

March 18, 2007

Dear Brethren,

Greetings in the name of OUR LORD and SAVIOR, JESUS, THE CHRIST.

Many recent and past events have dictated that I write this letter to you. It is with a heavy heart that I write to you now, and I pray that you will take the time to read this message, and pray for God's guidance as you read.

Most of you know me, and hopefully you know the passion and desire that I have for serving God and sharing the Good News of the coming Kingdom of God, just as it tells us to do in Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world.* Amen."

God began calling me at a very early age, and as I grew He revealed, through His Spirit things in His Word that, at the time, I didn't understand, but now that I am older, and through that same Spirit, He has given me understanding. In obeying Him, I share that understanding with whoever will listen.

I tried to get my family into the WWCOG back in the eighties, but God, in His wisdom prevented it. We continued serving Him in our home. A few years later, we tried to get involved with the CGI, and this was also prevented. At the time I didn't understand why, but God knew the problems that were about to happen in each and prevented us from possibly being scarred by it, as many others were.

I continued to pray for a place that we could fellowship together with other believers, but it didn't happen right away. I continued to search the scriptures and as the Holy Spirit revealed things to me, my family and I would make adjustments in our lives so that we could obey God.

God led me to the ICG Feast site in Kimberling City and from the moment I walked in, I felt I was home. Because I had seen the disturbing things that had happened with the WWCOG and CGI, I didn't bring my family the first year. This gave me an opportunity to meet a lot of people, including many of you, and after doing so, I knew that God had given me people of like minds to fellowship with. Sadly, even then, a small few could only see me as an outsider.

From that moment, God began opening more doors for me. I got to meet Mr. E. B. Vance, and he invited me over to spend the afternoon fellowshiping with him, and then I got to spend a lot of time with God's people. God gave us a way to open up our home to even more people than just those who were meeting with us before.

The next year, my wife and I jumped right in and began serving, just as God's people are supposed to do, and we enjoyed every minute of it, plus more of the people got to know us.

He continued to bless us in our area and a few years ago He teamed Robert Bruce and I up, and opened a door for us to begin reaching out to the people, not only in the KC area, but in other areas also.

We began having open bible studies, at first, which eventually led to having Sabbath services around the country. In every one of these services, we put out ICG materials and tapes, and we put up posters representing the ICG and the GTAEA. All the people who attended had the opportunity to fill out and request information from the ICG, and all of those requests were passed on to HQ.

God blessed us with being able to produce a newsletter that has been going out to over 200 people for well over a year. All of these people asked to be put on the mailing list. He blessed us with the opportunity to put our local sermons on CD. We didn't do it to compete with ICG, but instead to give people what they were asking for. We've never asked for people to support us. In fact, we've always told people to give where they are being fed, and to pray about it before they make a decision.

Now apparently, a few of those in key positions have begun to feel threatened by the Work that we are doing, which I thought was the same Work they were doing. We were asked to stop going out, to stop having the weekly bible study, and they have made several other unbiblical demands that I won't go into right now.

Accusations have been made that we were trying to pull people away from the ICG, and that we are trying to elevate ourselves in the ICG. That is far from the truth. If putting out ICG materials and supporting the Work is considered pulling people away, then I guess I am guilty. If serving God as a servant to His people is wrong, then I am guilty.

If being content in the position God has placed me in and doing the Work that He has given me to do is wrong, I guess I am guilty, but let God judge me. I have never thought of myself as anything more than a servant. I do not desire a position of power, but only to serve my Heavenly Father.

Sadly, in talking with these leaders, I have found that the foundation of the problem is with me, and not with Robert, but yet they didn't come to me, which is not biblical. Read Matthew 18:15 ¹⁵Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

To others, they have falsely accused me of stealing, while refusing to accept evidence showing otherwise. They did not come to me about it.

I ask you, "Is this the way a churches leaders should act?"

I could go on and on with all that has happened, but I would rather stay focused on the positive. The only reason I felt I should share this with you, is to let each of you know that the possibility of this same thing happening to any of you is very, very real. If you try to do the Work, or if you should ask the wrong questions, or if you should question acts that are unbiblical, you could find yourself in this same position. It has already happened to some before me, and I'm sure it will happen to others after me.

By no means am I perfect. I'm a sinner, and I still make a lot of mistakes, and I'm sure I will continue making mistakes, but I will continue on the course that God has set before me. I will continue to study the scriptures and allow God's Holy Spirit to guide me through them.

So much pressure has been put on Robert that we have both decided that we should part ways for awhile so that hopefully we can both continue the Work God has prepared for us. We may be parting, but will remain brothers in Christ, and will hold to the same admiration and love for each other that we've always had.

I cannot handle seeing my family suffer and hurt as they have. We may have to walk different routes for a while, but we, God willing will reach the same goal, and we are still God's children if we obey Him.

After a lot of prayer, fasting, and meditating on this, I have decided that I should leave the ICG. This was not an easy decision, but I can see no way to solve this when I've never had the opportunity to face my accusers. I am by no means leaving God's Church as some may try to tell you. I am by no means angry about what has happened, and I do love even those who have accused me. In fact, I believe that God is opening an even bigger door for me to step through to be able to continue the Work that He started with me many years ago. I will continue to reach out to all of God's people wherever they may be and share the Good News to all

who will listen. Robert, along with the rest of the board members, felt that I should continue working under the KC Church of God Ministries, so I will continue the newsletter, the website, the Friday night bible study, the CD sermons, and anything else God allows us to do. At Robert's request, and in hopes of taking pressure off of him, he has asked that all of his sermons, articles, and any reference to him be removed from the website and newsletter. If you have any questions for him, please contact him at the address below.

I will remain operating under the KC Church of God Ministries, P.O. Box 909, Harrisonville, MO 64701-0909.

Robert will operate under the ICG of Kansas City, P. O. Box 7214, Overland Park, KS 66207

If you choose to continue to support one, or both of these ministries, please use the addresses above. As we've always told you before, give where you feel led to give. God has always provided for the Work that we've done and I know that He will continue.

If you have any questions, or need help with anything, please feel free to contact me at either P.O. Box 909, at my email address: goodnewsminister@earthlink.net , or call me at: 816-380-7821.

As I've said before, I will continue the Work that God has given me. I will still visit any of you that still want me to, but that is a choice that you will need to make. I've never forced my way into any other groups as I've been accused of. You know the messages that I have preached, and if you haven't we will be happy to get them to you so you can hear and decide for yourself. None of us should ever make choices before we have all of the facts. Don't ever be afraid to ask questions. Don't ever be afraid to address a wrong that is being done.

You are all still our family, and though some of you may choose to look at us differently now, we will not abandon you. We will always be there for you if you need us. Our doors are always open to any of you to come and fellowship with us. This is the way it should be. We will be meeting in different homes until after the Holy Days, then we will look for a permanent place.

I have thought a lot about this verse in Matthew 5:11-12 ¹¹Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

I am by no means calling myself a prophet. I am just a lowly servant. As I read this though, I never would have dreamed of this coming from within the church. It is sad, but if allowed satan can get a foothold just about anywhere. I will continue to pray for all of you, and God's churches scattered throughout the world.

May God bless and protect each and every one of you all the days of your lives.

With deep felt and sincere brotherly love,

Stephen Hicks

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