

*the* **CHURCH OF GOD**  
**PREPARING for the KINGDOM of GOD**  
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Dear Brethren,

The past two weeks have been difficult for brethren in Toledo and Detroit. Due to controversy over disagreement in a corporate meeting of Board members, issues came to light that needed to be addressed. In the sermon of last Sabbath (2/5/00), I tried to help brethren focus on those issues. As a pastor here and of a larger scattered area, I have been working to avert an immediate threat to the welfare of those whom God has placed in my charge.

Since things have happened so quickly and because I had to respond just as quickly to correct a movement against the welfare of the Church, I felt compelled to take the actions I mentioned in that sermon. However, it has now come to light that a better course can be followed to insure the protection of everyone. As of now, all letters given to any brethren during last Sabbath, that removed them from a status of "good standing," are revoked and no longer apply.

The reason for giving those letters was based on what I believed to be the only option open to me to protect the Church. Some people needed more time to pray and study about these matters and this seemed to be the only legal means to insure they could, while at the same time protecting the best interest of the Church. For others who were opposing the continuing welfare and direction of this church, there was certainly a need to inform them they were not members in good standing, but with the desire of offering a hand of reconciliation, those letters are revoked as well. It is hoped that everyone will respond in a positive and godly manner to make things right and to correct the wrongs that have been done.

I would like to explain the reason for this change and the need to get this letter to you as quickly as possible. There has been a lot of hurt and many rumors floating around. Such an atmosphere is very damaging to a fellowship. Some things have gotten way out of control. Let me explain.

Before the Sabbath was even over, some were beginning to spread the rumor that what I had done was an illegal action and the threat of litigation was being made. By midday Sunday, there was even an effort underway to call an emergency Board meeting with the intent of removing me as the pastor. I had to explain to the individual seeking to call the Board meeting that his efforts were now futile, as I had already started the procedure to disfellowship one Board member and that I would not hesitate to disfellowship any other Board members who continued to threaten the welfare of the Church.

In the sermon of last Sabbath, I tried to make it plain that I do not want to be forced to correct anyone, but will do what I must to protect the Church. As I stated, it is my desire that grace be given and not correction. This is being done out of love, but even out of love, correction will be given if that is the only alternative left.

Since some had already decided they were ready to remove me as pastor, it was quite obvious they did not want me as their pastor. So I called the same Board member who was seeking an emergency meeting and told him that the escalation of these matters was only going to cause greater pain and suffering among the brethren. I suggested that we have an amicable and peaceful separation. It was encouraged that they decide what they want as settlement, which concerns finances and equipment of the church, and then we would meet to determine if an agreement could be made. It was also encouraged that they start meeting separately as a congregation by this Sabbath, so as to ease the tension that was experienced after last Sabbath.

Perhaps that will not be needed now if all individuals will pause and rethink the direction they are taking, as I strive to give them the needed time to accomplish a reconciliation. Certainly, some things will change, but we are a family and hopefully we can reconcile spiritually to one another. I hope that by rescinding the letters of last Sabbath and postponing any recommended change to our By-laws, that it will show good faith and desire toward all that we have

the time necessary to begin working for true reconciliation. It is my recommendation that we cancel the annual meeting for this Saturday evening to another time in the future. This will hopefully give people more time to consider the issues at hand, work toward reconciliation, and spend the time necessary in private prayer and Bible study to become convicted of their beliefs, one way or the other in these matters.

These recommendations are now being made because of the breathing space that has been given to me, where the threat upon the Church has effectively been removed by legal counsel that has been received, concerning the strength of our By-laws. Since so many rumors were flying around about law suits and illegal actions, I retained legal counsel from one of the largest and most reputable law firms in northwest Ohio; Shumaker, Loop, & Kendrick.

The action I took was not illegal, but has proved to have been taken from a very strong position granted to me through the By-laws. However, that does not stop someone from seeking litigation. It did come out of the meeting that there was something that I had not considered, which gives me even more power to deal with matters that threaten the welfare of the Church. In essence, the By-laws are better than I had imagined when it comes to my position as a pastor and the standing of members in the Church.

The Church of God has the precedent of several decades of practice and belief that the ministry has the power to disfellowship a member when deemed necessary because of any unrighteous behavior that threatens the welfare of other brethren. A Board member who is disfellowshipped cannot remain a member of the corporation and certainly cannot remain a member of the Board. It was suggested that these By-laws are not as far removed from our doctrine as I believed, since the pastor may remove any Board member who threatens the welfare of the Church or anything that might cause great hurt to other brethren.

This understanding has given me great relief, as I do not believe there is any longer a threat to the corporation or the welfare of the Church. I am truly sorry that this has caused the kind of grief and panic that it has for some brethren. Because of the many wrongs we have witnessed in the past, some fears are still very real. Hopefully we are growing stronger and learning to discern more clearly what is of God and what is not. I apologize for any hurt I may have caused anyone, with the only action that I believed was at my disposal, as a last stand to protect the Church.

When opposition, silence and resistance was received from the Board, I recognized a real threat to the Church and acted upon it in the only way I believed I could at the time. That condition had to be addressed and changed immediately. Some wanted me to wait at that time, but I could not because of a real threat that some of them could not understand or perceive.

That which transpired over a period of less than two weeks has revealed many things to us if we have the eyes to see. I do not believe that what has transpired is a matter of coincidence, but a matter of God working to expose what needs to be corrected. This is essential if we are going to be able to continue moving forward together in order to be used by Him in greater ways. It has become clear that there is not complete harmony and unity within these congregations, but underlying currents that need correcting. In addition, some do not hold to the same belief and doctrine. If those that do not have the same doctrinal belief are willing to spend more time in study and prayer over these matters, they may be given that time as long as they do so without contention, divisiveness, or a wrong attitude. Some who have reacted to these matters out of envy, jealousy, resentment toward authority, justification for harboring offensive feelings, getting caught up in a spirit of rumor and slander - willing to believe the worst toward others, etc are things that must be repented of quickly and made right with others through genuine apology and reconciliation.

Let's receive one another as the family we are and seek to reconcile our relationships in godly love.

In Christ's service and with deep love to all,

Ron Weinland (February 7, 2000)