

CHURCH *of* GOD

A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 3490
McKinney, TX 75070-8189

March 7, 2019

Dear Brethren,

We are finally in the new building! Our original move date was scheduled for Monday, Feb. 25, but due to some last-minute complications and inability to schedule all the city inspectors before that date, we had to postpone the move. We were greatly relieved that the movers were able to accommodate us, as we changed the date for loading the furniture to Wednesday, Feb. 27. At 8 that morning the movers showed up with several trucks, and by the end of the day, everything was removed from both the downstairs offices and the FI classroom upstairs. Then, on Thursday, they spent most of the day transporting the contents of our rented storage space, where we had kept all our literature and Feast audiovisual equipment.

Finally, on Friday, March 1, we were open for business in the new office! Most of the day was spent unpacking the individual offices, but the phones were working and, most important, the Internet was working! Jerry Rehor and his wife, Tami, worked tirelessly in advance making sure we had Internet from the very first day. William Beech, who works for our Media department, spent many, many hours on the phone with vendors, coordinating what turned out to be a more complicated move than we had imagined. Then, of course, there were the rest of us—the office employees. I was deeply impressed with how well everyone worked together to make this move as painless as possible. We moved all our belongings from Allen to McKinney and reopened in approximately 48 hours!

Now that we are in the new building, I want to invite all of you to visit us. I believe you will find our world headquarters office amazingly functional and also quite beautiful. That was our goal from the beginning—to build something that would serve us for many years as an office, but would also be attractive. I am very happy with the end product. We still have a number of items to take care of to complete the building to our desire, but they are all minor when compared to what has been accomplished.

In order to accommodate the many local requests to tour the office, we have set aside Sunday, April 7, from 3 to 5 p.m. for an open house for the members who attend the Dallas, Fort Worth, and Sherman congregations. The office only has 50 parking spaces, so it will be a challenge to accommodate the many brethren who live in this area, but we do have an alternative plan that will utilize additional parking spaces located nearby.

In addition to the open house, we are planning a formal dedication to be held when the ministers and their wives from around the world are in town to attend the International Ministerial Conference at the Sheraton Hotel, which is near the office. On Sunday evening, May 19, at 5 p.m. there will be a dedication ceremony. With 250 ministers and wives in town for the conference, we anticipate over 300 people will be present. There certainly isn't enough space inside the building, so we are planning the dedication itself to take place on the large section of lawn in back of the building. We believe this is an extremely important occasion in our history, and we want to share it with everyone. We understand that most of you will be unable to attend, so our plans are to record the dedication ceremony and have it played in all congregations as soon as possible after May 19.

The theme we have selected for the upcoming ministerial conference is taken from Psalm 127:1: “Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” The actual theme will be the first six words of this psalm “Unless the LORD builds the house.”

It hasn't been lost on any of us who have worked on this building project that God has been involved. From the location and purchase of the property to the completion of the building, we have seen numerous interventions that went far beyond being coincidental. I can also report to you that we finished the building while increasing our cash reserve. I don't think that has ever happened in any building project in which I have been involved. I am not saying there wasn't additional money spent along the way. There certainly was! The city's requirements (the “bike path to nowhere,” the last-minute retaining wall and the underground drainage, to name a few) added approximately \$250,000 to the original projected cost of the building, and along the way we added additional funds to upgrade from our original plan. In order to keep from increasing our mortgage amount, we paid all these items from the building fund and our cash reserves. The amazing thing is that our cash reserves actually increased during 2018—that is, we had more cash in the bank on Jan. 1, 2019, than we did on Jan. 1, 2018. I am amazed that we were able to build the new office and initiate the most ambitious leadership development program in our history, both in the same year! Of course, we believe it was God who made it all possible!

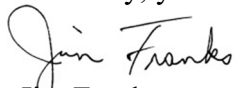
I want to thank you for your prayers and support throughout the past year. I never want to take them for granted. It has been a most miraculous year for the Church. I believe God heard our prayers and provided for us. I don't expect things will always turn out the way we want them to. The Bible is clear that if we are serving God, preaching the gospel and caring for the brethren, we will suffer trials and persecution. It isn't *whether* we will have trials, but how will we react to those trials (James 1:2-4) that is important. As Peter tells us, it is through trials that we receive “the end of [our] faith—the salvation of [our] souls” (1 Peter 1:6-9).

There will be challenging days ahead as the world falls deeper into an abyss of confusion, division and animosity. These trends in the world do not bode well for mankind or for the Church and its members. Our job is, of course, to remain faithful through the good days and the bad days.

With Passover approaching, we should reflect on and think soberly about our Christianity. It isn't about buildings or money, but it is about the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As a body of people, we are privileged once a year to attend a special ceremony that commemorates His death—the Passover—on the night of the 14th day of the first month. It isn't too early to begin the process of self-examination as directed by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11.

Once again, thank you for your generosity and your prayers for this building project! And if you ever get to the Dallas area and have some time, please come visit us.

Sincerely, your brother in Christ,


Jim Franks