

December 23, 2005

Dear Pete,

It was really great to see you a couple of weeks ago in Albuquerque for the Board meeting. I think good progress is being made and there's a great "feel" around the church. I especially enjoyed doing staff devotions on Tuesday morning and being able to reconnect with staff both new and old. I love you and Angie and pray for God's best for you both. I wanted to write a personal note to express my support for you and my heart behind staying engaged as I stated at the Board meeting. I love the thought of working together into the future.

In the recent past there have been some unfortunate misunderstandings that I believe were caused by an unnecessary polarization between board members and erupting when one of them threatened the involvement of his personal attorney, carrying with it the threat of legal action. "If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?" (1 Corinthians 6:1). The Board, as you remember in last year's meeting, clearly denounced this effort to intimidate as unacceptable. As founding pastor of a church lovingly established through nearly 23 years of praying, planting, and preaching I was especially saddened at what that did to our relationship (founder and successor) and that for the first time my motives were being called into question.

Pete, the last thing I wanted in proposing you as my successor is to see you and I pitted against each other so as to create a division among the body which results in carnality. "For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:4-7). This is God's church and I want to work together with you into the future. It was so enjoyable and rewarding to hear the reports from you, Bob, Dave and Chip and to realize that the foundation that was laid is being built upon and tweaked with God's leading. We spoke about core values of the church and it seemed like we all agree on those ideals and principles. This is vital! "Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?" (Amos 3:3).

Perhaps, I need to apologize if I have in the past given you any mixed signals in the midst of the large scale and tumultuous transitions that have occurred in the last two years in both New Mexico and California. You and I have both been through enormous change, and I'm sorry for any instability or undue stress this has caused you. But, I'm convinced that leaders must be learners! Suffice it to say, that I have been on the greatest learning curve of my life! Therefore, as I've gained new insight, I have reviewed and reassessed previously held assumptions.

First, **transition is a process, not an event.** After conversations with Chuck Smith on the subject of succession, I have been better educated as to a wiser, more stable approach

in releasing the many responsibilities included in the office of Senior Pastor. The baton pass is not releasing a pulpit. It also involves the practical duties of administration that you have admittedly stated is your weak suit, and in which I can help guide your hand. Additionally, it embraces building personal equity in the lives of the flock through involvement in their daily lives. Chuck said, "You're not their pastor until you've married them, buried them, and walked through times of joy and crisis along side of them. And that takes upward of five years." The flock has warmly embraced you Pete and has responded to your congenial and approachable demeanor. I believe they love you, and that you are being strengthened in the role of a true pastoral leader.

Secondly, **founders don't retire, they restructure.** Founders are "fathers in the faith" since they were God's instruments of spiritual birth. However, "fathers" can transition and find others to feed and nurture God's children. Paul had his Timothy and his Tatus. "For even if you had ten thousand others to teach you about Christ, you have only one spiritual father. For I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you. I ask you to follow my example and do as I do. That is the very reason I am sending Timothy—to help you do this. For he is my beloved and trustworthy child in the Lord. He will remind you of what I teach about Christ Jesus in all the churches wherever I go" (1 Corinthians 4:15-17). Though I will always be the spiritual father of Calvary of Albuquerque, it is my deepest desire to see you, my Timothy, succeed and lead a new generation in the years ahead! Your success is my success and God's glory. Your failure would also be my failure.

My continued involvement is therefore necessary and I believe has strong scriptural precedent along New Testament lines. I don't micro-manage nor do I like to nit-pick at style. My involvement with you while you were on my staff as youth leader was very low key and free of any heavy-handed constraints. My relationship with you in this new role on the Board is similar. I love and respect you, Pete. You are wonderfully gifted, charismatic *and anointed*. I am thrilled that we can "lock shields" and march forward, realizing that Satan is ever trying to weaken us but our victory is sure in Christ. "...We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Also Pete, the programming and expansion of the radio stations is a concern. The Board had specifically insisted on my involvement in order that these be sustained. You expressed at one time that you had no interest to expand into media ministry and that radio wasn't a real part of your purview. Radio has always been and continues to be a huge part of my passion and ministry. As I transitioned from my pastoral ministry and my oversight responsibilities in the local church, I never intended to transition myself out of the radio ministry in New Mexico. Also, KLYT was gifted to Calvary ABQ because of my past track record in the community with reaching out to youth. The previous KLYT board added the caveat that ownership of this important asset would be transferred to Calvary ABQ since I would be its spiritual overseer.

During my twenty-three years of serving the Lord in New Mexico, not only did the ministry grow but I grew personally. My vision for developing the Lord's work continues to expand and I've had the privilege of birthing not only the church in Albuquerque but also nearly 30 other churches throughout the country. It continues to be both a joy and privilege in serving alongside you in the work of the Gospel. God's kingdom is the only one that will last! As we seek Him first and glorify His matchless name, I remain your humble servant and friend.

Sincerely,

Skip Heitzig