

April 26th, 2023

Brethren in Christ,

I offer you this letter of *resignation*, or as I prefer, ***transition***, today, April 26th, 2023. This is the result of much prayer through reflection, fasting, petition, soul searching, and listening. I am very thankful to have served Cornerstone Chapel since April of 2015 and cannot express with words the gratitude I and my wife and family share for your patience with my leadership as Jesus transformed me through His Spirit. This resignation comes from no place but my heart's desire to answer the call to transition elsewhere for Kingdom Labor.

Further, this resignation is not a walking away from continuing in love and labor over and toward all of you for the Glory of Jesus any more than Paul walked away from the ministries He served in. Like the seating at our Lord's table, my prayer list grows, and my labor maintains purpose and definition. Jesus is our great General, *and I take my shoes off and worship Him with my obedience.*

At this time I plan to *transition*, if you will graciously allow, in July of this year. I do not have another job officially lined up, however the Spirit has confirmed He is leading my family and me to labor for Him in the *South Central District of the Christian & Missionary Alliance*-with a particular focus on Texas. Conversations have taken place between me and the leadership there, as well as the current District Superintendent of the Metro District, *Kelvin Walker*. Before a definitive agreement is reached, due to my desire to act with integrity and transparency, I place my notice with you brothers.

It is truly with a heavy heart, for I have come to love all of you as well as the greater Cornerstone family. From welcoming new life to laying to rest life in the hope of the Resurrection that is ours in Christ; to the daily in-between growing and maturing that has been the last 8 years here. Together we have seen God do the miraculous- coming out of redevelopment, coming out of an interest only relationship with ADF / Orchard, along with renewed intimacy with the Metro District, and a new vision of the next generation Cornerstone has been called to train and equip- here we stand together upon the top of *Pisgah* overlooking the better and greater that is to come.

In some ways I feel I have overstayed. Yet from the beginning of the call to prayerfully consider the invitation for NJ, God has led me to experience an intimacy with Him through His Spirit I had not believed possible but always yearned for. The Alliance is the tent where my conviction finally felt at home. I've grown in the Spirit and am truly at a place that I can say my labor in the Lord is both *Spirit filled* and *Spirit led*, as was Jesus'. *Jesus is truly our Savior, Healer, Sanctifier, and King- the same yesterday, today, and forever!*

My wife and I have matured in our walk with Christ, our unity in marriage and parenting, along with our call to minister in our tenure here unlike any other time in our lives. You have patiently and graciously walked alongside us as we answered the call to foster care. From the miraculous move of God in the courthouse, to the up and down battles to love each and every child well, you have been the family we needed to keep giving Jesus our yes. We were even blessed to welcome our newest addition into this world while stationed here with you. Together, 10 children have called us *mom and dad*, and have known the love of Christ richly through each one of you.

It is here my children have grown to find a building with a steeple as an odd thing. White paint and stained glass hold a beauty without value for them. In this I am grateful, for they have learned that the Church Jesus is building is *people-* and everywhere they step is with Him and is *Holy Ground*. Everywhere saints gather is the place where the miraculous of the Kingdom pours out- regardless of the location or building! May such a heart never change for Cornerstone as you continue in this constantly depreciating, invitation to sweat, place this building has been for us as we gather to worship Him here.

The vision God placed upon my heart for Cornerstone Chapel has not changed since it first came. A *safe place-* a hospital for spiritual, mental, emotional, physical deliverance and healing. An *intentional place* to seek and find Jesus, to encounter with all the resource of His Kingdom to be transformed from the inside out. A *growing place* for the training and equipping of all ages for service unto our Lord and His Kingdom, with a special focus on the next generation. *Together, in pursuing the Mission of all of Jesus for all of the world, we continue to learn from Jesus, live like Jesus, and lead others to Jesus.* My prayer is that this passionate flame for Jesus does not diminish but becomes explosive unlike ever before- the Kingdom lamppost seen for miles, a light of invitation reaching many as it continues residing here at Route 23 North.

I and my wife desire to finish our time here strong. With your blessing, I plan to continue working with the township and contractors to finish the NextGen space, work to help see new tenants in place and any rotation of occupancy of designated space for Cornerstone offices, along with preaching and teaching. Further, the full spectrum of pastoral shepherding will not diminish in an respect over anyone- from new visitor acclimation to the visitation and strengthening in Christ of present Body.

Lastly, to an already lengthy letter, I will coordinate with District regarding each and every step for a healthy transition. In the spirit of *the* Spirit's moving in Acts, our hearts in a sense have always been burdened for the harvest fields of Texas. But we were not ready for the ministry there. We had much learning and growing in Him that cannot be attained in a classroom. It is here in the *Midian* of New Jersey God has prepared us to return to the *Egypt* of Texas! It is now the *no's* and *not yet's* of the Spirit have become *yes* and *amen!*

I am as excited for the Kingdom work awaiting us in Texas as much as I am for the kingdom work in front of you here in New Jersey. We are all a part of the Big Tent of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and greater the ongoing coming of God's Kingdom into this world with the power and authority found alone in Jesus' Name! You will hear my voice faithfully in the Throne Room as I look forward to hearing yours regardless of our geography in this world. Eternity together awaits us all in Him- but we are not there yet. There is still much work to be done.

There are still many who need to know the *saving, healing, delivering, transforming, restoring, resurrecting power* only the **God of the living** can bring to them. There are *still* more seats at that Divine Banquet table needing to be filled; more streets to search for the lost upon. *Still* more Robes of Glory to be handed out to those washed by the Blood of the Lamb. The waters of Baptism continue to be disturbed- may they never rest! There is *still* much of the world that needs all of the Savior, Jesus. In this Kingdom Labor, He moves us as He pleases- His Kingdom comes by His Will alone.

There is so much more to say, which I hope to express over the following weeks we have together, Lord willing. I never understood Paul's words regarding the joy he had over those he ministered to until my time here with you. This time with you has been my reward. Please accept this letter of **resignation** as my affirmation of the Spirit's leading to **transition** on my and my family's lives. And with your blessing I will continue to serve faithfully until that final day comes.

Your Brother in Christ,

Damian W. Mericka

Pastor

Cornerstone Chapel, of the Christian & Missionary Alliance

*“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” **-Acts 13:2-3***