

September 30, 2023

Mrs. Carlota Allen  
c/o William J. Bryan, Attorney  
17926 Dixie Highway  
Homewood, IL 60430

RE: Response to Request for Erasure

Dear Carlota,

It is with great sadness and distress that we recently received a letter from you and Michael through an attorney making an additional request for erasure and threatening legal action against New Covenant. After much thought and prayer, we are writing to indicate our response.

This response comes in the context of the judicial trial the Session had conducted concerning accusations against you regarding particular sins. Please be advised that, prior to our receiving the letter from your attorney, the Session did hold the trial in your absence in accordance with *Book of Discipline* IV.C.4. At that trial, the following three charges were considered:

1. Making accusations of sin against a member and against office-bearers in the church without requisite biblical evidence, contrary to Deut 19:15; Prov 18:17; Matt 18:15-20; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Tit 3:1-2; BD III.1; IV.B.3
2. Contumacy against the Session, contrary to the fifth commandment; Matt 18:15-20; Tit 2:15-3:2; Heb 13:17; and the 5<sup>th</sup> membership vow
3. Divisiveness within the Church, contrary to Matt 5:23-24; 10:40; 18:15-20; Rom 14:1; 15:7; 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; Eph 4:3; Phil 4:21; 1 Thess 5:26; Heb 11:31; Heb 13:17; 1 John 1:3, 7; 3 John 1:10; and the fifth membership vow

Having examined a significant amount of written evidence as well as the content of oral testimony from witnesses concerning each charge, the Session, acting as a judicatory of Christ's church, did conclude that the evidence supported the content of each charge and therefore found you guilty of each of these sins in a way that damaged the purity, peace, and unity of New Covenant Community Church. We hereby communicate these findings to you, then, with both sorrow and an urgent exhortation that you would acknowledge these wrongdoings in a posture of repentance, looking to Christ for forgiveness, restoration, and renewal. Though you have for some time been uncooperative with the Session's efforts to shepherd you with regard to these serious matters, we nevertheless urge you to consider these formal findings with due seriousness and so acknowledge and address these significant wrongdoings. Following the determination of guilt regarding these three charges, the Session also proceeded to determine a proposed censure, in accordance with *Book of Discipline* IV.C.3.b.

However, prior to our being able to communicate the results of the trial and the proposed censure to you, we also received the aforementioned letter from you and Michael through Mr. Bryant and

his accompanying letter as well. Clearly, the actions threatened in these letters go against Scripture's own admonition that judicial matters be resolved within ecclesiastical courts, rather than taking the affairs of the church before civil courts (1 Cor 6:1-8). After considerable contemplation and prayer regarding these new developments, the Session is grieved to say that it believes this action of retaining an attorney, demanding that we communicate only to him, and threatening legal action in a civil court all have profoundly debilitating effects on the God-ordained processes of church discipline and the positive purposes that those processes are intended to achieve. As described in Scripture and our secondary Standards, the purposes of church discipline include three things, each of which are now significantly undermined in new and profound ways by this action. The shepherding purpose of discipline, which seeks to deal earnestly with and recover a sinner for their own spiritual good, is further compromised. The purpose of supporting the peace, purity, and unity of New Covenant is directly threatened. And the purpose of promoting Christ's glory would be undermined by bringing an ecclesiastical matter before an unbelieving world in a civil court, as 1 Cor 6:1-8 directly teaches against doing.

With these things in mind, despite our continued desire to see the positive purposes of church discipline accomplished, the Session has determined not to continue this shepherding process any further but instead to bring your membership at New Covenant Community Church to an end by erasing your name from the church roll in accordance with *Book of Discipline* V.2.a.(2). This act of discipline is something that we greatly regret having to undertake, and we do so with great sorrow.

While this action brings your membership at New Covenant to an end, this fact and the circumstances that immediately led to it also result in the continuation and even the heightening of our concern for you. Your rejection of proper processes for handling conflict within the church over the last many months is only expressed more adamantly by what you have done to seek to force those processes to an end, which makes us even more greatly concerned about your spiritual state as a professing sister in Christ. Jesus said that those who love him would keep his commandments and also regard the voice of his apostles, and yet it is both Jesus and the apostles themselves who describe the necessity and propriety of church discipline. We therefore greatly lament your insistence on your own way over against showing respect for the church structure and governance that you had vowed your submission to in the Lord. And we pray that, even after being erased from New Covenant's rolls, you will consider what you have done in light of God's Word, find faithful spiritual counsel to point you in a biblical direction, seek the Lord in repentance and faith, and that one day you would be willing to pursue a proper resolution with us to these matters. We also pray that you would, in due time and a proper fashion, seek either to rejoin New Covenant or to join another, Gospel-loving, Scripture-teaching church on proper terms, knowing that the position you now inhabit outside of the visible church is one of grave danger, in which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation (WCF 25.2).

As we lament the current state of affairs, then, we also pray that the Lord might nevertheless work mercifully in and through it for both your and our spiritual good, unto his ultimate glory.

Sincerely in Christ,

Nate Hollister  
For the Session