

Highway Tabernacle  
18th and Spring Garden  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

March 15, 1977

OFFICIAL BOARD, MEMBERS & FRIENDS:

This is to inform you of my decision to resign as pastor of Highway Tabernacle. I have notified the District officials of the Assemblies of God that I no longer wish to be affiliated with them as a minister and I have returned my valid ministerial credentials to that office.

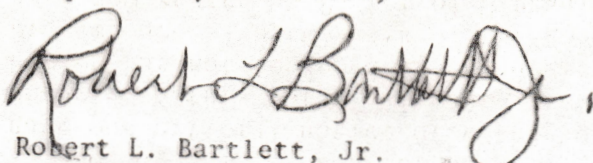
I am making this resignation in writing for I want it to be clearly understood that I categorically deny the defamatory accusations that have been brought against me by former associates of Teen Challenge, and which have circulated among the membership of Highway Tabernacle. Although strong and sufficient evidence has been given by reputable people that discredits the characters of my accusers, and I have been advised by legal counsel that a case of slander would be upheld in the courts, I feel it best for the future of Highway Tabernacle and the ministry in general, that I withdraw at this time -- even though I am not guilty.

I will point out, however, that I have done all that seemed right and proper to do. Immediately upon hearing the slanderous charges against me, both myself and my wife, along with the Teen Challenge Board of Management, followed what we believed to be correct procedure for an Assemblies of God minister. We contacted the Sectional Presbyter, and in his presence denied all allegations against me. I next appeared before the Assistant District Superintendent, as well as the Secretary-Treasurer and (again) the Presbyter; there in the presence of my accusers, I repeatedly affirmed absolute innocence. Then, upon the District Executive's investigation, I was given a 100% vote of confidence by the Teen Challenge Board of Directors, and subsequently, by the full church board of Highway Tabernacle. In no instance has there been one shred of evidence to substantiate the charges against me; instead, the accusers themselves admit to improper behavior. Yet, it's solely on the verbal allegations of such false witnesses as these men of questionable character, that the whole case against me is built.

I feel it isn't God's will that my family be subjected to, nor the ministry of this church be hampered any longer, by prolonged and repeated hearings. It would only do jeopardy to the work which God has ordained for this city. Already, much irreparable harm has been done by the rumors circulated. I pray that my resigning as your pastor at this critical time of church growth will cause these rumors to cease and permit your outreach to continue bearing much fruit for his glory.

Although we are aware, after checking the Eastern District Constitution and By-laws and the church manual, that it is not imperative that I be a credentialed minister in order to fill the pulpit of an Assemblies of God church, I believe it best under the aforementioned circumstances that I resign. When you voted us in as pastor, we held valid credentials, but as of March 14th, we gave our official notice of withdrawal. Therefore, we do not persist that you be held to this vote. Although I will no longer be your pastor, my vision and burden has not lessened in any degree. More than ever before, my heart and prayers are with the work of the gospel that God has ordained for Philadelphia as I now resign as Pastor of Highway Tabernacle.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert L. Bartlett, Jr.

