

The Timeline for the Establishment of Church of God, a *Worldwide Association*

The following is an accurate account of the timeline of events leading up to the formation of the Church of God, a *Worldwide Association* including an additional point added January 3, 2011.

From the day President Dennis Luker commented in his first video sermon to the Church on the idea of a “peaceful separation,” it was inevitable that many ministers and members would ponder and discuss what that would mean for the future of the United Church of God and any other organization that would come out of such separation. However, no concrete discussions for separation or a new organization took place until the week of December 13, and those were based on a series of developments after the letter from 57 employees was sent to Mr. Luker on December 4. The timeline of these developments is outlined below. Exchanges about future planning regarding the formation of a new organization accelerated after receiving the December 17 letter from President Luker. However, it was not until a December 20, 2010 Internet meeting that a proposal was put forward to begin forming a new organization.

1. **On Saturday night, December 4, 2010**, an open letter from 57 employed elders was sent to President Luker, outlining their concerns about the crisis in the Church and asking the question whether we had reached an impasse with no hope of reconciliation.
2. **On Monday, December 13, 2010**, several ministers among the 57 who had signed this letter to Mr. Luker discussed the lack of results from that effort and they agreed one final attempt should be made to talk or, most likely, seek a peaceful separation. Mr. Luker mentioned the idea of a peaceful separation in his very first message as president back in June of this year. Messrs. Lyle Welty, Dave Johnson and Richard Pinelli were asked to speak with Mr. Luker and they agreed to represent, unofficially, the signers of the open letter. These three men set up a meeting with Mr. Luker for Wednesday, December 15, 2010.
3. **On Wednesday, December 15, 2010**, the meeting took place as scheduled and Mr. Johnson submitted a report after the meeting. The meeting dealt mostly with terms of separation since there was no agreement to pursue any further dialogue. Here are excerpts from Mr. Johnson’s report: “[Mr. Luker] also said that if a new organization came about, he would like to see a joint statement from both groups laying to rest any animosity and simply moving on in the way we felt we needed to. Richard [Pinelli] pursued the subject saying that if he understood what [Mr. Luker] was saying, that those who were concerned as we are would need to be able to meet to discuss what to do next. [Mr. Pinelli] asked if they

would be able to do that without recriminations. [Mr. Luker] said that he realized that they would need to meet to figure out the next steps, and that, as long as the meeting was focused in that way and not on attacking those who support the Council and administration, **he would think such a meeting was reasonable and he would not have a problem with it...** [Mr. Johnson] told [Mr. Luker] that if we were able to hold such a meeting, it would not be a foregone conclusion that we would be starting a new organization, but that would certainly be a possibility as we put all of our options on the table. [Mr. Luker] said he understood... Richard [Pinelli] wrapped things up saying we had basically come to the end of the things we needed to discuss and it was time now to act on what we had discussed. We thanked them again for the meeting with us... **It was agreed that the ministers in UCG who are not supportive of the Council can continue doing their jobs till we resign. There was no mention of a need for ministers to resign prior to our meeting.**" Mr. Luker did tell the group that he would have to discuss this with the Council to get their thoughts.

4. **On Wednesday, December 15, 2010** a report on the meeting was sent to the signers of the open letter. Based on Mr. Luker's comments, information was provided in this email message concerning the possibility of an Internet meeting to take place on Sunday or Monday (December 19 or 20) to discuss future options. Here is the quote: **"Denny was informed by Richard, Lyle and Dave that there is a meeting being planned in the near future. So, there is no secret concerning a meeting... Denny was told that all options would be on the table at that meeting including forming a new organization."**
5. **On Friday, December 17, 2010**, Messrs. Welty, Johnson and Pinelli received a formal response from Mr. Luker regarding their Wednesday meeting. After speaking with the Council Mr. Luker changed the agreement that had been understood by the three men who met with him on Wednesday. Mr. Luker wrote the following: "You brought up that I had commented in my very first sermon as the then-new president of the United Church of God that if we as ministers could not agree, then we should consider a 'peaceful separation' rather than harm the Church and its precious members through continued divisive acts. That was about six months ago and quite a few events have taken place since then. So far as any process or procedure goes, we are without a roadmap. But we do know that we intend to protect the brethren entrusted to us, and that we cannot honorably or in good faith ask members to in effect 'fund a separation.' If your desire is to leave and form yet another new organization, that is your choice. If that is your choice, **then it is our belief that all of you should do the honorable thing and voluntarily resign your status as an elder in the United Church of God.**"
6. **On Friday, December 17**, Jim Franks sent an email to the same group of concerned elders, confirming an Internet meeting for Monday, December 20 to discuss the future. The email stated that it was time to move forward with plans to hold a meeting to discuss recent events. Here is a quote from the email: "Next week we need to firm up plans for moving forward... Within the next few days we will need to discuss the following (among other things)..." What follows is a series of questions - when the group should meet, where they should meet, and

what should be done about resigning or being terminated. This email did not provide any plans for a new organization since there were no plans, but only confirmed the meeting date and asked some basic questions for the discussion that would take place during the Monday meeting. The email was prepared on Friday afternoon, reviewed and edited, but not released until Friday evening. Mr. Franks wrote to Mr. Luker on Sunday, December 19, 2010 informing him of his intent to resign but asked for clarification on a couple of personal issues. Mr. Luker was out of the office on Monday attending the funeral for Dibar Apartian, so Mr. Franks contacted him by email letting him know that his resignation was effective Monday morning, December 20, 2010. Mr. Kilough also resigned effective at noon on Monday, December 20, 2010. The meeting in which a new organization was proposed took place on the afternoon of December 20.

7. **After the December 20, 2010 meeting** in which the proposal for a new organization was put forward, each participant made his own decision about the timing of his resignation based on personal circumstances.

Summary: It was only after the letter on Friday, December 17, 2010, declaring that there would be no “peaceful separation” and that any meeting would be viewed as a problem, that a group of concerned ministers moved forward with plans for a general discussion on Monday, December 20, 2010 to consider the options for setting up a new organization. During that meeting a new organization was proposed and the paperwork filed with the state of Florida over the following few days resulting in a new organization officially beginning on December 23, 2010.