

[REDACTED]

29th October 2002

Dear Paul

Thank you for your letter dated 14th October 2002 outlining the progress as regards The Narrowgate Community Church. May I apologise for the delay in replying to you, but I felt a time of seeking God and reflection was necessary on my part so as to be able to evaluate my own personal position in relation to the discussions we find ourselves regrettably in the thick of.

As you are aware, my only motivation for the past 10 years is seeking to share the Gospel in the North End, it came from a direct word and encounter with God. I neither sought nor desired to be placed at the head of this work and made those feelings clear at the time. In obedience to the Lords call I went-and in obedience I have remained.

The North End of Birkenhead is classed as one of the most deprived areas in the Northwest – indeed it comes within the countries top ten deprived areas in England. As I write there has been an ongoing drug/gang warfare raging with a man being shot at in Milner Street, another in the street run over on the pavement outside with the desire to kill. For reasons best known to God Himself, He has determined to place myself and my family there to minister. Even when the pressures of the ongoing situation between you, the Ferguson's and ourselves caught in the crossfire, was raging, the only position I felt open to me was for me to resign. The Lord again intervened. He made His plan clear and that very night sent over forty people into Narrowgate, most of them with words of comfort and encouragement that they felt the Lord had sent them to say (none were aware of the situation) for us to remain in place.

building business especially as you are only too aware of the financial restraints we find ourselves ministering in on a daily basis. After all, many others have inputted finances whom could claim the same rights, but wouldn't consider it appropriate, myself included.

You stated at a meeting with RS David Woodfield and myself, that you doubted N/Gate could survive on its own financially as the burden would be too much because of the offerings. We agree, if a mortgage had to be taken into account as well as tithes/affiliation fees to Elim that would be a correct observation, but as you know the N/gate has met all its own utility bills out of its own finances for the past two and a half years, including the huge bill to put right the damage that Nesbits did to the building. Including a new carpet worth nearly £1,500. And yes, Narrowgate is in a deprived and needy area that needs help with finance – not hindrances.

So I whole heartily agree with you, because of the areas poverty we will struggle to make ends meet, and with that would ask that like those godly Brethren brothers of past, that you remove from us your request for financial reimbursement.

You have decided the correct course of action for you regarding this building is for what you said in our meeting with Ray Smith – to give the building to Elim. Could you not consider giving the building to us on the condition it is given by us into the Elim trust, thereby removing the financial constraints, which you know, would choke us eventually. I agree that it should be in Elims trust and am happy to comply.

That said, over all the years working in Milner Street I was led to believe, alongside of conversations given by yourself to Mandi and other folk, that the deeds/building was already owned by Elim. The work and repairs undertaken by myself and others to this building were carried out with that understanding. It came as quite a shock to discover that you are the owner/trustee alongside of another fellow minister, and for us to remain, and serve God in the area, you require of us a financial commitment I'm unable to make.

I never envisioned Elim would ever put us in a position of having to pay large sums of money for the privilege of working for many years without wage, in the belief that the vast sums of labour/finances and capital being invested by myself and others for the Lords glory were more than sufficient for this never to be the case.

the damp problem. Again as you know, these men ruined the building and despite being in a 'close down' situation, found myself yet again with others working for approx 17 weeks and inputting major building and structural work alongside finances, to see the Lords house reopened. I feel that this building work alone would if charged for would far exceed the current market value of this building, which I would envision to be approx £12,000 MAX.

I feel it is irrelevant at this stage to debate these matters, especially the Smith & Sons 'general remarks' paper you sent to myself along with others, which yet again mentions demolition and re-development. As you are aware, these scenarios are irrelevant and anathema to all concerned with a heart for mission in this area. As a charity, it is my understanding that it is unlawful for us to engage in speculation or redevelopment so the figures of £20,00 to £25,000 are not only inapplicable but also irrelevant. Figures I have at my disposable make that prospect of building two houses in one of the poorest streets in Birkenhead to be financially not only foolish but also unrealistic.

I assume from the 'general remarks' paper you forwarded from Smith & Sons to myself and Elim Leadership, that the continued use valuation, which is the basis for any sale will be included in points 1 to 14, (you only sent us the general remarks paper point number 15) which I believe you have in your possession. I would be grateful for a copy of this for my own records.

I can understand that you feel that a cash settlement is rightly owing to you, but feel it is grossly unreasonable to place that burden on us. When recently speaking to Mary Waters, a wife of one of the trustee's who decided to hand Milner Hall over to you, she was very insistent that the conditions were that the Hall should always remain as a church and also used for seeing unsaved into the kingdom. You gave those reassurances I am led to understand to the trustees. It was with those stipulations in place and also to add no unnecessary burdens on the Lords work that those trustees gave the hall to you free of charge.

Therefore, is it not right to concede that WCC's financial input over the years bears a direct correlation to that given assurance to those godly individuals by yourself, and in seeking to place this financial burden upon the work at Narrowgate could be interpreted to be in effect like asking us for a refund! Surely this is not in keeping with those earlier understandings between the Brethren who gave you the Hall and yourself? It feels completely out of step with the spirit of Kingdom

It is with the acceptance in my own heart of Gods will for myself and Narrowgate that I have determined to see this work through. I have a responsibility before God to steward the resources available to us as I have done to the best of my ability over the past ten years. It is I feel necessary, to call to your remembrance the appalling condition of Milner Street Hall when I first entered. The roof was missing as indeed was the ceilings, windows, doors, plumbing etc etc. The productive association with that work and WCC was effectively at an end, and your own thinking at that time was demolition in response to its state of dereliction. Thankfully God intervened at a crucial juncture, as I hope and pray He will now to preserve what has been planted ready for reaping (you remarked at our meeting with Ray Smith present that if myself, Mandi and the other team members vacated the building within an extremely short span of time it would soon be vandalised and derelict again).

Ten years ago, I personally worked for eighteen months, alongside 5 others, to turn that derelict building into something that glorified God, we felt with Gods help a desire to turn things around instead of the church being removed, in faith we believed we would eventually see the work the Lord wanted – blossom (still do). We believed that the Lord honoured the prayers of many godly people over the years with the same desire as Him to see a light shine in such a dark area, and for that work to succeed which Satan has so strongly tried to kill, steal and destroy.

As we wait in hope for the Lords sovereign purposes to be out worked in our respective 'callings', we find ourselves with some major decisions to make, which I am convinced **WILL** AFFECT OUR OWN LIVES BEFORE God for some time to come. My most earnest prayer and desire is that we make them **honourably, correctly and above all according to His will** and not ours.

As you stated in our conversation with RS David Woodfield, you felt that you should be recompensed as regard the financial input WCC had invested in Milner Street over the years. You also mentioned that you'd had a valuation done when 18 months ago the building needed a damp course, you also said that valuation came in at £35,000 on the land if redeveloped. In view of that valuation we arranged Brennan & Ayre to do one for us, whom stated that as they didn't have access to certain main parts of the building they could only give an approx estimate of no more than £16,000. As we were in Cornwall running a Kids club, they were not shown the kitchen roof that needs to be replaced nor the damp or fungus that is back, that needs to be dealt with **again**, even after the Ferguson's paid £3,000 to WCC for arranging for Nesbits the contractors to deal with

I do confess to being very saddened and hurt but the events which have been unfolding around us and do like yourself hope for a speedy - Godly - conclusion for all concerned. I have spent many nights lying wide awake running and re-running the events that have brought us to this unhappy situation and admit I am as unsettled now as I was at the outset.

I feel like yourself that a line needs to be drawn with the past so all concerned can move on, hopefully with Gods help into happier and more fruitful times. This is my prayer for both yourself and all connected with this sorry development. I feel it is absolutely critical at this juncture that only good seed be planted in our respective congregations, so as what will grow in the future will bring only blessing.

Yours in love and with respect thanking you for all support over the years,

Ian Carter