

Meeting of the Official Board called by Bro. Krause to meet with the Pastor relating to his resignation which had been read to the morning Congregation, held immediately after the evening service. (June 3, 1951)

Bro. Krause presided.

The entire Official Board with the exception of Bro. Geo. McKinley were present.

Meeting opened with prayer.

Bro. Krause stated that the meeting had been called to find out whether there is anything that we have done or have not done that has caused Bro. Bragg to resign, and whether things can now be remedied or if there is anything we can do to get Bro. Bragg to reconsider his resignation. Bro. Krause called on Bro. Bragg to make statements as to what might be the cause of his resignation, etc.

Bro. Bragg said he wanted to speak within the bounds of God's will, yet some things ought to come out. I am not asking for anything. When I came back from Cleveland I told the Elders what that church was offering me, and asked them not to publicize it. "If you were offered more and guaranteed a period of years wouldn't you take it? I have had to raise \$1300 on the car.

The scripture says "My God shall supply all your need". Yet some complain about pastors living off the wages of other people. It is an enticing offer."

"I have been bucking the situation for eight years, ever since I came here. I had to buck it the first month I was here on the Trustee Board, so you see it has not always been smooth sailing on the Trustee Board. I have had to definitely say that some things were of God, and the work of God must not be blighted. I think it is time for a change. If I should stay there would have to be some adjustment in that condition.

Concerning the things I ask about and recommend before our Church I think I know the Will of God in most of these things, and it means a lot to have someone stand across from you and block it., and unless there can be changes that is the way it stands. That is all I have to say right now."

Bro. Krause: Bro. Bragg, what is it that has been causing this condition ?

Bro. Bragg: "I think it is time to speak of it. Eight years ago the Trustees were sitting here and there came up the question of the Young People's work and the Daily Vacation Bible School, and Bro. Day took a very big stand against that. Don't be alarmed about that, we have that every little while. Presently I said, "Brethren, the work of God has to go forward. There is no stopping it because the field of Child Evangelism is ripe."

"Four years ago, at the time of the Grand Rapids General Council meeting the matter of the payment of the phone bill came up. Bro. Day said to me, "We are paying your phone bill and after

all it is the church's. I said some of that bill is our own, and all over a certain number is so much a call. He said, Oh, it is not much, we will pay it. I went away feeling that it was not right. When I came back I discovered that something had happened, and that it was out that my daughter Faith had called Melvin Waggoner a number of times, and the whole truth of the matter is that we had to get them together and get the thing straightened out. Faith got greatly disturbed and I know she was not calling boys. He told me they would pay the bill and then challenged it .

Here last Sunday in the Trustee's room there was a little discussion about Television. I understand Bro. Day was encouraging them all that it was instructive. When pressure like that is upon me you cannot be your best in the pulpit.

Bro. Krause: "Brethren, are these things true."

Bro. Walter Hepworth: I say they are true."

Bro. Bragg: "I might mention this also, as I believe it should be all out at the same time. I suppose this goes back quite some time. Sister Payne, I don't think she likes me. She has written by letter and also spoken to my face.

Bro. Bogdan: These things should be straightened out.

Bro. Bragg: Two years ago there was an endeavor made to raise my salary. When we were in Oklahoma we had a little property we sold and we have used that. I didn't ask for it, the brother came to me and said he would see what he could do.

Sister Payne: Bro. Bragg did I ever say I did not like you ? Bro. Bragg "No, but actions speak louder than words."

Sister Payne: What I have said to Bro . Bragg on the Board of Directors of the Home everyone there knows about. The letter Bro. Bragg speaks of I shall read (Read letter). This letter was written for the express purpose of getting Bro Bragg to make proper announcements for the Home, considering the fact that he had signed as one of the Incorporators and had taken a vow that he would go along with them to establish and maintain a home, etc., which he is not doing, but rather had hindred and dampened the work by his influence on the Board and in the pulpit. Bro. Bragg has a right to his opinion, but surely we also have a right to ours, and when we feel a thing is right we are not expected to change.

Bro . Hepworth said the word says "Suffer not a woman to teach", and Sis. Payne is trying to teach the pastor.

Bro. Valentine: I think the Pastor should go along with the majority. Whatever the question or action taken, when the majority takes action we should all go along.

Bro. Bragg: I prophesied in the very beginning that this Home proposition would fall on the church, and it is true, the weight of the thing will fall on the church. I can't support this Home idea because the church does not understand what is being done. Furthermore, I cannot support it wholeheartedly because it is being operated by a neucleus of the Church. I do not have the green light to go ahead.

Bro. Hollahan said you can't work when you are bucking something.

Bro. Day arose and answered somewhat in detail the points covered by Bro. Bragg's statements, making it clear that the Board of Trustees are working in the interests of the Church, endeavoring to know what the church's money is being used for. Bro. Day said that while the whole Trustee Board would agree with him he was not speaking for the Board but for himself. Bro. Day apologized to Bro. Bragg and asked him to forgive him for anything he might have said or done that had caused offense, that he meant it from his heart, for after all some day he expected to meet God and he wanted to have nothing between, that his desire was to work for the interests of the church

Bro. Day also asked Bro. Walter Hepworth to forgive him for anything he might have done that had been offensive to him.

Sis. Griffin said she thought we were like little children holding such small things in our hearts for so many years and harboring them. It is just like the sermon we heard tonight. Some of the boards have worms in and we are not willing to discard them, but hold things to our hearts and let it spoil the whole. It is the spirit of God that counts. We are an organism. While we are an organization, we cannot be expected to follow the dictates of some man without the working of the Spirit of God in our lives. If Bro. Bragg feels he is in the spirit of the Lord, if he feels God is leading him, we will not hinder the Spirit of the Lord. But is it the Spirit of God, or is it his own Spirit that he is following?

Bro. Hepworth: I think we should take into consideration the work of the Lord.

Bro. Robert Lafferty: This is Bro. Bragg's decision. If his work is done here he should go to Cleveland.

Bro. Valentine: I do not think that money should enter into this. It is Bro. Bragg's decision as to whether he is in the will of God. If so, we do not want to stop him.

Bro. Lanham: I feel we should know whether Bro. Bragg could or would reconsider his resignation regardless of what promises we might make.

Bro. Hollahan: I feel satisfied to work with Bro. Bragg, to counsel with him.

Bro. Krause: Sister Payne, I will start with you. If I have done anything to offend you I ask you to forgive me.

Sis. Payne: I forgive you freely, Bro. Krause. I have told you that before.

Bro. Krause also asked the Board to forgive him for anything he might have done.

Bro. Alexander and Bro. Heintz made similar statements, as well as Bro. Hollahan.

Bro. Krause asked Bro. Bragg if he felt his resignation to be in the Will of God, or whether he would feel free to recall it.

Bro. Bragg: I have not said this is the will of God. I am taking a step at a time. I have my fingers on the pulse of the situation here, I believe, and if I should leave there are a lot of people who would also leave.

Bro. Krause asked those who were willing to go along with the pastor if he should remain to stand.

Sis. Payne said, "Bro. Krause, before we pass on that phase of the question, it would seem that is only half the problem. It appears that Bro. Bragg's main point is a larger salary. Bro. Bragg sought this position without counselling with anyone. He wanted money and he went out to get it. The work of the Lord was not considered. If he feels this is the will of God we are doing wrong by asking him to reconsider his resignation. It is his decision, not ours. It will take two weeks to call a general membership meeting. The Official Board can neither accept or reject his resignation. He was elected by the church.

Bro. Krause: I think we could only agree to work together if he would remain the problem of the salary would not enter into it.

Bro. Bragg. No.-- I am not so sure -- If you were offered an enticing salary, with a guarantee of somany years, wouldn't you take it? But I can't forget that congregation standing this morning.

Bro. W. Hepworth: Yes. I make a motion that we give Bro. Bragg \$25.00 a week more.

Bro. Krause: We cannot pass on the money end of it. That is for the Trustee Board.

Bro Valentine: I think this decision is yours. If you are making a change because of money I do not feel that should enter into it. If your work is done here and it is God's will, that is a different proposition.

Bro. A. Clarke: Bro. Bragg, I do not feel that money should enter into it.

Bro. R. Lafferty: I definitely feel that money should not enter into the preaching of the gospel, neither for you to go or to stay. You know how much I love you, Bro. Bragg, but I do not think money should be the question here. That is my conviction.

Bro. Krause suggested that we adjourn and make it a matter of prayer.

Bro. Bragg said, "I have to give an answer tomorrow, and my answer will be based to some extent on this meeting tonight. At times like this there should be a break, but I can't break.

Bro. Krause made the statement that as far as the entire Board was concerned we would start clean from here on out. The Board of Trustees will meet after we are dismissed and come to their decision. It is now up to the Trustee Board as to what they do.

Sis. Payne: It matters not what decision we come to, the Board has no power to accept or reject the resignation, and it will take two weeks to call a general meeting. The decision lies with Bro. Bragg. If the Lord is leading him we will not hinder. We want God's will.

The Trustee Board agreed to meet even though some of their members had gone.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

Clara M. Payne
Church Clerk

At the morning service June 10, 1951, Bro. Hollahan made a statement as to the decision of Bro. Bragg relating to his resignation presented last Sunday, in which he said :

"When I came to church last Thursday I asked Sister Bragg what was the decision. I was happy to hear that Bro. Bragg had decided to stay with us. There will be a lot of things said about this matter through the grapevine system, but I feel that the Lord sent Bro. Bragg to us, and I think that he is interested enough in the work of the Lord to try to determine the mind of the Lord and then work that way. I know it is in the heart of everyone of us that they should be in the Will of God and neither would we do anything to take them out of the will of God. Some matters were gone over in the Board meeting last Sunday evening, and Bro. Bragg has decided to stay with us. If We would take that 15th verse of the 105th Psalm to heart, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophet no harm", etc.

Bro. Bragg also made a statement, in which he said, in part: "I felt perfectly in the will of the Lord last Sunday when I handed in my resignation. I am convinced as of this hour that I am staying in the Will of the Lord. I did not have to stay, only as the Lord indicated. I had two churches asking for me, This is not the first time. But I said it is a little more difficult to ascertain the will of the Lord now. One of the church was the West Coast the other Cleveland. By the grapevine system it has been said that I was leaving to go to a larger church with a larger salary. I want you to know that the Cleveland church is smaller than this one by 200 members.

I am staying because God wants me to stay. When I saw the vote of the people last Sunday and when the Board got together, I felt the Lord was talking to my heart. I had been voted in as Pastor of the Cleveland Church almost unanimously, but I had not told them I would accept the call."