



**TEEN
EVANGELISM &
STUDY TOURS
INTERNATIONAL**

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A MISSIONS MINISTRY OF NORTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

June 1, 1992

TO: The Pastor and Deacons of Northside Baptist Church,
Charleston County, South Carolina

SUBJECT: Disassociation of Teen Evangelism and Study Tours (T.E.S.T.)
with the Northside Baptist Church Board

It is with deep sorrow that we must inform our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ at Northside Baptist Church that we are asking that T.E.S.T. be removed from the cover of Northside.

For over a year we have wrestled in our own hearts, seeking God's direction for the ministry He has burdened and given to us. Because of continued practices and actions in the leadership of Northside that are contrary to the principles and commands in God's Word, we must remove the T.E.S.T. ministry from this relationship. Because of the lack of response to our April 1988 request for association of our ministry under the Board of Northside and the subsequent mutual lack of confidence and communication, we must seek counsel that sincerely desires to be a partner in this mission effort.


Not given to hurt or divide but to provoke honest and courageous obedience to the revealed will of God, the following are a few of the main facts influencing our action:

- Fact:** Oscar Fitzhenry as well as Pastor Stevens asked me to witness a meeting between the two of them. This indicates that Pastor was allowing a dismissal without personally visiting ("going" Matt. 18:12, 15). A chance meeting in the Sheraton lobby, although it included prayer and "I love you" from both Oscar and Pastor, ended with Pastor refusing a letter from Oscar - hardly an evidence of "serving one another in love."
- Fact:** The obvious orchestration of Oscar's dismissal as a deacon; that is, the "committee of the whole", restricting full debate and limiting Oscar's defense. Did the full deacon board vote and agree to such a limiting action? Was the congregation fully informed?

In all the defensive words of the deacons and Pastor contending that they went to Oscar, not one of them went to his home - an indication of sincere willingness to restore, sacrificing time, reputation, etc. Most contacts and efforts to contact were demands to come to the office, "repent on our terms," "get up and leave the prayer meeting and come in the office." When repentance was evidenced, that is, a letter read to the congregation, the Chair gave his comment on this statement of repentance which misled the congregation from the true Biblical spirit of Luke 17:4, "And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

Note that all of this was before any evidence of a law suit.

By these words I do not say Oscar Fitzhenry is the only one who sinned. This is no defense of any person, but a plea for all of Northside Baptist members, beginning with the Pastor and the deacons, to reconsider the first trial - that is, the dismissal from the office of deacon. Look at the consequences - either maintain a proud spirit with no true desire for restoration of truth and local testimony, or face a public trial and allow untold damage to the cause of Christ and His church. A council to reconsider is not without precedent in Baptist history or polity. Would not a fair retrial be an avenue to the restoration of peace and true worship?

Fact:  Continual disregard for the true findings of Russ McCall's audit. An unwillingness to meet and go point by point through the report making restitution, asking forgiveness, and righting all public commentary made to negate the testimony of Russ McCall whom we as a church body asked and approved to do this job - the accuracy of which has not been disproved.

Fact: Calling Mr. McCall a liar by saying he lied and not facing him or allowing him to face his accusers for more than one year.

Pastor, the only step of credibility I see possible is a humble admission of each error noted, confess as sin for saying otherwise, for attacking a brother, and be willing to accept whatever ministry God reveals afterwards. I am not asking for the resignation of a Biblically obedient man. I only say that I cannot remain as presently associated with a disobedient man.

Pastor, why not make yourself available to those who would rise and say, "You wronged me - and you are the Pastor and you never came to make it right." The way up is down; the way forward is to go back. Go back to the beginning. God's Spirit will work if and when Christians will go to where the axe-head came off and fell in the river.

Thank you for meeting for such a long time with my family and me on Saturday. We are not worthy of your sacrificing your family time for us.

Pastor and Deacons of Northside Baptist Church

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Many deacons and others have asked us not to leave Northside, but we must. Each one of you as an individual, being obedient to God's Spirit, has the responsibility to stand and vote for right. May God help you to do so.

Please do not misunderstand our attitude. The spirit of service of our family is well-known. We do not desire a board to serve us or - as in the case here - one that demands we come to them. Rather we desire one who steps forward eagerly to take position shoulder to shoulder with us.

Please forgive us for not having this letter finished and copied in time to get it to each of you before midnight Monday as we had promised.

We wish to thank Terry Egolf for coming to our home. He is the only one in leadership who has come.

We request that current fiscal policy continue through the end of this current month so that records will coincide with the church fiscal year.

Sincerely,

Mike & Ruth Greene & Family 6-19-92

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