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Dear Friends of Pine Knoll Publications,

Over the last few months some developments have occurred which affect both Pine Knoll Publications and its principal speaker, Dr. Jonathan Gallagher. As you probably know, in addition to teaching the Sabbath School class in Redlands, California, Dr. Gallagher served the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) General Conference as its United Nations (UN) liaison officer for the past eight years.

During Dr. Gallagher's UN service he made many acquaintances in the diplomatic community. These contacts led to requests for public appearances and speeches to various groups around the world. After one such presentation Dr. Gallagher was approached by a UN Human Rights Officer who asked him if, when he traveled, he could make observations of human rights problems and report them to a UN contact. Dr. Gallagher agreed and his involvement in the cause of human rights (with a focus on religious liberty) rapidly grew. Dr. Gallagher apprised his superiors at the SDA General Conference of these unique opportunities to assist both Adventists and others facing persecution for their beliefs and he was given permission to continue and expand his efforts. The SDA General Conference added one condition, however, that Dr. Gallagher raise funds to support the additional expenses this religious liberty work would incur in terms of research visits. Dr. Gallagher turned to friends, all of whom are part of the Pine Knoll Sabbath School class, and they made significant contributions to support that part of his work.

All went well for several years as Dr. Gallagher did his normal work and on occasion also did confidential research including on-site visits. From the start, Dr. Gallagher explained to his SDA General Conference superiors that the nature of that fieldwork would mean that information that could be shared would be very limited because of the significant and real risks to everyone involved. Moreover, he offered to give the General Conference leaders briefings as to what he was doing. Little interest was shown. Nonetheless, as opportunities arose, Dr. Gallagher gave reports to certain General Conference officers as well as to the donors concerning his work.

It is now known that during the last few months of 2007 and into 2008, a handful of relatively new individuals at the General Conference with a very limited knowledge of Dr. Gallagher's trips speculated that his human rights work was suspect. They began an "investigation" into his UN confidential research to determine whether Dr. Gallagher's UN contacts were real, apparently

reasoning that if they could not locate his confidential UN contacts, those individuals did not exist. They then concluded that the entire confidential research effort was a fabrication, intended only to provide opportunities to do bird-watching. By their account, their “investigation” consisted primarily of “googling” the names of his contacts, and when they didn’t find them, they decided that Dr. Gallagher’s independent research was fraudulent. A short time later, the General Conference Computer Department told Dr. Gallagher that it was time for him to turn in his laptop computer for an unscheduled replacement. Dr. Gallagher turned it in as asked.

A few weeks later, Dr. Gallagher was called into a meeting with several General Conference officials, including the Senior General Counsel. Dr. Gallagher was confronted with vague charges of fraud and downloading and viewing pornography. He was shown a notebook prepared by the General Conference Treasurer which the General Conference officials claimed supported those charges. He was summarily asked to resign “for cause”. Dr. Gallagher refused and asked for an opportunity to clear himself. He was initially given three days, later lengthened to approximately a month to do so. From the beginning of these discussions, Dr. Gallagher made it clear that since the General Conference officials did not want him in his position, he was ready and willing to resign, but only “without cause”. He was steadfast that he would not resign for cause and would fight to prove his innocence. (A termination “for cause” means that there was a valid, legitimate, justified and nondiscriminating reason for the action, based upon the fact that the employee had done some wrongful act. A termination “without cause” means that the termination was not because of a wrongful act on the part of the employee but was for the business purposes of the employer.) The General Conference President, Treasurer and legal counsel from the start of these discussions was just as adamant that Dr. Gallagher was “guilty” and could not clear himself.

This law firm, as Dr. Gallagher’s attorneys, asked the General Conference legal counsel for the evidence which supposedly incriminated Dr. Gallagher. Some papers were provided but it came in pieces, was never complete, was full of holes, legally speaking, and was systematically investigated by both this law office and a forensic computer expert and thoroughly refuted. Throughout the course of the investigation, it became clear to us as Dr. Gallagher’s attorneys, that:

1. The General Conference legal counsel and its officials were biased in their investigation of Dr. Gallagher’s confidential fieldwork at the UN. When our law office provided evidence to clearly demonstrate that Dr. Gallagher had been engaged in such work, that evidence was simply ignored by the General Conference officials and legal counsel. The evidence provided on Dr. Gallagher’s behalf consisted of documentation of interviews with people he had worked with all over the world and a number of letters attesting to his diligent efforts in the cause of human rights and religious liberty. Through it all, the General Conference officials were unmoved by the clear evidence which contradicted their charges.
2. The General Conference officials’ purported case in support of the charge of pornography also had major flaws. One example is that at the purported time he was accused of downloading and watching pornography on his computer, both Dr. Gallagher and his wife were engaged in a business luncheon for which they had receipts and declarations from other individuals who were present at the meeting. When this was presented to the General Conference legal counsel, the response was that perhaps someone else had downloaded pornography onto Dr. Gallagher’s laptop when he wasn’t

there, even though it had been left in a locked residence at which no one was home. That retort from the General Conference legal counsel is, however, a tacit admission that Dr. Gallagher was innocent of that charge. A more likely scenario which this office has pointed out to the General Conference legal counsel is that someone else put that pornography onto Dr. Gallagher's laptop computer after the General Conference Computer Department had taken back the computer.

To summarize, the minds of the officials in charge of the investigation appeared to be made up regardless of all the evidence that was presented in support of Dr. Gallagher's innocence. Although the General Conference legal counsel finally indicated that the General Conference officials were suspending the charge of downloading and viewing pornography, our law firm has received numerous reports from many places that certain General Conference officials have continued to spread this unfounded charge against Dr. Gallagher to discredit him and his work. Our law firm has warned the General Conference legal counsel that the continued spreading of these invalid allegations constitutes libel and slander and have requested that it cease and desist. Because these false reports have continued to circulate, numerous inquires have come to Pine Knoll from individuals from throughout the world seeking further information about these recent events. This letter is written in an effort to address the majority of those questions and is available for future reference online at:

<http://www.pineknoll.org/jonathan/jg-legal-counsel-memo.pdf>

For anyone interested in more details of the evidence presented, a summary is available online at:
<http://www.pineknoll.org/jonathan/jg-gc-exec-summary.pdf>

After Dr. Gallagher presented evidence of his innocence to the General Conference officials, he submitted a letter of resignation without cause. That letter speaks for itself and may also be viewed online at:

<http://www.pineknoll.org/jonathan/jg-gc-resignation.pdf>

After Dr. Gallagher resigned without cause, the General Conference Executive Secretary indicated that his ministerial credentials would go to the General Conference Credentials Committee for review. Ziprick & Cramer had requested some additional information from the General Conference legal counsel which we believed would further exonerate Dr. Gallagher at this and any other potential hearings. We were told by the General Conference legal counsel that "no attorneys would participate" in the Credentials Committee meeting so no further documentation or information would be forthcoming. (The significance of this was two-fold. First, as attorneys, we had asked the General Conference legal counsel to confirm the exact date the computer was picked up from Dr. Gallagher. Since no attorneys were to be involved in this meeting, the General Conference legal counsel said this information was not relevant and would not be provided. Secondly, when Dr. and Mrs. Gallagher approached the meeting, they encountered the Senior General Conference attorney leaving the meeting room. When they expressed surprise at seeing the Senior General Conference attorney leaving a meeting at which he was not supposed to attend, the attorney explained that he had been "briefing" the Credentials Committee. Since Dr. Gallagher was represented by legal counsel, he should have been given the opportunity to have his counsel present which was denied. The attendance of the General Conference's legal counsel at the Credentials Committee was in direct contradiction of that attorney's prior statement to this law firm.)

Dr. Gallagher presented his explanation to the Credentials Committee. He was later informed by letter that the Committee had voted to leave his ordination credentials intact. However, Dr. Gallagher now has learned that the General Conference Executive Committee, or a small portion thereof, subsequently met and removed his ordination credentials. In this manner, the General Conference officials overrode the General Conference Credentials Committee.

Finally, Dr. Gallagher taught a Sabbath School class at the Spencerville SDA Church for seven years where he was an ordained elder. He was recently called in by the senior pastor of that church who said that objections had been raised. The pastor asked him not to continue in his position as elder. Dr. Gallagher declined and asked for a hearing. At the hearing, Dr. Gallagher was not told the charges being made against him and was further restricted as to what he was allowed to state in making a defense. His position as an elder was stripped from him. Later, Dr. Gallagher was informed that an official of the General Conference had put pressure on the local church officials to remove Dr. Gallagher from the position of local church elder.

Needless to state, many people have expressed grave concerns for the manner in which Dr. Gallagher has been treated by the General Conference of the SDA Church. The total lack of due process is extremely disappointing since the Church has historically advocated for fairness, especially when it has felt that it has been the subject of discrimination. Furthermore, the manner in which the General Conference officials handled the evidence suggests that their biases prevented them from considering new evidence—evidence which so strongly refuted the accusations made by the General Conference officials that it is inconceivable to see how a court of law would find against Dr. Gallagher, had he had the opportunity to present his position before such a neutral judge. One comment that has been received frequently from a wide variety of people is that this type of unfair treatment is not new and that the General Conference needs to change its method of “trying” its personnel who are the subject of charges.

It is understood that in this world, charges can be made at any time against any one for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the charges are valid, but many times they are not. Sometimes allegations are made for revenge for some perceived grievance or perhaps for political reasons. But whatever the reason, in this case, Dr. Gallagher is guilty of nothing more than serving the SDA General Conference to the best of his ability, for his passion and advocacy for human rights and religious liberty and for teaching Sabbath School lessons with an emphasis on the character of God and the Great Controversy and its importance in the history of the world. Surely, he deserved better treatment than he received.


In spite of what has happened, we are gratified to report that Dr. Gallagher’s work on behalf of human rights and religious liberty is certainly not over. Several days ago, he was personally invited to a “by invitation only” conference at the UN concerning the interaction of religions and the UN. Dr. Gallagher was present as an independent participant and took part in important discussions. He had the opportunity to visit with many of his colleagues from the UN. A link to his report on this meeting is at:

<http://www.pineknoll.org/20081216-united-nations-religion-cooperation>


Dr. Gallagher remains strongly committed to the work of God. In addition to contributing to the cause of religious liberty and human rights, we are very glad to report that he will continue to be deeply involved in Pine Knoll projects including Sabbath School classes, teaching and writing. Rest assured that his work is not over.

Very truly yours,

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