

Community Church of God in Christ
1801 Park Avenue Richmond VA 23220
(804) 564-0009
Dr. David N. Wright, Sr. - Pastor
dnwright398@yahoo.com

September 18, 2015

To My Dear Brother, Dr. Edward Lee Johnson,

Greetings in the name of Our Lord, Savior Jesus Christ. Having never had the privilege of meeting you personally, I felt telephone communications are often too loosely misinterpreted and misrepresentative of one's true feelings and convictions. Therefore, I am writing you in response to your numerous calls and do apologize for any seeming "ignoring" of them or you. I just wanted to respond to your line of questioning of me after a time of prayerful reflections. It's now 3:52 am and I perceive it is the Holy Spirit urging me to get up and finally write to you on my perspective on the "controversy" centered around Dr. Earl Carter's sermon and subsequent "Campaign against sin in the church."

Forgive me, but I was not quite sure if your calls were a motivated "fact finding" mission or "fishing expedition" and thought appropriate caution was necessary.

To begin, Dr. Earl Carter's sermon, however "RAW," was his sermon and deserves no critique. God's use of us and our uniqueness in delivery and content are "gifts" to us. Thus, it deserves no comment except "Well Done".

My concerns are with the present public (in social media) (and again I use the term) "Campaign" in which after reading and rereading of his email caused me grave concern.

You don't know me, but I am too a 4th generation COGIC son. I was reared and disciplined by persons well acquainted with the development of our "young" church and our founder, Bishop Charles Mason. Only seeing him once to my recollection, I like so many others feel like I know him after hearing and rehearing the stories about him and his ministry.

Permit me to begin with a story told to me by my late grandfather Bishop David Love. It was told so many times I felt I was personally there to experience it. In the mid to late 1940's, Bishop Mason traveled to Virginia often. During this particular period he was in the area not only to oversee the work in the state, but also to have then Overseer Love to take him into various sections of North Carolina with its "too numerous to count" small cities and towns to find an "AWOL" Overseer.

This "Overseer" was from Michigan. He left his pastorate and his "jurisdiction" of Michigan after having impregnated an underage girl in the church. For 2 – 3 years when Bishop Mason would come to Virginia, Bishop Love would drive him throughout North Carolina following "leads" on where this man of God had "fled". Finally, they found him. Described as a larger and taller man than Bishop Mason and upon seeing him, the Overseer ran to Bishop Mason's feet and hugged him with tears and cries of remorse and repentance.

Immediately Bishop Love saw and heard the fist of Bishop Mason slam on a nearby table and these words proceeded out of Bishop Mason's mouth, "Man (stop this)! I didn't come to condemn you. I came to ask you, "Why didn't you fight your way through?"

This story or incident is of great significance to me, because it bespeaks the nature or spirit of our church's founder and his perspective on the handling of sin, in particular, sexual improprieties in the church.

Charges of inappropriate sexual behavior must be dealt with by the Church, as they are not "new" problems. Yet the loving fatherly kindness of our founding Apostolic Father should set the precedent for how our dealings with "sins" should be handled outside of the pulpit and within the church.

It is apparently evident that Bishop Mason was far from negligent in addressing "sin" in the church, but was very trusting of God through prayerful vigilance that "God would run and protect His church". Thus, Bishop Charles Blake is not the focus of my concern, exclusively. My concern is with the future of church's being properly influenced by scripture, historical precedence and the Spirit of Christ.

1. Brethren, if anyone is overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such and a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
Galatians 6:1

Understanding what the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul meant by the “Spirit of Meekness” could be a treatise in and of itself. However, the term “overtaken in a fault” or “sin” is at issue here.

Referring to a deceased man’s conversation or accusations is completely unsubstantiatable. This level of baseness and baseless trash hurdling communication is dangerous and its line of questionable justification threatens to unravel the very fabric of our Church.

The rehearsing of “incidents” of which you know nothing factual (i.e. by you being actually present and/or participative or personal observation) is completely unscriptural and ungodly. Our church has at its foundation **Hebrews 12:14** “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

When “sins” are rehearsed or “uncovered” as with the digging up of a graveyard casket, questions then arise. “How many graves must we dig?” How far back in one’s past is permissible to rehearse? And, “Who is exempt from such microscopic inspection?” Further, “Who is saved” or even better “Who then can be saved”?

Holiness and Forgiveness are not two “Cornerstones” of our church, they are the One “Cornerstone” upon which our church gets it’s measurements to build.

This is the opening of a “Pandora’s Box”. Because a person sinned (past tense), does not equate to their being presently in sin, nor a person practicing sin.

Allegations centering around “Associational Guilt” are also without merit. If it is true that Bishop Blake was the late Bishop Husband’s youth pastor this is still not grounds for accusing him of participation in the “alleged” sins of his Pastor. My closest friend in medical school was Bishop L. T. Walker’s nephew and Bishop Husband’s organist while attending Atlanta University, Elder (Dr.) Scyrus Cartwright. A more dedicated and zealous man to and for the Lord Jesus Christ I have never met. Dr. Cartwright worked very closely with Bishop Husband and never ever alluded to his ever having been inappropriate with him or any others he knew. (Please note Bishop Blake had not been Bishop’s Husband’s youth pastor, but Bishop Hensley’s).

The late District Missionary Gertrude Gwathney cornered me one day after service and posed this question to me, “Elder David, do you know what Hebrews 12:14

means?" To which I replied "of course, Mother Gwathney, anyone in the Holiness Church knows that scripture as our rallying cry. It means if you don't live Holy you will not see God!" She loudly retorted, "Aren't you a Rabbi in Israel and don't you know what this scripture means?" She continued, "It doesn't just mean if you don't live Holy you won't see God in the sweet by and by. It also means you won't be able to see God now! You won't be able to see what God is doing and where God is moving and how."

General Stonewall Jackson was a right hand man to General Robert E. Lee. In a battle in which he was out-numbered by "Federal troops", he routed the Federal army in a series of maneuvers that caused this huge army to run from him in retreat. Dusk was rapidly approaching and General Jackson tried to rally his troops to follow him into the wilderness where the "federal troops" ran, but to no avail. Darkness was coming in too rapidly. Turning back towards his own "Confederate" lines, his own men mistakenly fired upon him and his Calvary troops, killing two and mortally wounding their General, who eventually succumbed to "pneumonia" and died.

"Killed by **Friendly Fire**".

Holiness without Forgiveness, Peace, Kindness and Love is as deadly to the Spirit of Christ as Friendly Fire was to Stonewall Jackson.

Darkness envelops us. Our eyesight's are dimmed and without precaution we who strive "without sobriety" (**1 Tim. 2:15**) inadvertently operate in the spirit against Christ or "Anti-Christ", simultaneously proclaiming our own righteousness in our courses of action.

We are called to Holiness. We are called to peace, not the sowing of "Discord with our Brethren", or "Ad Hominem" attacks.

I recall the late Bishop L. H. Ford say publicly how he often differed with our leader, Bishop J. O. Patterson, Sr., on many issues. But, he added, **never publicly!!**

Behind closed doors they argued as adversaries, but in public they stood as **One**. As Bishop Ford said, "I spoke my convictions behind closed doors, but wholeheartly supported leadership." **Public displays of differences borderline on hatred not love.** There is a right way to do what we perceive to be right. That, we must always do. We are better than this. The mishandling of these matters can cause irreparable damage to the church, the pillar and ground of truth (**1 Tim. 3:15**). Ignoring the "collateral damage" as "acceptable loss" is unjustifiable and heinous.

2. “Neither give place to the devil” (**Ephesians 4:27**)

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (**Romans 12:19**)

I am well aware that “doors of utterance” are often closed to leaders within the “Body of Christ” by leaders within the “Body of Christ”. Specifically, I use the term “Body of Christ” Brother Johnson, because the “Body of Christ” is larger than the Church of God in Christ, of which it is a part. Doors open and close and ????? Dr. Carter need not be concerned with his livelihood, as many more doors are also opened to him (**Phil 4:19**). However, it seems as though the diatribe and assertions as “The Words from the Lord” may be personally motivated or construed by many well-read and well-meaning as “Vendettas”.

Another story... As Bishop O. T. Jones, Sr., assumed the leadership position of our church the issue of ‘Dividing Virginia into 2 Jurisdictions arose in the General Assembly’. After proper presentation three quarters of the General Assembly voted not to divide Virginia. In a closed session with Bishop O. T. Jones, Sr., with Bishops Bailey, Kelly and Mother Lillian Coffey, Bishop Jones against the vote of the General Assembly declared “There are still 2 Jurisdictions in Virginia.”

Bishop Love was devastated. His attorney (Stovall) back in Norfolk, Virginia advised him to get the minutes of the General Assembly and stated that he would “Shut Memphis Down”. Bishop Love then sought the advice of his closest advisor and mentor, Bishop Samuel Crouch, and asked him, “Do I have to take this?” To which Bishop Crouch replied “Yes, because you love the church.” Bishop Love in subsequent conversation stated that Virginia was large enough to be divided, but he had only wanted it to be done “more properly”, specifically without “personal attacks upon him”.

Irreparable damage was done by the manner in which the problems in Virginia were handled. I remain the only member in Bishop Love’s family that remained in the Church of God in Christ, the others left hurt and embittered.

Dr. Johnson, Bishop Blake has a godly family, legacy and following, as did Bishop Love. Attacking another leader is not only attacking him, but all of those into whom he’s invested and all of those who invested in him.

Is it possible that God, who knows us all, thought it best to raise up Bishop Blake (**Psalms 75**) in spite of all of your collected innuendos or rumors, for such a time as

this (?). It is possible that He, who alone can judge His servants, has raised up Bishop Blake in spite of these rumors that surround him? Friendly fire is just as lethal as pernicious intentional killing.

3. Finally, I come from a long legacy of physicians. I'm among the 4th generation of medical doctors in my family. I left medicine after prayerful guidance of my Pastor and grandfather 31 years ago.

I am not up on the latest procedures, medicines and therapies for diseases, but I'm still trained and educated in recognizing ill health upon cursory and/ or close observation. As I have watched Bishop Blake as an opportunity arose while in Haiti with him, in service with my own Bishop and General Board Member, Bishop Ted Thomas, Sr., at my own church, and in a recent engagement when I was privileged to greet him personally (without thorough investigation/examination), he is apparently in tremendous shape.

In Medicine we speak of age in 2 categories, chronological and physiological. Bishop Blake may be 74 or 75 chronologically, but physiologically he is a 50 year old man upon cursory observation.

Ageism (age-ism) is just as costly as sexism, classism and racism. Service to God and for God should be allowed and encouraged until its proven deleterious to the health of the minister or his ministry.

This road of argument Dr. Carter is paving may be a road he one day may regret he has paved.

Let's Seek Peace...

Love to your Brother and Family,

Dr. David N. Wright, Sr., your Brother.

cc: dr.edwardleejohnson@gmail.com,

Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.

Elder Eugene Rivers

Bishop David D. Daniels, Sr.

Bishop Ted Thomas, Sr.

Bishop Larry L. Shaw

Pastor Samuel Braxton, Jr.