

## Elders' Additional Concern about Steve Isitt

This letter to Atsuo Miyake (a Bellevue elder) shows another attempt I made at Handling Matters in House. There was no response from this brother (2004). This letter also shows other “concerns” that so-called elders had for me.

Again, I speak positively concerning the churches..... knowing full well the arguments against the way I talk with local church leaders.

1-18-04

Dear Atsuo,

1<sup>st</sup> paragraph removed

**...Brother, hearing the facts and knowing the background of a story always makes the picture so clear. I hope you will consider the facts of my situation and give me the opportunity to share with you at least how I see things. To make a defense of one's self is sometimes necessary for the sake of restoring or improving fellowship, which was the aim of the Bellevue brothers in their letter concerning the brother mentioned in the Bellevue letter to the churches, explaining their action against him. It has also been my aim for some time with, these same Bellevue brothers.**

I have become involved on a broad scale and with much interest for the oneness of the Body and care for the saints. Because of such an endeavor I have become labeled as a dissenter and a divisive person. However, to all the positive aspects of the church life, I am not dissenting a bit. I fully support the ministry of Brother Lee, the God-ordained way, the churches, the saints, the elders, and even the concept of the one accord for the Lord's new move. I have, though, had a great problem with the *facts* of the new move as history reveals it that led to so many people leaving. These matters I have tried to address with current elders so that together we could build a bridge of communication to those who left.

A terrific anti-testimony has built up against us in the recovery based on those facts and our history. I have not ignored those facts. My efforts have been basically to encourage resolving of problems long-festering in the Body of Christ. Brother Lee's charge to “march over all obstacles” and to “conquer” took place in the wrong way and was costly to the recovery and to the oneness in the Body (**The Vision of the Age** p. 86, **Elder's Training Bk 9**, pp 61-63). I say this based on our actual history, and with a desire for reconciliation of many members.

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...I would ask you, Atsuo, will you be fair-minded with me also? Will you hear the whole story that you might gain a proper background to judge me? You haven't heard

enough, and you also don't know me well. Yet, I believe you lean in the direction to condemn me, because 1) You heard a little something about me 2) You feel the brothers who conveyed the information are trustworthy sources 3) and because you assume the role of supporting the brothers' decision to condemn me.

**I have invited you before to come to me, Atsuo, and I invite you again to do so if you can come in an impartial way and in a spirit of love. - God's authority in you should be established over me, not outwardly and legally, but inwardly and organically through a ministry of life and with an intimate concern. I have yet to see any brother establish himself with me in this way.**

I don't know if I am misunderstanding the heart of the brothers who met that Monday night to discuss my case, but I feel that a quick **assessment** developed within those present, including \_\_\_\_\_ who went to speak on my behalf. And, **word** also went out to the ears of the five brothers present that evening that "Steve Isitt has a problem with **God's government.**" And, this concept remains in the minds of those brothers present and in the minds of certain leading brothers in the recovery, as well.

I would like to get these matters cleared up now in a straightforward manner and I ask you for a thoughtful reading of my "defense".

### The Booklet Matter

It has been three years (January 2001) this month since I gave a booklet I had written to Dan Towle "for fellowship". I told him that I didn't plan to have the booklet "widespread" and that if I was "unfair or inaccurate" in any way perhaps he could "catch" me and I could make an "adjustment" or "terminate" the proposed fellowship. I sent Joel a copy of the letter and asked him to pray with me and monitor what I was doing. There was no response from him. I also told Dan (and Joel) I wanted to build a "bridge of communication" to those who left the recovery. Dan responded by recommending to the brothers to take discipline measures against me! I was utterly shocked at this. I still have not received an explanation for this action. I asked Jim and Willie (both elders) on the phone for an explanation, and they humbly expressed that they didn't know.

### Letter of Apology

I wrote a letter apologizing to the brothers in Bellevue and Seattle for upsetting them with the booklet, saying, "the Lord isn't able to use it among us", and I encouraged them to throw it away, and I myself put the booklet matter aside. (About a year later I used it once to give a sister an updated, milder version of the booklet which she had read previously, and I was reported for giving it to her.) I also apologized to certain saints for upsetting them by talking to them about certain local matters too strongly. My desire was to just go on in the church life, not bothering anyone with any matters. The brothers felt differently, and I was eventually told "it's your concepts we can't handle", "your concepts gotta go", and "if you want to go with them, that's up to you". My concepts!

I don't think you have read the booklet, Atsuo, and it would be very hard for you to judge me concerning it. But, I think you heard a few lines that gave you a certain negative impression. Why don't you read the whole booklet and give yourself the opportunity to understand my heart? \_\_\_\_\_ read it and didn't feel I was attacking Brother Lee, the ministry, and the new way. I was simply trying to make certain points and hoped for subsequent fellowship concerning them. Marty Young (elder in Seattle) read it and was rather sobered by it, saying, "I think you've raised concerns worthy of our consideration." The brothers who have taken action to discipline me have greatly surprised me with their over-reaction and choice to separate me from others and be separated from me.

I have not caused division and did not try to get any following. I sincerely before God in Christ testified of my convictions, based on my experience, readings, and observations.

Brother Lee said in Elders' Training Book Four, **"When a person speaks negatively about the ministry, you should not consider that as an attack. We must give people the liberty to express what they feel and think". "To criticize the ministry, to say something bad about the ministry, and even to oppose the ministry should not be considered as the type of attacking that was done by Alexander the coppersmith."** ... **"I say again that we must always remember that when we practice anything for justice, we must do it in love. We must also reduce the extent and the quantity of the punishment from "forty stripes to thirty-nine. This is safe."**

I don't believe Brother Lee's fellowship has been regarded. He also shared in another place not to **"cut someone off so easily from the fellowship, for that will prove you do not value that member's fellowship in the Body"**. I feel that this has been the case.

## Oklahoma City Elders

I was accused of violating God's government in contacting Oklahoma City. I was also accused, to my great surprise, of being divisive for something I said in a letter about Colley Joseph. These are very serious charges, especially because they came from more than one person, for I had sent letters out to elders to alert them to the need in OKC. I also wrote a letter to the elders in Norman and OKC, encouraging them to care for a couple getting divorced, and I also sent them excerpts from the ministry on the matter of divorce. I have no problem at all before the Lord with my efforts to care for a need in OKC (which was surely a need in the Body).

### Francis Phone Call

I had even called Francis Ball about the matter because a brother, upon divorcing his believing wife without a Scriptural ground, was quickly seeing another sister and attending meetings with her, including the Lord's table meeting. **Francis acknowledged immediately that my concern was legitimate and that the situation could have "far-reaching consequences" in the recovery if it wasn't stopped.** He said he would take this matter to the brothers that morning, (- where Dan Towle would adjust Francis).

### **Les Cites Phone Call**

I also talked to Les Cites about the couple because he knew them. He suggested that we meet with the OKC brothers and fellowship with them on what should be done. We knew the Word had to be upheld and a proper testimony kept. This was our concern. He had acknowledged that the brothers in OKC were short of skill in dealing with the couple, knowing their history with this couple.

### **Dan Towle Phone Call**

Both Francis and Les, however, reversed their stance later, following a call I made to Dan Towle. Dan told me in that call that what was happening in OKC was the responsibility of the brothers there, and that it was not his business or mine, then he hung up on me.

I liked the initial fellowship that I had with Francis and Les on the matter. The desire was there with them to care for the couple and for the testimony, in an organic way. Help was neither coming from within the church in OKC / Norman nor from Les and his wife, who were in the church in San Diego. **No one**, including elders, was in contact with the estranged sister for about **two years before I came in contact with her**. Before that, some saints were involved, including Les and his wife who flew there to spend time with the couple. I was the only one helping this sister at the time that I contacted Francis and others for help. The sister getting divorced was desperate for her marriage, and I was doing my best to help her. I didn't feel I could just leave her in that situation alone.

### **Jim Waldrup, OKC Elder, Phone Call**

I called Jim Waldrup (elder) in Norman, and a brother from San Diego, \_\_\_\_\_, joined us on the phone. He could confirm what I say. The elder assured \_\_\_\_\_ and I that he spoke for the other elders. He told of the difficulty that they had making progress with the couple and informed us, basically, of their history. He said, "If the brother decides to divorce his wife, we will not throw stones at him" that "he is a good brother, and he is better off without her." He (and Colley Joseph) thought she needed mental help and that she was an "opposer". \_\_\_\_\_ and I were amazed at his attitude - and he, Jim Waldrup, represented all the elders! They all felt this way. If they were like him, they had washed their hands of the situation.

I was fresh to the situation, however, and had just spent four years with a brother, who I met with usually every morning (seven days a week) in prayer, the ministry, and in fellowship over his situation with a **truly opposing** wife. Two elders, Joel Kennon and John Brooks, and I did our parts, individually, to help \_\_\_\_\_ accommodate his wife, on the one hand, and be released from her control on the other, that he could serve the church. I was determined to help in the OKC matter also and had the burden to do so.

I asked Jim Waldrup to pray with \_\_\_\_\_ and I. \_\_\_\_\_ knew the couple from when they were in San Diego, and knowing Jim had given up on the couple, I prayed, "Lord we really don't know as you know", and Jim prayed very lowly, "Lord have mercy on us" and then he prayed for the couple very, very weakly, but with a loving heart. They

needed help in that locality, and I was willing to give time and energy to support them and to coordinate with them to bring a couple back together in life and in love. I know the brothers there had a heart for the couple, but they were quite discouraged with the situation, which left them with no heart practically to help. They had no way. I was willing to coordinate with them, but they were not interested. They were done.

**Removed detail only to relieve tedium.**

### Contacting the Quarantined Ones

I was also charged with violating God's government for contacting John Ingalls, etc. Here again is an amazing charge. And, the charges about John Ingalls being a "rebel" are even more amazing. President John Adams, who was once an attorney, said he would not judge a man till he had read. He meant until he acquired all available information.

After taking the time in great earnest to learn the facts and the whole story about John Ingalls, I took the responsibility to seek out fellowship with current elders on the subject of division in the late eighties. This doesn't mean I don't keep the oneness among us. I have merely desired that we consider the facts, and have asked for fellowship over these solemn matters. I take seriously the breaking of the oneness that took place among us.

Removed much detail, and potential tedium to the reader.

Before the Lord, brother Atsuo, this is my careful fellowship with you. We need to be fair and accurate concerning people we judge, regardless of official condemnation. John Ingalls is our brother and he is a member of the Body of Christ. I treat him accordingly. I can do so with good conscience because I know the whole story. To call him or any of God's people a "rebel" should be a serious thing to us, and risky. We do need an improved understanding and attitude toward John Ingalls. Lack of information leads to error and misrepresentation. Proper information leads to proper understanding. And proper understanding leads to proper representation. A little knowledge is dangerous, and that is what we in the churches have of John Ingalls. Until you read John's testimony, you have a lack of knowledge. We need to be careful to have a thorough understanding of a person before judging him. To misrepresent God is very serious. If He is not condemning John Ingalls, either should we.

### Joel Kennon

Atsuo, the matter with Joel Kennon (Seattle elder) is very simple. I asked him over a five-year period to address certain offenses and he didn't do so. I asked others to help in this matter, and they did not. What bothered me the most was that it began circulating that "Steve has a problem with the brothers" and that I have to "get through with the brothers", which is what I was trying to do. I was trying to get through with Joel and not have a problem with him or any of the brothers. I was met with replies suggesting I bear the cross, that I don't be negative, and that I should be as Watchman Nee when he was misunderstood. **No one wanted to help to address the situation in a righteous manner.** I feel this is still the case today. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ know the story of this

elder's offenses. Willie Wise (elder) read the timeline of my experience with Joel, so he knows a lot. These brothers are not unaware of his offenses.

I know it is not an easy matter for you and other brothers to handle, since Joel Kennon is so highly regarded. However, if we do care for righteousness and the oneness in the Body and even relationships in the kingdom, we will not disregard this problem among us. **No brothers**, including \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, would coordinate to approach Joel. No one wants to bother him or assist us practically, according to the Word. Is such a posture in cooperation with God's government and His provision for the saints in the Scriptures?

### **The problem with Joel has been disregarded for eight years, this month.**

I informed Joel by letter of my concerns in 1996. When he didn't respond after another letter or two, I wrote to four other brothers ultimately, asking for their assistance. They did not assist. One brother later repented, saying it was cruel of him not to respond.

Five years went by before Joel finally responded by letter. He thought his letter was fine, but in it 1) he didn't address the twelve issues I asked him to address. 2) He didn't acknowledge any wrongdoing on his part, neither did he deny the matters. 3) In so many words he basically seemed to be asking me to forgive him for anything I imagined him to do that was an offense to me. 4) **He referred to my concerns as "accusations and complaints" against him not as offenses that he committed.** 5) He asked for a clear sky above us, though he acknowledged nothing, confessed nothing, and apologized for nothing. There was no apology or repentance from him. There was also no offer to meet together to discuss some of the matters to my satisfaction. There was no offer to pray and fellowship that we might have our relationship restored. Even if Joel would have met with me and showed interest in our severely strained relationship and the problem we were causing the church and if he could have then **honestly** denied every point of my concerns, I would have received him. This brother, however, has shown no interest in me, no interest in our relationship, and no interest in clearing up a problem long-festering in the Body.... [www.twoturmoils.com/MoreOnJoel.pdf](http://www.twoturmoils.com/MoreOnJoel.pdf).

### The Mistaken Email

I had put down my website on September 7 and also stopped the writing of a book at the same time in order to pursue restoring fellowship. (I had been pressed that far only after requests for fellowship over important matters were ignored. So the frustrations about them remained.) Progress became slowed in my pursuit of fellowship, then got halted when the brothers here received an email that I had mistakenly sent to David Kangas. I had called David to let him know the mistake and asked him not to read the sensitive material. He hadn't yet opened the email and twice he assured me that he would delete the email when he got to work, and would not, therefore, be reading it. His word was not kept, and my **personal** message was tampered with and then used against me.

I wouldn't mind that he or anyone read it, but I knew it could be easily misunderstood without knowing the background. What background? Let me just say, there was a

buildup over a long period of time with Dan Towle before writing that email. I have no problem with comments I made to intended recipients who have the necessary background to understand my language. I didn't know that the letter would end up with **unintended recipients.**

A problem that brothers had in that email was that I seemed to be holding the brothers over a barrel. I was sincere before God to address concerns with them, and all the time hoping for their fellowship. When I saw that they were far from being amenable, I considered my objective impossible with them, and I laid aside the website and book matter. My goal up to that point had been for the leading brothers, past and present, to have fellowship unto repentances and reconciliation that would affect the whole Body.

Jim and Willie were quite upset about that email, their view being on one side of the matter and their knowledge of the background of the letter too limited.

I let them both know previously of my earnest desire to drop all the matters and come to pray and fellowship with them and be brought back into the church life. They were not interested. They felt that I "would get upset with something and go and put the website up again". I was astonished at this response, to say the least. The brothers did not give me the opportunity to be restored by their fellowship of life. We did have a good initial contact and there was a warmth and fellowship of life. Then they turned away.

Hope is surely in the fellowship of life, and so is the reality of God's government.

Steve Isitt