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John Allen Chalk: Personal Correspondence

John Allen Chalk

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5-18-1970

From/To: John Waddey (Chalk's reply filed first)

John Waddey

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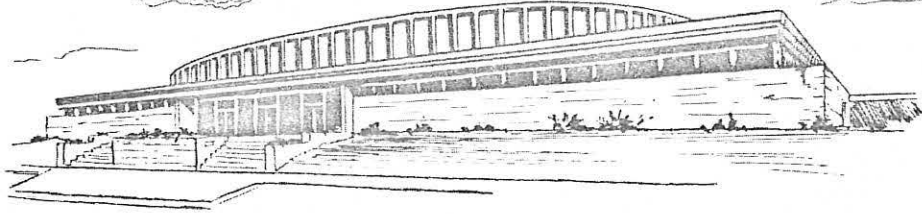
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# HIGHLAND Church of Christ

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A. A. WADE

May 18, 1970

Mr. John Waddey  
Karns Church of Christ  
Beaver Ridge Road, Route 20  
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dear John:

Thank you so much for your kind letter of April 30. I will be very anxious to see your reply to my article as well as brother Wells'.

I deeply regret the misinformation you got in Liberia. You say you spent "a few days there," but I spent two weeks there working very closely with Billy Nicks, R.C. Wells and Andrew Hairston. I also have known very personally and have worked directly with Paul Williams in Liberia. I believe I am in a position to know the problems growing out of a Nashville syndrome which Billy Nicks has, as well as the tensions that were heightened by brethren Wells and Hairston. I do not believe that R.C. is guilty of "transporting racial problems to Liberia." I do believe he has contributed to the situation but I do also believe that brother Nicks did too by consistently using the term "colored" in the presence of R.C. and Andrew after I had very plainly and kindly told both him and his wife they should not use that term with those two brethren since they personally preferred either "black" or "Negro." It seems to me that Romans 12:10 alone would demand that Billy use black or Negro instead of colored. You must also remember the paternalism that has existed in mission work which brother Nicks and others have done in Nigeria by which the white man becomes a "little god" as opposed to a strong, indigenous, national-led church. The problems in Liberia, therefore, are much deeper and lie at much more basic issues than a bad attitude regarding the race problem.

Let me hasten to say that I esteem Billy Nicks as an honest man. I believe him to be a genuine Christian but, unfortunately, I believe that he has contributed to the entire situation out of his background, training and understanding.

Mr. John Waddey  
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I also raise the question regarding the way you answer "where shall we begin work to right the wrongs done?" I am sure you have spoken to this matter in review of my article. In my article I spoke directly to this question and to the fact that neither the white church or the white colleges in our brotherhood have made any sign of repentance. The white man's attitude, generally, has been that of "let's pick up from here and do the right thing." This is not a Biblical doctrine of repentance. It does not bring into view the Old Testament or the New Testament view of restoration of things stolen or of the material harm done when one repents. It's a matter of taking the cow back home, once the thief decides to become a Christian. This very simple illustration and basic concept at the heart of Biblical Christianity was not in view in the article you wrote for the Echo to which I replied.

I appreciate your personal conviction about racism. I appreciate your willingness to speak against it. I do think the situation is too grave for any white brother to attempt to lecture black brethren. I think the time may have come when we will need, as the black brethren have done for more than 300 years, to suffer for our Christian faith, rather than saying in essence, "If you will be a Christian in your attitude, I will be a Christian in mine."

It was a pleasure seeing Harold Duncan in Franklin recently. He is a good man and speaks so highly of your ministry at Karns. I esteem you for your commitment to Jesus Christ and the way you are attempting to live out that commitment.

Your brother,

John Allen Chalk

JAC:hm

# Karns Church of Christ

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April 30, 1970

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JERRY HOGG - SOUTH AFRICA

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HAROLD DUNCAN - 588-7988  
FRANK HUBER - 947-7341

Mr. John Allen Chalk  
Highland Church of Christ  
Abilene, Texas

Dear John Allen:

Your letter came while I away on a seven week mission tour in Africa. Consequently I got to read it and your article in the Echo at the same time. I appreciate your sending the personal note of explanation. My reply is in the mail to Bro. Hogan.

I have not seen any response to the article except of R. C. Wells and yours, of course. I expected Bro. Wells to respond as he did. He was the chief one I had in mind in writing it in the first place. This brother has fallen into the very snare that I wrote about. Are you aware of the racial problems he has transported to Liberia? I just spent a few days there.

Surely you are aware that we are working publicly, here at Karns to remedy the problem of prejudice. My admonitions have not been just to Negro brethren.

You are mistaken if you assume that I obviously refuse to accept the sins of the whites against the blacks through the years. The issue is, where shall we begin work to right the wrongs done? I cannot undo wrongs that my great-grand parents did. I can change my life and encourage those around me to love their neighbor as themselves. Militant hostility will only make the transition more difficult.

My reply is offered in the same spirit as yours. May God bless us that all brethren may be more Christ-like daily.

Your fellow Christian,

  
John Waddey