

## **History of Reconciliation Process**

*John Hopley, Great Commission Churches Director--January, 2012*

Our God is a God of reconciliation, as is written in 2 Corinthians 5:17,18: *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation..."* In 2011, in accordance with this verse, God brought about reconciliation between leaders in Great Commission Churches and Bill Taylor and Larry Pile. This is a short history of that reconciliation process.

The Great Commission church movement began in 1970 on U.S. college campuses. Though there were many leaders at the beginning, Jim McCotter was the primary catalyst in the early days. In 1973, a summer team led by Dennis Clark, Mike Keator, Fred Colvin and Larry Pile came to Columbus Ohio to share the gospel at Ohio State University. As a result, a church (Solid Rock) was formed, where, in 1976, Bill Taylor had a teaching ministry as an elder and Larry Pile was a deacon with a special ministry in exposing wrong doctrine in cults.

In 1976, Bill Taylor was disciplined from Solid Rock. (As will be explained later, in 2011 the Columbus church judged this to be a wrong action and vacated the discipline.) This led to criticisms by Bill, Larry and others of Great Commission leaders (primarily Jim McCotter). In the 1980s Great Commission was formally organized and Bill, Larry and others increased their criticisms of Great Commission leaders and Jim McCotter in particular.

After Jim McCotter left Great Commission in 1986, GCC pastors initiated Project Care in which they wrote the 1991 Errors and Weaknesses Paper and pursued reconciliation with former members. However, a reconciliation did not occur between GCC and Bill and Larry. Although these two men appreciated the changes made in GCC,

their position was that much more had to be done--most notably the lifting of Bill's discipline. Also, Larry had some specific issues from the past that he wanted GCC to address.

Ever since the early 1990s, GCC's position has been that we made a good faith effort to resolve concerns from the past through Project Care. Also, our general opinion was that reconciliation with Bill and Larry was not likely. Since the 1990s, we would hear or read unfair and extreme mischaracterizations of GCC (that we were a "cult" or "abusive")—and people who made these mischaracterizations would often use words spoken or written by Bill or Larry in the past to support their claims. Evangelical friends outside of GCC shared our opinion that we were being unfairly characterized and counseled us to ignore criticisms from the past, to "move on," and to focus on building churches for Christ.

However, beginning in 2010, the Lord led us into a reconciliation process with Bill and Larry. This reconciliation required many hours of discussion, as we sought to listen to each other with greater patience and humility. Although this took a lot of time, we all consider it time well spent. In January, 2011, GCC leaders reconciled with Bill Taylor (See Attachment A). Afterwards, Larry Pile and I had several interactions on other issues from the past that concerned him. This also resulted in reconciliation. (See Attachment B for Larry Pile's letter on the reconciliation process.)

We in Great Commission Churches are happy to report that we now enjoy a restored relationship with Bill Taylor and Larry Pile as fellow believers in Jesus Christ. This has been a great blessing to all of us—and we give God all the glory for what He accomplished.

If you have any questions about this reconciliation process please contact the GCC office at [info@gccweb.org](mailto:info@gccweb.org).

## **A Story of Reconciliation: Bill Taylor and Leaders in Great Commission Churches**

*John Hopley—July 2011*

Dear friends of Bill Taylor,

In April, I sent out a letter with the encouraging news that the 1976 Solid Rock Fellowship discipline of Bill Taylor has been vacated and that there has been reconciliation between Bill Taylor and the former leaders of Solid Rock and the leaders in Great Commission Churches (GCC) including the Linworth Road Church (LRC) elders. (See April, 2011 letter, attached.) This paper is a history of the events that led to that reconciliation

Our God is a God of reconciliation: *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”* (2 Cor. 5:17,18). In unity with God’s ministry of reconciliation, I have three goals in this paper. First, I want to honor Bill and the men involved in the recent reconciliation. Second, I want to give details of the recent events that led to the reconciliation between Bill and GCC. Third, I want to appeal to any who have not reconciled with Bill or with GCC.

### **A Word of Introduction**

In 1973, after hearing Bill Taylor’s lecture on the Second Coming of Christ, I put my faith in Jesus Christ. I later joined Solid Rock and benefited greatly from Bill’s teaching. I had no part in the September 12, 1976 excommunication process, but I was at the church meeting when Bill’s discipline was announced. In 1979 I became an elder of Solid Rock and later was on the team that started the national Great Commission organization. In 1991, I and other GCC leaders talked with Bill in an attempt to bring about reconciliation. This past year, as the GCC Director, I steered the reconciliation process between Bill and GCC. Also, I am a member (although not an elder) of Linworth Road Church.

This paper represents my personal perspective of Bill’s discipline and reconciliation (although I did submit this paper to Bill, the other Solid Rock elders, the Linworth Road Church board, and the GCC board for their counsel). My hope is that this paper will bring more reconciliation within the body of Christ.

### **HONORING THESE MEN**

At the outset, I would like to give honor to Bill Taylor, the former Solid Rock elders (Fred Colvin and Mike Keator) and the other GCC leaders who had a role in the 1976 discipline and the recent reconciliation (Dave Bovenmyer, Dennis Clark, and Herschel Martindale.) Each man loves Jesus Christ and His word. As humble men who have confessed their wrongs, they have received God’s abundant grace. May we imitate our heavenly Father by giving them abundant grace as well.

In this paper, I have a special desire to honor Bill. When a man is excommunicated from a church, he suffers a loss of respect in the Christian community, even if later on it was

acknowledged that the excommunication process was not appropriate. One goal I have in writing this paper is to do all I can to restore Bill's reputation as a follower of Jesus Christ, particularly in GCC churches. Bill is a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ. His ministry has had a powerful impact for God's kingdom on many people, including many in GCC. Today Bill is doing a marvelous work in equipping nationals to advance the gospel in unreached parts of the world. While it is true (as he has admitted) that he was wrong in some of his actions in the 1970s, my personal belief is that he had an overall desire to teach God's truth in this new movement. It is an honor for me to say that Bill Taylor and I are united as brothers today to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

At the same time, I want to honor the other 5 men mentioned above (Fred Colvin, Mike Keator, Dave Bovenmyer, Dennis Clark, and Herschel Martindale). Just as there is a need to *restore* Bill's reputation, there is a need to *defend* these men's reputation. They took action in 1976 out of a desire to advance the gospel and to build Christ's church. Those most familiar with the facts of this case know that these men had valid issues that they were addressing at that time. Hindsight being 20-20, they would take a different course of action were they faced with similar circumstances today. My hope is that this paper will increase people's appreciation for them. Although they were wrong in some of the actions they took in 1976, they are humble men who were worthy of our respect in 1976 and who are worthy of our respect today.

### **A Commitment to Transparency**

This paper is focused on giving details of the recent reconciliation. As to the 1976 discipline, I want to answer any question related to the specifics of that discipline. However, I want to do so in a way that honors the Lord and the men named earlier in this paper. I could give many details about events that occurred over the past 40 years. But I see no need to write about certain statements or actions that have since been confessed and forgiven. Because I respect Bill and these GCC leaders so much, I have chosen to limit the amount of facts that I put in writing. Also, I have chosen not to present any facts that would hinder future reconciliation efforts between Bill and those outside of GCC involved with the 1976 discipline.

If you would like more details about the 1976 discipline of Bill Taylor than this paper provides, please contact Bill (billjoanntaylor@juno.com) or my office ([info@gccweb.org](mailto:info@gccweb.org)).

## **DETAILS OF THE RECENT RECONCILIATION**

**1970s:** Bill's discipline in 1976 involved a conflict that began in the early 1970s. There are many details that could be given. However, it is sufficient for this paper to make three points:

1. The discipline in 1976 centered around statements and actions by Bill Taylor between 1974 and 1976. Bill had concerns with the leadership and teaching in the movement, particularly with Jim McCotter. Jim was the pastor with the most national influence in the Great Commission church movement from 1970 until he left in 1986 to pursue business ventures.
2. Over the past 30+ years, a primary issue for Bill has been the content of his concerns with the leadership and teaching in the movement. During the past 30+ years, as GCC

leaders addressed Bill's substantive concerns, a primary issue for GCC leaders has been the way Bill shared his concerns. Many of the issues raised by Bill were later addressed and acknowledged in GCC's 1991 *Errors and Weaknesses Paper*.

(<http://gccweb.org/assets/gccweb/weakness.pdf>). However, Bill has also stated that he was wrong in some of the ways he presented his concerns in the 1970s.

3. Another key issue was the process taken in the excommunication. In September, 1976, leaders from outside Solid Rock came to Columbus because of their concerns with Bill. Everyone agrees that it was appropriate for these outside leaders to present their concerns to the Solid Rock elders. However, everyone in GCC also agrees that several significant aspects of the 1976 discipline process were wrong (and contrary to how a GCC church would proceed today).

**1990s:** In the early 1990s, GCC leaders made changes in their leadership approach. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s elders would too often ignore criticisms or assume they were unmerited or ill intended as being "divisive". This resulted in the inappropriate usage of Titus 3:10 in some situations. But now a greater emphasis is placed on humility and responding maturely to criticisms. As part of Project Care, in 1991 I and other GCC leaders pursued reconciliation with former members including Bill Taylor. Afterwards, GCC wrote a letter to Bill acknowledging and apologizing for the process taken in the 1976 discipline. However, despite these procedural errors, GCC leaders believed that the discipline should not be lifted and asked Bill to respond to some issues. Initially there was some dialogue but until recently there was little interaction between Bill and GCC.

**2010:** Last year, the Lord began working towards reconciliation. Bill's wife JoAnn had a deeper prayer burden for a resolution. In May 2010, while reviewing the history of our movement, I began praying for reconciliation. Then, after receiving an email from Bill Taylor's friend Dan Lilly, the Lord stirred Fred Colvin to see the discipline lifted. This resulted in many emails back and forth and some conference calls in late 2010. At that time, I was affected by 1 Peter 3:8: *"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit."* Harmony comes when there is sympathy— seeing things from the other's viewpoint. So we made extra effort to see things from Bill's viewpoint. For example, I was sympathetic that in the 1970s there was no defined appeal process (as there is in GCC today) for Bill to express his concerns with a pastor who had national influence. Even though we in GCC still questioned some of Bill's conduct, God used 1 Peter 3:8 to prepare us for our meeting in January.

**January 2011:** On January 6-7, 2011, I invited Bill Taylor and Fred Colvin to Columbus to meet with Mike Keator, Herschel Martindale, Tom Short, Dave Bovenmyer and me. In summary, it was a wonderful time. We prayed together, and the Lord was very present. We had rich fellowship, characterized by humility, brotherly understanding, forgiveness, and grace. The time was filled with the sharing of God's word, testimonies, and moments of laughter. We spent many hours talking about advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ to new places in the world.

At the outset of the meeting, GCC leaders humbly acknowledged to Bill the errors in the discipline process. Also, I shared that GCC leaders thought it would be right to vacate the judgment unilaterally. During the meeting Bill also acknowledged that he was wrong in some

of the ways he addressed his concerns in the 1970s. Overall, everyone extended forgiveness to each other.

After the meeting, as Herschel and Dave flew back home, Bill, Mike, Fred, Tom Short and his wife joined my wife and me at my home for a meal and a time to break bread. For me, it was a time of special blessing to be fellowshiping with the former elders of Solid Rock.

**January 2011 to the present:** The 1976 excommunication was done by Solid Rock. Linworth Road Church (LRC), the successor to Solid Rock, was the proper body to vacate the discipline. Since none of the present LRC elders had any knowledge of the 1976 events, the GCC board recommended to LRC that the September 1976 church judgment of Bill Taylor be vacated. In February, I met with the LRC elders to explain the Bill Taylor discipline and the GCC recommendation. Due to several being out of town over the next month, the LRC elders were delayed in making a board decision. Then on March 18, 2011 the LRC elders made an “official” and independent decision to vacate the 1976 judgment of Bill Taylor.

## Questions and answers

### ***1. How does vacating the excommunication restore Bill's reputation?***

Because significant aspects of the process were wrong, the excommunication was vacated. To vacate means we treat this judgment as if it never occurred. We did not “retry” this case under Titus 3:10. A retrial was not considered possible (since these events happened so long ago) or necessary (since we who met with Bill in January would not characterize him as a factious man today).

What does this mean as to Bill's reputation? We should presume that Bill was innocent of faction, based on this principle: A man is presumed innocent unless proven guilty by a fair and thorough process. In a court case, if the procedures are not right, then we cannot be sure that the judgment is just. In Bill's case, he was never judged to be factious through a fair and thorough process. Therefore, Bill should be viewed like you and me, as one innocent of faction, until proven otherwise.

In addition, based on my general understanding of what occurred in 1976, it is my personal opinion that the events that occurred in Solid Rock in 1976 would lead to a different result in GCC today. In 1976, Solid Rock was not part of a church association where there were older, mature Christians who could act as mediators when conflicts arose. If the same events occurred in a GCC church in 2011, I believe that those in national leadership in GCC would counsel the elders to view this as a conflict between elders, not a Titus 3:10 matter. Even though there were some valid issues in Bill's life to address at the time, my opinion is that in 2011 this matter would result in mediation, not church discipline. If my opinion is accurate, then Bill would not have been disciplined in 1976 had Solid Rock been part of a support structure like that provided by GCC today. And if so, there would have been no need to restore his reputation today.

Bottom line, my hope and prayer is that everyone will view Bill Taylor today, not as a factious man, but as a brother in Christ who seeks to honor God and His word.

### ***2. What steps have been taken to correct the wrongs of the 1976 discipline?***

Because the discipline was wrong, the following steps were taken. First, the GCC and LRC boards have repudiated the 1976 discipline. Second, I urged those in a GCC church who were involved with the discipline to reconcile with Bill. Every GCC church member who played a role

in the discipline has asked for and received forgiveness from Bill. Third, in 1998 GCC established as a GCC church membership requirement a process for addressing concerns with elders that protects churches in the future from the wrongs that occurred in 1976. Fourth, for 25 years, the practice in GCC churches has been for elders to seek a peaceful resolution that avoids a Titus 3:10 discipline. Elders are urged to be humble and patient with those with disagreements, and not be quick to assume that a person is divisive. Fifth, as for those who participated in the 1976 discipline who are not in a GCC church, GCC has urged them to seek reconciliation with Bill. Finally, I have asked Bill if there are any other steps for us to take and he said that he is satisfied with GCC's response.

### ***3. Why did this reconciliation not occur in 1991 when GCC leaders met with Bill?***

I have often asked myself this question over the past few months. We all wish that reconciliation had occurred many years ago. However, there are several reasons why reconciliation occurred in 2011, not 1991. First, in God's sovereignty, the Spirit of God chose to move in several people's hearts (JoAnn Taylor, Fred Colvin, mine) at the same time in 2010 to bring about the reconciliation that was completed in 2011. Second, GCC leaders and Bill are more mature today than in 1991. This past year, GCC leaders and Bill made greater attempts to see things from each others' perspective. As a result, God changed GCC leaders' perspective on how to view the wrong procedures. In 1991 GCC leaders acknowledged that the 1976 discipline process was wrong. But at the end of 2010 GCC leaders recognized that if the process is wrong, then the right action is to vacate the 1976 judgment unilaterally. When this was communicated to Bill at the start of the January, 2011 meeting, it paved the way for a total reconciliation between Bill and GCC.

But there was another major factor. When I and other GCC leaders met with Bill in 1991, we genuinely wanted to achieve reconciliation. What most people don't realize is that another church (not a GCC church) had disciplined Bill in 1985. The discipline by this church (which previously had disagreed with Solid Rock's 1976 decision) greatly affected GCC leaders. To honor that church's discipline, we wanted Bill to give us news of a resolution or an explanation on why the 1985 discipline was invalid. Not until 2010 did this occur, when Bill sent me news that he and the church's pastor had reconciled. It is true that Bill received a letter of discipline in 1985. However, the church's pastor told me that although there had been a conflict, his view today is that Bill did nothing worthy of being disciplined. This news was pivotal in the reconciliation between GCC and Bill. My *personal* opinion is this: If the 1985 incident had been resolved in 1991 I believe that it would have led to a chain of events that would have resulted in Bill's discipline being vacated in 1991. I realize that this is highly speculative. But still, that is my opinion today.

### ***4. Has there been reconciliation with everyone who was involved in the Bill Taylor discipline?***

Everyone who is a GCC church member (and all but a few outside of GCC) are reconciled with Bill. Bill has made himself available for a reconciliation meeting with anyone involved in the 1976 discipline, including Jim McCotter. (FYI, Jim has not been a member of a GCC church or in any sort of accountability relationship with GCC for over 20 years.) Please pray that God will bring total reconciliation with all involved with the 1976 discipline.

## **Evaluating through eyes of grace.**

In this story, there were wrongs and immature actions done...by everyone. But I hope that we all have a gracious spirit when evaluating the men in this story. All of us, including leaders, have flaws and need God's grace. These leaders were young men, in their 20s and 30s who did not have the benefit of 30+ years of experience with the "20-20 hindsight" that we have today. Therefore, my appeal is that we refrain from a harsh, judgmental attitude when looking back on September 1976. My prayer is that while we look honestly at the flawed actions, we will evaluate these brothers as the Lord views them, with "eyes of grace."

## **TWO APPEALS**

I rejoice that Bill Taylor and GCC churches are reconciled today. However, some unresolved situations remain. Therefore, I have two appeals. First, if you have not reconciled with Bill as to the 1976 discipline, please do so. Second, if you have concerns related to this paper or related to a GCC church, please contact me. I promise to listen to you with sympathy and to make a good faith effort to resolve your concerns. In that regard, please consider this note from Bill Taylor:

*"I have found John to be, as the Director of Great Commission Churches (GCC), a man of his word. As we worked recently through issues that have divided us over these 35 years, it was John's persistence and honesty that unlocked shut doors leading to ways that reconciliation could take place and relationships mended. I would encourage you to share openly and honestly with him as I believe he wants the best for the Lord Jesus Christ. If you would be more comfortable to include me in your communication with him regarding issues that concern you please feel free to do so. John and I continue to have open and straightforward communication and a common desire to see the Lord glorified and people helped positively as much as we can regarding these things."*

## **FINAL WORD: EXALTING THE GRACE OF GOD**

In closing, it is only fitting that we exalt God for His grace. The gospel of Jesus Christ has continued to spread over the past 35 years, despite everyone's sins, errors, and misjudgments. Fred Colvin, Mike Keator and Bill Taylor are all actively proclaiming the gospel overseas. Also, from that 1976 Solid Rock church, over 35 churches have been started. But perhaps the greatest miracle is that the Lord united Bill, Fred, and Mike as former Solid Rock elders and brought unity with other GCC brothers in Christ. Today we all support each other in our ministries to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ across the globe. Praise God for His amazing grace! To Him be all the glory!

**If you have any questions about this letter, please contact John Hopley at [info@gccweb.org](mailto:info@gccweb.org).**



April, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You are likely aware that Bill Taylor was excommunicated on the charge of faction from Solid Rock Fellowship in Columbus, Ohio in 1976. Solid Rock later became Linworth Road Church, a member church of Great Commission Churches (GCC). This is written to give you the encouraging news that there has been reconciliation between the former leaders of Solid Rock, the leaders in the Great Commission Churches including the Linworth Road elders, and Bill.

The seven of us met on January 6-7, 2011 in Columbus. Fred Colvin, Mike Keator and Bill Taylor, were the Solid Rock elders in 1976. Dave Bovenmyer and Herschel Martindale, present GCC board members, were elders from other churches involved in the 1976 excommunication. John Hopley and Tom Short, also GCC board members, were members of Solid Rock in 1976. All were present with a desire to see God bring about reconciliation. In summary, the January meeting was a time of rich fellowship in the Lord, characterized by humility, brotherly understanding, confessions and expressions of forgiveness and grace. The time was filled with prayer, the sharing of God's word, testimonies, and moments of laughter. We spent many hours talking about advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ to new places in the world.

After unrelated delays, on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Linworth Road Church elders, in harmony with counsel offered by the Great Commission Churches board, made a decision to vacate the 1976 church excommunication of Bill Taylor. If you have questions about the specifics related to this decision, you can contact any of us individually or the GCC office (<http://gccweb.org/>) or the Linworth Road Church office (<http://www.linworthroad.org/>.) Also, John Hopley, who the Lord used to steer this reconciliation process to its conclusion, is writing a paper from his personal perspective which gives a history of this matter in detail, which you will be able to receive by contacting the Great Commission Churches office.

As your brothers in Christ, we would also like to communicate to you the following:

1. *The Living Christ.* Jesus Christ is the One who brought about this reconciliation. The January meeting was another example of God's grace being greater than our sins, our immaturity, and our unwise judgments. Even with all the events that occurred in the 1970s, God faithfully worked in advancing His church. Since 1976, there have been over 30 churches started out of Solid Rock.
2. *Brotherly Humility and Love.* Each of us has confessed to each other the wrongs we have done, our immaturity, and acknowledged to each other the different ways we would have acted were we faced with the same set of circumstances today. If there are ones who have been hurt or wronged by our actions, we ask for your forgiveness—and we would want to express that to you personally.
3. *The Mission of Jesus Christ.* Although we have had many healthy discussions about the past, we have chosen to not dwell on the past. We are moving on, united as brothers, to advance Christ's glory to the ends of the earth. Dave Bovenmyer is a pastor in Iowa, and serves on the GCC leadership team. Fred Colvin is a missionary in Austria, helping to lead a movement of 40 churches. John Hopley is the GCC Director, a movement of 150 affiliated churches in the world. Mike Keator is equipping thousands to share the gospel with unreached people throughout the world. Herschel Martindale is training leaders in the Dominican Republic. Tom Short preaches to college students, leading many to Christ. Bill Taylor works with a mission group in training nationals to advance the gospel in their countries. We support and pray for each other in the work each is doing for the Lord. We also ask for your prayers and support for each man that the fame of Jesus Christ will spread throughout the world.

Much grace to you in Jesus Christ,

Dave Bovenmyer, Fred Colvin, John Hopley, Mike Keator, Herschel Martindale, Tom Short, Bill Taylor

## *Attachment B*

### **Statement Regarding Great Commission Churches (GCC)—*Larry Pile***

Many who post messages on this site know that my wife, Linda, and I had been adherents of GCC between 1971 and 1977. That period, including much of the '80s, was a turbulent one in the history of GCC, with many high moments as vibrant churches were established throughout the country, but also with serious lows characterized by excommunications of numerous individuals who ventured to voice criticisms and disagreements with certain teachings and practices, primarily of movement founder, Jim McCotter.

Over the years former leaders and members wrote letters, made phone calls, and had face-to-face meetings with top leaders of GCC in an effort to bring about what the former regarded as needed reforms. In 1985 several former leaders in GCC (including Paul Martin and me) arranged two weekend conferences for ex-members who were still hurt and confused by some GCC teachings, and by certain recent events. These were held in Kansas City, Mo., and Norman, Okla.; approximately 70–80 people attended each conference. Some of you may have attended one or both of those conferences. The main speakers were Paul Martin, Bill Taylor, Mike Royal, Henry Hintermeister, Ray Moore, Jerry MacDonald, Jimmy Schooler, and me — all of whom, with the exception of myself, had been elders of various local GC churches. In addition, Rick Harvey, former elder in Norman, surprised most conference attendees by showing up at the gathering in Norman over Labor Day 1985 and revealing that he had recently severed his ties with Great Commission. He shared the long and difficult course that led him to his decision.

Many of the above-named men met annually for the next three or four years to pray and share what they had each learned about events related to GCC, especially the departures from its ranks of leaders and other members who held significant roles in the movement (e.g., editors of publications and radio station managers). They also brainstormed possible ways to effect needed reforms in GCC. During their meeting in Atlanta in 1987 they learned to their surprise that in 1986 GCC founder and leader Jim McCotter had asked his co-leaders to permit him to step down from his position of overall responsibility, and then earlier in 1987 he and an associate left the movement altogether in order to focus on their business interests.

On February 28, 1991, at the request of a few members of the board of directors of GCC, Paul Martin and I met with three of those board members (Dave Bovenmyer, John Hopley, and Tom Schroeder) at a motel in Lancaster, Ohio, to express again some of the issues of our greatest concern.

A follow-up meeting took place on July 19, 1991 (immediately following GCC's annual leadership conference in Columbus), again at the request of the GCC board, between Paul and I and nine of the ten-member board and three campus leaders. At

one point towards the end of the scheduled time one GCC board member remarked to the effect that “One of the reasons this meeting is even taking place is because some of *us* have had concerns of our own.” This was one of several statements by a few of the GCC men that Paul and I would have liked to explore a little further, but because of considerations of time constraints did not (as it was, the meeting lasted an hour longer than the two hours originally allotted). The remark, however, seemed to be a hint that at least some of the then-current GCC leaders had seen some of the errors and imbalances about which the *former* leaders and ex-members had long been concerned.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Paul and I both felt that the GCC representatives had come a long way in the right direction, moving away from many errors in teaching and practice of the past and toward a much healthier and more biblical condition spiritually. Both Paul and I, however, were dismayed by the virtual adulation of Jim McCotter by several of the GCC men present, even though they did also acknowledge that Jim had “made mistakes.” At least one or more of the GCC representatives expressed the view that Jim’s errors were probably really merely the consequence of his “youthful zeal” and “visionary personality.” Paul and I felt this explanation failed to account for what we viewed as more serious matters. However, earlier on this day the pastors and national leaders took the significant step of ratifying a [“Statement Recognizing Early Errors and Weaknesses in the Development of the Great Commission Association of Churches.”](#) This was a much needed action in the process of internal reform, likely made easier by McCotter’s departure a few years earlier.

The following day Rick Harvey and Bill Taylor joined Paul and me in a meeting with four GCC leaders (board members Bovenmyer, Hopler, Schroeder, and pastor Mike Keator). This meeting began about 8:30 a.m. and continued until about 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. the following morning. The two sides made much progress in bridging the gulf between them — particularly in regard to situations concerning Taylor and Harvey, respectively — but, in spite of a several months’ correspondence continuing into late 1992, no final reconciliation took place

Then, in August 2007 former GCC member Dan Lilly arranged a “reunion” picnic in Ames, Iowa between current and former members of Iowa GCC churches. Dan also began floating the idea of reconciliation with Bill Taylor. Then in 2010 Taylor’s wife, JoAnn, also felt a deeper prayer burden for a resolution of the issues separating Bill and her from men and women with whom they had once worked in love and harmony. Also in 2010 John Hopler likewise began praying for reconciliation. This renewed interest in working toward a broader reconciliation between the “ins” and the “outs” was spurred on again by Dan Lilly — this time via e-mail. Ultimately, a meeting took place on January 6–7, 2011 in Columbus, Ohio, between Bill Taylor, who had been excommunicated from the Columbus-based Solid Rock Fellowship in 1976, and former SRF elders Mike Keator and Fred Colvin, along with four GCC board members. As soon as the seven men got together, the GCC men told Taylor they were unanimous in their decision to “vacate” his 1976 excommunication, i.e., to

regard it as null and void, thus eliminating the need for any further discussion of the issue. The remainder of their meeting was a wonderful time of mutual confession of wrongs and forgiveness for hurts received, amid tears of sorrow mingled with joy.

A succeeding series of phone discussions between GCC Director John Hopler and I concerning a number of remaining issues of concern resulted in those being resolved as well. Therefore, **I wish to state that GCC has resolved to my satisfaction all issues of concern** I have had over the past 34 years regarding GCC's teaching and practice. I am happy to state publicly that Linda and I and GCC now enjoy fellowship together as members of the broader evangelical church community. Unfortunately, Paul Martin did not live to see this day; he died of leukemia in August 2009.

In addition to the process rehearsed above, over the past several months reconciliation has been effected between several current and former leaders and members of GCC. A more detailed account of events leading up to this ultimate reconciliation is or will soon be available on the GCC website.

At the same time, I recognize that there may still be problems in the future, just as there may be also within and among churches of mainline denominations. In such cases, it is my recommendation that these be reported to GCC Director John Hopler, at [jrhopler@gmail.com](mailto:jrhopler@gmail.com).

Finally, I realize that material I and Paul Martin have written over the past 30+ years which addressed our concerns with the Blitz/GCI/GCAC/GCC in the past might be used by some as a basis to characterize GCC unfairly today. While I stand by the things I have written in the past about GCC, times clearly have changed. Therefore, I request that **the past remain the past**. I urge that current members and leaders of GCC be evaluated fairly, according to how they teach and live out their faith in the present.

Lawrence A. Pile  
December 15, 2011