

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91129

JOSEPH W. TKACH
PASTOR GENERAL

March 15, 1996

Dear Members of the Philadelphia congregation:

The New Testament Passover, or Lord's Supper, will be celebrated Tuesday evening, April 2, 1996 at Gratz College at 7:30 PM. As you know, we will be commemorating the death of our Savior that evening. Nothing is more important for us right now than to solemnly yet joyfully partake of the Bread and Wine.

While this has been a year of confusion, turmoil and stress for all of us, it has also been a year of spiritual growth and understanding, as God leads us closer to his perfect will for our lives.

When we gather together to wash each others' feet and eat and drink of the emblems of Christ's broken body, it is important that each of us has thoroughly examined his or her life. We need to individually and as a congregation take stock of where we are spiritually. I as your pastor also have to do the same.

In that regard, I realize before Jesus Christ that I have been far from perfect as a Christian and a pastor. So many times I get in the way of what the Holy Spirit wants me to do. So many times I have found my own human nature getting the best of me and therefore it impacts my ability to serve you as your shepherd. For those times I apologize from the heart. For those times I failed to live up to your expectations, I ask for your forgiveness.

I also sincerely apologize for all the years I had a part in perpetuating (albeit sincerely and in ignorance) some wrong ideas and concepts that may have hurt you or your loved ones. I hope you will forgive me and my family and I hope you will find it in your heart to forgive the ministry and the Church. We are not minimizing the hurt and pain we have caused. We want there to be healing and reconciliation. If I as your pastor can help you deal with your struggles, please let me know. I want to help, not hurt.

This season needs to be one of forgiveness and reconciliation. We can't as a Church or local congregation move forward if we are in a spiritual malaise and stupor because of the sins and errors of the past. Forgiving takes time, full recognition of the hurt and the help of Holy Spirit. Now is the time to make our calling and election sure, even as we hurt.

As we examine our lives in the next few weeks, perhaps it would be good if we

would ask ourselves some soul-searching questions:

- Is my commitment to Jesus Christ increasing or decreasing? If it's decreasing, what is it that God would have me do about it?
- Do I understand that at baptism I made a commitment for life to Jesus Christ and to the Body of Jesus Christ, that is, his Church?
- Am I doing my part in building up the Body of Christ?
- Am I doing my part in helping the Body preach the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- Am I heeding the words of Hebrews 10:25-26, where it exhorts us, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching"?

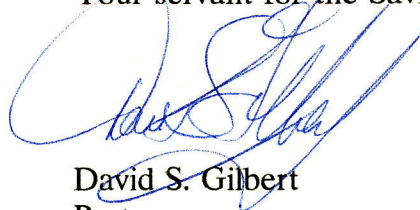
Now is the time for all of us in the Church of God to: "...strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 'Make level paths for your feet,' so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed" (Hebrews 12:12-13). If you are still struggling, please ask for help. We're all in this together.

Now is the time for all of us to be truly conquered by Jesus Christ and rise up in unity and go forward in faith as the Church that he purchased with his own blood.

Now is the time for all of us to take off the weights and go forward preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. It's to this that you and I have been called and chosen by God. I hope to give you further training this coming year to enable you to determine and use the spiritual gifts God has given you to do the work we need to do. Let's do it together.

May God grant the Philadelphia congregation a deeply spiritual, meaningful, and life-changing Lord's Supper. I hope you'll be there with us. We love you.

Your servant for the Savior,



David S. Gilbert
Pastor
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