We (the apostles) are of God. He who knows God hears us (the apostles); he who is not of God does not hear us (the apostles). By this we (the apostles) know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error' (1 Jn 4:6). The refusal to heed the apostolic doctrine indicates a severance from Christ, resulting in going into the world.

More profoundly, the apostolic doctrine is divinely inspired and Spirit-driven. It becomes the standard to differentiate between the work of the Spirit and the work of the spirit of error. Clearly, any doctrine which differs from the apostolic one is not from God. The danger cannot be greater for those who piece their own set of beliefs together. The danger is two-fold. First, it gives ground to Satan to work judging from what John says. Second, what will Satan do? Will he lead man to salvation? Surely not! He brings corruption and eventually leads man to destruction.

The form of Doctrine of the True Jesus Church

How should we view the doctrine of the True Jesus Church? How can we be certain that her existing set of doctrines is the apostolic one? We can address these questions in two ways. First, it is the Spirit who guides the church into all truth (Jn 16:13). With the abiding presence of the Spirit with the church, the accompanying system of beliefs can be confidently believed to be the truth. Recently, there have been many ill-intended questions posed to undermine the doctrines of the church. We believe that through the presence of the Spirit, the Lord will teach us how to answer their provocations (see Mt 22:15-46).

Second, the form of belief of the True Jesus Church is in line with the core belief of the apostles: it is on the resurrection of Christ, and is followed by repentance and the remission of sins. Prior to venturing out to preach, the apostles are told to wait for the coming of the Spirit (Lk 24:36-49). The church firmly believes in the resurrection of Jesus. This is what the church teaches and frequently reminds both truth-seeking friends and brethren alike time and again. In terms of evangelism, the teachings of water baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit are always proclaimed.

An example of a provocative challenge is that while accepting that the foot-washing and Holy Communion sacraments are performed on account of Christ's instruction, some question why Sabbath observation is singled out from the Ten Commandments to be included in the set of doctrines of the church. These people then accuse the church of not following the doctrine of the apostles because there is no clear-cut indication in the New Testament which confirms that making the Sabbath to be part of the system of belief is valid.

We can answer this question by looking at one of the functions of the doctrine. It is given to correct (Tit 1:9). In the apostolic times, observing the Sabbath was not a problem. Both Jesus, the apostles and the church kept the Sabbath. (Thus, we have first established that keeping the Sabbath is a teaching of the Lord and His apostles.) However, in the third century the Sabbath commandment was changed, moving the Sabbath to the first day of the week (Sunday) in the process. This change caused the entire Christian world to have no part in the rest of God. This in effect draws Christians away from entering into the future rest that God has prepared for His people (Heb 4:9-10).

Since the mission of the true church is to save, which the early church had faithfully carried out, it is thus necessary for the True Jesus Church to point out to the world the need of keeping the Sabbath - to correct the Christian world in order to save. Not keeping the seventh day Sabbath would result in losing salvation. In this light, making the Sabbath observance on the

seventh day to be a system of doctrine of the church not only has not gone against the teaching of the apostles, it in fact reinforces the mission of the church that Christ has given to His servants. The intention is to point out the wrong and lead man to the right path – it saves. This is truly Spirit-inspired.

When comparing the system of beliefs of the apostles and that of the True Jesus Church, we first see that there is no contradiction between the two. Second, although there are some innocuous variations in emphasis between the apostles' doctrine and that of the TJC, both are of the same foundation. That is, the apostolic church emphasized one aspect of the system of beliefs more than us and vice versa. In view of the Sabbath having been changed, we emphasize it more than the apostles did. However, they emphasized more on salvation through grace in the wake of some Judaizers advocating returning to the Law for salvation (Acts 15:1-2), as compared to our situation though the need to do so nowadays is beginning to emerge as well.

Conclusion

The doctrine, which is concerned with the way of salvation, must be kept in faith and love (2 Tim 1:13). 'In faith' means believing the rightness and trueness of the pattern and holding on to the pattern with great resolve. 'In love' calls for practicing the doctrine in its essence – to love God and to love man (1 Jn 2:3-10; 5:2-3). Together, they give the idea that the pattern shall never be changed given the most difficult of circumstances and that love and doctrine are not mutually exclusive. This is what must be done constantly throughout the life of the believers, despite the relentless and increasing challenges against the pattern of the sound words.

However, the true believers of God know full well that there is only so much we can do to help ourselves. We need the Spirit, who lives in us (2 Tim 1:14). The advice of Paul is to rely on the Spirit to keep the pattern of the sound words. On the one hand, it tells us how important it is to remain and live within the framework of the truth. On the other hand, such an advice brings to light the uniqueness of the pattern of the sound words. There is only one form and it must be kept with the power of the Holy Spirit.



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Advancing the Gospel through Evangelizing to Children

Pr. Wan Fa Chen

Through the ministry in Cambodia, we have established 15 gathering places for service and 11 places for service for children. The volunteers from abroad train the workers to fit our needs, with the main goal of promoting evangelism to children. Naturally, the parents also attend services with their children. Therefore, the workers go out in pairs on Sabbath services, one in charge of services for the adults, while the other leads services for the children.

There are many forces behind promoting children's evangelism: Deacon Rong Can Xiao from Taiwan led a team every year to hold a children's Bible camp; Preacher Li Rong Chen led religious education teachers to conduct short-term intensive trainings; sister Bin Lin Chen, Mei En Huang, Jia Hui Huang from Neihu Church strengthened the religious education worship services; volunteers from Malaysia and Hong Kong etc. also contributed to promoting the growth of our religious education.



Adult Evangelism in Obort



Children Evangelism in Obort

By God's grace, the religious education teachers in Cambodia have conducted large-scale evangelical services for children with more than 30 children attending in two places in Prey Veng Province and two in Kampong Speu Province. Arrangements have been made to hold religious education services during regular Sabbath services or evening services.

Thank the Lord, holding the children's Bible camp is equivalent to evangelizing to children.

The parents also attended to care for their children. We also held evangelical services for adults and these parents have been regular truthseekers. After eight to nine months, they have gradually understood the truth. Once we have reinforced the teachings of our doctrines, the parents would lead their children to receive the baptism of water in accordance with the truth at the Spiritual Convocation.



Adult Evangelism in Vearl Thom



Children Evangelism in Vearl Thom

Since we have strengthened the children's services at various places, the need for workers has become increasingly great. Some are needed to conduct the children's services while others are needed to facilitate the services for adults. By the promise of the Bible, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20).

Currently, we have the following religious education teachers (names translated using Chinese pinyin): Shalun, Tielan, Tiela, Ganzhenna, Shupowan, Sunna, Ni, Latana, Laxing, and Xienie etc.

As a result, there are currently 11 places for children's services and services are held regardless of the number of children attending. Thank the Lord, these youth workers work together in unity and submissiveness. God's promises are certainly trustworthy and reliable (Matthew 9:38). We will continue to pray for the Lord to grant us with more workers to promote various types of holy work and to establish the church that glories the true God.



2017 Work Report of European Pioneering Area

European Pioneering Area Care Team

European Pioneering area covers Spain, Italy, and Greece. The ministry of each country is as follows:

Spain

Places of Worship	Number of Believer
Madrid	50
Albacete	13 (as families)
Barcelona	10 + truthseeker

Chapel in Madrid



Outlook before renovation



Outlook after renovation



Inner part before renovation



Inner part after renovation

The Situation of Ministry in Spain:

- In Spain, there are three places of worship: Madrid, Albacete, and Barcelona.
- Among these places of worship, the place with the largest number of believers and most stable organization is in Madrid. Under the IA's assistance in August 2015, they purchased an old repair

shop with two floors, about 200 square meters from top to bottom for the price of 180,000 euros. After renovating the first floor, it became a chapel which accommodates about 80 people in the hall. The second floor was renovated into a kitchen, religious education classrooms and dormitory. In addition to ground-based of the reconstruction which needs and local laws and regulations and must be contracted by the local construction company, the rest of the project is mainly done by the experienced upholstery of our believers who kept the spirit of the saints to rebuild the temple, the spirit of the restoration of holy city, sacrificed their time and eagerly devoted themselves day and night. Each brick and tile are mixed with the brothers' sweat and tears. With the congregation's help, the building was completed less than 2 months just in time for ESSC, which was held near the end of August 2016. All the renovation costs summed to a total of 86,883 euros. The dedication ceremony will be held per IA's approval after the ordered tables arrive. By then, it will be the first True Jesus Church building in European pioneering area, which located at Madrid, Spain. May God bless and watch over this church!

- There are two spiritual convocations a year. One is in mid-August and the other is in late December, and the assisting workers are assigned by IA.
- In addition, religious education teachers visits and help with religious education four times a year.
- The RE group established by the German-speaking countries' coordination board accompanies the trainees of local religious education teachers twice a year.

Italy

Places of Worship	Number of Believer
Empoli 	50 
Prato	35
Napoli	13
Milan	8

The Situation of Ministry in Italy:

- The total number of believers is more than a hundred, who are all scattered around the area. There are now four places of worship listed as shown left. The place of worship in Milan was established on September 2016 when a worker of a pastoral region moved there for work. Besides Milan, about 20 believers are scattered nearby in other different areas.

- Most believers live in Empoli. Since 2015, we've rented a shop where a sign can be put out for regular service and spiritual convocation. From then on, the believers no longer had problems with neighbors' complaint, police's visit, or being forced to move as a response from the sounds of prayer. Thank God!
- The places of worship which hold Sabbath service and are led by believers are: Empoli, Plato, and Milan
- The believers who cannot keep the Sabbath attend an online service using an app called "qq," led by a deacon, which is available every Sabbath in their respective region. If the deacon is not available, we would do our best to contact sermon speakers in the respective region to lead.
- To cooperate with the church in Spain, the national spiritual convocation is held twice a year respectively in mid-August and late December in Empoli and Naples.
- In addition, every year in March in Empoli there is a regional spiritual convocation, which is mainly assisted by the care group.
- The holy work in Italy requires long term watering and prayer since most of the believers are factory workers. They live and lodge in the factory itself. Whenever materials are available in factory, they would work more than 15 hours a day regardless if it's a weekday or weekend. Also, since factories are located in remote areas, it's an inconvenience for believers to come to church. Besides the schedule, the believers are afraid to go out for the sake of security. The factory bosses of do not like workers bringing friends to visit the factory or home, so visiting believers have become a difficult problem. May God have mercy and open a way!

Greece

Places of Worship	Number of Believer
Athen	23 + 10 Truthseeker



The Situation of Ministry in Greece:

- The rented chapel is located in an apartment building shared by the believers.
- More believers would attend service during the autumn and winter time. In summer time, there are some believers who go to the beach to work, so attendance would decrease.
- Spiritual Convocation is to be held 3 times a year in January, April, and November, by the IA and European Pioneering Area Care team.

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 *Intercession*

1. Please pray for IA work assignment as below:

Date	Location	Program	Personnel
4/1-4/30	Sabah	Church's Pastoral Work	Habakuk Hee
4/1-4/2		Literary Camp (Refine and polish spiritual essays in English and Chinese)	Tsai Kar Chung
4/3-4/6		Preacher's Seminar (Systematic Theology on Bible& Hebrew)	H.H. Ko
4/27-5/22	Malaysia	Regional Pastoral	En Yuan Ho
4/30-5/1		National Ministers Spiritual Nurture and National Ministers Meeting	
4/2-4/10	Australia	Autumn Evangelistic and Spiritual Convocation (Brisbane)	Silas Kong
4/10-4/15		Divine workers' seminar/training (Perth-Dianella) Elisha Shim	Elisha Shim
4/16-4/22		Working Youth Retreat (Perth-Cannington)	
4/23-4/30		Divine workers' seminar/training (Perth-Dianella)	
4/14-4/19	Korea	Seminar on Evangelism (Introduction and discussion on the evangelical work in Taiwan)	Jin-Rong Chen
4/21-4/24		Spiritual Meeting(Fu Shan Church)	
4/24-5/16	Japan	Church's Pastoral Work	Cheng Wei Lin
4/16-4/22	India	Youth Spiritual Meeting/Junior&Senior Bible Camp/Area Spiritual Meeting	India Preachers & Volunteers
4/27-5/8		Evangelical Service/Youth Leadership Training/Seminar (Women's Fellowship & Role in Church)/Visitation of Churches	Isaiah Phan
4/1-4/2	Philippines	Central Region RE Teachers Seminar (Mansilingan)	Zebedee Chong
4/4-4/6		Preachers Seminar (Mansilingan)	Joel Chong

4/6-4/25		Short Term Theological Course (Mansilingan)	
4/30		Central Region Divine Workers Seminar	John Vun
4/28-4/30	Canada	Church dedication & Spring ESSC (Calgary)	J. Chou
4/28-4/30		Spring ESSC (Montreal)	S. Hwang
4/14-5/14	Argentina	Visitation/Bible Seminar/Divine Workers Training	YJ Lin
4/23		Truth-Seekers Forum	
April	Ecuador	Pastoral Work	CM Chu
4/1-4/2	France	Spiritual Convocation	WHDWM
4/12-4/14	Germany	Students Training (Heidelberg)	HH Ko
4/14-4/16		Spring Spiritual Convocation (Heidelberg)	HH Ko Bao Qin Wang
April	Greece	Member Visit&Concern/Spiritual Convocation	Bao Qin Wang
4/27-5/14	Russia	Pastoral Visitation & Spiritual Convocation (4/29-5/1)	S. Hwang

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🌱 *You Could Help the Worldwide Evangelism Mission Simply by Contribution a dollar a day...*



How You Can Help

You are called to take action for the sake of worldwide evangelism and the spreading of the gospel...with **a dollar a day**. If everyone could daily extend one dollar towards the International Assembly World Evangelism Fund, we could, together, accomplish the commission that our Lord Jesus Christ left behind. Your financial commitment will open up possibilities and resources that will lead us to save many souls.

Please take time to fill out the offering sheet available at your local church, to pass this message on to loved ones and family, and to pray for God's ministry. May the Lord be gracious to you!

To find out more about the dollar-a-day program and donation options, ***please contact*** ia@tjc.org **or** tjciatwn@ms25.hinet.net.

✧ *May our Lord remember your contribution and bless you abundantly!*

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