

Steven D. Reece

From: Steven D. Reece <sdreece@matzevah.org>
Sent: Saturday, November 2, 2013 10:53
To: Robin Park; Kevin Little; Daniel Compton; JoAnn Siegienski
Cc: Kevin Little
Subject: Conversation with Stephen

I wanted you all to know that Stephen called me yesterday afternoon. We talked for about 2 hours. He was deeply remorseful and apologetic for his actions; however, the reality of his decision and the accompanying consequences remain the same with the exception that we are working toward cooperating with him and his church next summer.

Essentially Stephen called to say he was sorry and asked if he could work with us this summer. I told him, "No" and that this would not be a good idea at this time for the following reasons:

1. In our working relationship, trust would need to be re-established.
2. His decision was public and was communicated to his church that they would be working with IMB. I told him that If he reversed his decision, he would appear double minded and unstable in his leadership.
3. Additionally, this sort of reversal would cause confusion and raise questions as to why he made the decision in the first place without discussing it with his mission's team, pastor, etc. and with me.

I emphasized to Stephen the nature of our working relationship, which is cooperative meaning that he has the freedom to work with whomever he wishes. The issue is/was that he committed to work with us and chose not to follow through on his commitment; he also did not inform us/me of his decision until after the fact. He understands the implications of his actions. In an effort to restore our relationship with him, I offered him the option of allowing members from his church who wanted to work independently with us this summer with the exception of the two who were involved in the indiscretion. More than likely, there may be only one person who would join us. Two or three others could possibly join us (we will need to have some sort of a screen process in place as we discussed for these and other volunteers).

Long-term, I believe that we will not formally be able to work with Stephen's church; nor do I expect great numbers of people to join us from his church (or any church for that matter) in our work. The pastor is unsupportive and what we do is too mysterious and misunderstood by most people. As we discussed, I believe that this is the direction that God is leading us much like Gideon; we are to be looking for those whom God calls and whose hearts are inclined toward our mission.

As for Stephen, my ultimate purpose is to help him grow in his leadership and to lead effectively as a servant of the Most High God. Stephen received what I shared with him about how to better work through the pressures that he is/was facing. I advised him to never make a decision under emotional duress or pressure. He needs to learn how to step back and take some time to consider his decisions. We discussed the need for leaders to have the willingness to make personal sacrifices and decisions that were based on what was best for all more so than just for what is best for them. I advised him to seek input from others and to consider options and outcomes (implied and unintended) prior to making important decisions.

I think that our relationship for the most part is intact; however, there are elements of it that must be restored. I love Stephen; however, we must work through what he truly values (believes to be right/true/just) and what he does (actually practices/his actual behavior). His leadership paradigm has been forged in pastoral theology in which he is at the pinnacle of leadership. The Lord Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28 NIV). The statement: "Not so with you," is an important admonition. The worldly leadership pattern of dominance is NOT the pattern of leadership that the Lord Jesus desires. Instead Jesus desires for his leaders to serve others and make sacrifices for their benefit. May we all take this to heart and put it into to practice.

Grace and Peace to you all,

Steven

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