

OWegner@aol.com wrote:

Dear Otis:

Thank you for your letter of March 24. Your comments concerning our ministry are kind and appreciated.

Pastor and Mrs. Bogdan, Pastor and Mrs. Charles Green (pastors from my youth back in Michigan), and I spent part of yesterday afternoon together sharing anecdotes of the past and dreaming together concerning the future -- a rich and renewing time as I listened in on over a century of ministry experiences.

Pat and I are sensing that it would please the Lord to allow our names to be submitted as candidates to Highway's historic pulpit. I will be happy to draft a letter which includes the outline of ministry strategies. Before I write however, I suggest the following protocol:

1. By virtue of my missionary appointment I am compelled to meet with District Superintendent Philip Bongiorno. Reverend Joseph Beretta, chairman of the board for Northeast Urban Church Planting (NUCP) and President of the Michael Cardone Foundation, and I will meet as soon as Brother Beretta returns from a Florida vacation. Each home missionary is technically a minister by invitation in a district and is approved by the district. In order to implement some of the strategies mentioned while meeting with you I would need to remain a missionary under appointment with the Division of Home Missions for a period of time yet to be determined.

2. While there is precedent for home missionaries serving autonomous congregations similar to Highway, the challenge is to establish clearly defined expectations by all parties -- the congregation, pastor-missionary, district, and Division of Home Missions. In order to facilitate the necessary communication I suggest that you, and other members of Highway's board attend and participate in our next NUCP executive committee meeting to discuss key issues relating to Highway before the congregation meets to decide to discuss our proposal. The next meeting is Tuesday, April 20th at 10:00 AM in Newark. If you could represent the church at that meeting it would also allow you to see a working model resulting from team ministry I defined.

There are many other concerns which are part of a decision as sweeping as the one we presently discussing -- ministry expectations, housing, compensation, timing, etc. We would like to meet with the board at Highway again, possibly in conjunction with the April 20th executive committee meeting, to draft mutually agreed expectations so that we reach mutually beneficial agreements.

All these issues are an exciting challenge for us. I believe they can be instruments in the hand of the Lord bringing us to a quality of dialogue and decision we are prone to miss as we move through a more routine process.

I will make an attempt to call in the next few days. Pat and I are visiting three urban ministry sites in the Washington, DC area from Friday through Monday. If I fail to reach you before our trip I will call as soon as we return. You may also call me at any time (973) 375-0272 (office); (201) 445-0313 (home); (973) 449-8112 (cell); and (973) 375-7279 (fax).

May the joy of the Resurrected Christ fill you and each member of Highway as you celebrate His life on Easter.

Sincerely,

Otto Wegner

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Dear Pastor Wegner:

Thanks for your prompt and detailed reply, which I will share with the board this Sunday.

I'm delighted to hear that the Lord is directing you and Mrs. Wegner to continue in this regard.

As of now, I'll plan to attend the NUCP meeting on April 20th. Seeing that I'm a vehicularly challenged urbanite, would I be able to meet you or someone else at Penn Station in Newark that morning?

I look forward to working prayerfully with you.

Best Regards --

Otis.
Acting Secretary, Highway Tabernacle