

From: McLean Bible Church fyi@mcleanbible.org
Subject: Message from Lon I Setting the Record Straight
Date: April 15, 2016 at 6:43 PM
To: stvarg@gmail.com



Image of MBC logo



The Bible says (2 Corinthians 2:11--NIV) "in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

My dear friends, one of Satan's greatest schemes is misinformation, half-truths, disinformation, and flat-out untruths. And right now, the enemy is seeking to use all of this to damage our church family at MBC.

I am writing you to address these "schemes" of the enemy before they become too widely circulated and believed.

I received the following email today:

False information is being spread among our congregation. A person I trust sent me this email about what people are starting to say:

"Rumor mills are going around. Someone told me and others something we haven't heard from the senior leadership, citing 'a well-placed long-time volunteer who has connection to Lon.' Apparently this person sent an email saying that we're headed towards aligning ourselves with Southern Baptist Convention, which is the reason why so many staff are taking the buyout, and that Lon has been prohibited from attending his own Bible study group during this transition period. Others are already starting to look for another church after hearing this false information.

It is our own sinful nature to speculate at an uncertain time like this, but we should be putting complete trust in God instead. I just wanted to make you aware that this is going around. The enemy would like nothing more than to destroy us."

OK folks--now please listen and let me set the record straight:

1. I have never been forbidden, by the Elders or anyone else, from going to my small group. In discussing my schedule with the Elders a few months ago, because of everything I have on my plate, they suggested that I should consider dropping the **leadership** of the small group and passing it on to a couple in the group. That is what Brenda and I did, and the group is doing well under this new couple's leadership. In fact, I just returned 30 minutes ago from meeting with the husband of this couple for 90 minutes to pray with him and talk about various items. The Elders suggested that I should feel free not to have to make all the meetings of the small group, and that this was not "letting the church down."
2. MBC has agreed to work with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in the area of church planting. Clint Clifton, who is consulting with our staff on church planting, and who is full-time with NAMB (the North American Mission Board of the SBC) requested that we do this because it makes us then eligible for funding help from NAMB to complement our own funding for church planting here in the metro area. The Elders approved this coalition, but MBC has not become a Southern Baptist Church, nor does the SBC have any oversight or authority over MBC. And, to the best of my knowledge, no staff person has taken the "buyout" for this reason.
3. I have no idea who this "well-placed long-time volunteer who has connection to Lon" is, but whoever they are, their comments were inaccurate, and potentially hurtful to our church family.
4. I also received an email from a parent who was told that MBC is canceling KidStuff (KS). This is not so. We are doing the KS scheduled for May, and then taking the summer months off from KS (as we always do). We are then planning to re-start KS in the fall as always. The difference is that we are hoping to start KS in the fall with a team of volunteer staff instead of paying four part-time staff and tech people to organize and run it. This is part of where the Lord is leading us to go, as I said in my email a week ago and in the services last weekend--namely, moving to a more volunteer-driven model of leadership, with our paid staff fulfilling Ephesians 4 and

"equipping the saints for the work of service," instead of the staff doing so much of it. We are so grateful for all the volunteer staff we have! Our goal is to see every member of our church family become a volunteer staff person and take some ownership of a ministry at MBC.

5. I am aware as we have entered this buyout season with our staff, that many of you, as I am, will be grieving the loss of a staff member with whom you have co-labored in ministry. Some of our staff have said they will continue to be part of our church, for which I am very happy. Some others are moving out of the area and/or going to the mission field. We will miss them deeply. Changes like these are always difficult and sad for us as people. I am feeling this way and I am guessing you may be too.

6. There are some things I have learned about change after all these years in the ministry: while these men and women who leave our staff can never be replaced, God will continue to work out His will--and His plan for His church and for each one of them. This is not rhetoric but biblical truth. But we can cast our cares on Him, because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Our God will continue to provide for the leadership needs of our church, as He always has. Often there are very capable people in the congregation who don't step up to serve until there are noticeably tangible needs. And believe me, we will have these needs, as staff leave.

7. Finally, people have wondered if all this means a "dialing down" or a "diminishing" of MBC's ministry. Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, we are doing more biblical ministry now than we have ever done! What we are seeking to dial down is the notion that whenever we want to do a ministry, we need to immediately hire a staff person for it. Our hope is that, whenever we need to do a ministry, volunteer staff from within our church family (with a passion to serve the Lord and for this ministry) will step up and lead. This will make our church family stronger, more unified, more cohesive, and full of people who have a much more personal connection to the ministry of the Lord at MBC.

Thank you so much for reading this. And thank you for your prayers against the enemy. The Elders, senior staff, and I are all certain that we are following God's command as well as His instructions in the Bible as we proceed in this way. We must not allow the enemy to divide or discourage us. Please join with me in resisting him, firm in our faith (James 4:7).

Respectfully as your senior pastor,

Lon

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