

UCGIA

United Church of God, *an International Association*
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Joel Meeker
Regional Coordinator

21 December 2010

Mr. Melvin Rhodes
Chairman, Council of Elders
United Church of God, *an International Association*

Dear Melvin,

I write to you in regard to the seat on the Council of Elders which has come to me following the recent resignations from the Council. It is my privilege to have served on the Council for about a third of our 15-year history in UCG. This service was for me a time of growth and learning, often challenging, and just as often rewarding. Sometimes I found myself in a majority, and sometimes in a minority on a variety of issues, but almost all the time those with whom I served on the Council were able to work respectfully with one another, and in respect of our governing documents, in what we believed was the best interest of the Church of God.

In considering whether to accept this charge once again, I have meditated on my own observations, sought counsel from men who have recently served on the Council and have considered this carefully with prayer for divine guidance.

As you know, accepting to serve on the Council would require, according to the Council Code of Ethics that I first signed in 1998, that I “uphold the consensus of the Council.” I take this very much to heart. Regrettably one need not be especially observant to see that the consensus of this Council has repeatedly violated, both in the letter and the spirit, our governing documents. These violations include:

1. Our corporate Constitution (for example Article 2.1.10.)
2. Our corporate Bylaws (for example Article 9.7.2.)
3. Our rules of association (for example Rules 3-110, 3-120, 4-120, and 4-140.)
4. Established internal policies (for example several of our Human Resources policies, and the policy that doctrinal material must be reviewed and approved by the Council Doctrine committee prior to publication.)

Several men attempted to bring many of these violations before the Council for discussion in both open and executive session a year ago – but, tellingly, many on this Council voted against such critical items even appearing on the agenda. A pattern has become clear: when such ethical issues have been raised to the Council its response has uniformly been “we are in charge” as if that answer puts an end to every concern and discussion. The Council is “in charge”, but only to

the extent allowed by our governing documents. It may not lawfully exceed that authority. To our corporate shame, this Council has done so time after time.

More importantly, this Council has repeatedly violated fundamental principles of Christianity. Commandments have been transgressed: the truth is regularly spun and twisted, the Sabbath command has been compromised, and even the sixth commandment has been violated, in the spirit, through violent verbal attacks on faithful elders and lay members who have dared stand on principle against the will of the Council.

In interaction with both members and elders, the Council has not acted in the spirit of Ephesians 4:2-3 “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” but rather with the spirit of gentile domination that Jesus condemned in Luke 22:24-27, fixated on who has power and who does not; who commands and who must be silent and submit.

This state of affairs places me in a conscientious dilemma. As stated above, the Council Code of Ethics would require that I uphold the consensus of the Council. But the same Code of Ethics would require me to “consider first the well-being of the Church and contribute to the needs and growth of the Church.” It is clear to me that what the well-being of the Church most urgently requires at this time is a substantive change in the grossly misguided and extra-legal consensus of the current Council. In the light of all this, it has begun clear to me that I cannot in good conscience serve on this Council of Elders. I must therefore decline the seat offered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel C. Meeker", written over a horizontal line.

Joel C. Meeker
French Regional Coordinator