Dear Brethren, 11/21/98

Praise the mighty and wonderful name of the Son of God! For His name is above every name! At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall indeed confess that He is Lord of all! Every earthly king and monarch shall one day humbly bow before the Lord of glory. Every rebel and mocker shall one day with trembling hands and quivering tongue praise Him whom they once cursed (*Jude 1:15*). He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah! He will triumph! He will subdue every enemy. Jesus Christ will reign!

As I stated in my last correspondence with you, I was extremely disappointed with your response to my letter expressing my disapproval of the recent events at Kent State. And, as I promised, I've now written you a more thorough explanation of what I believe is the Biblical view regarding this issue.

Before I begin, let me qualify the motives of my heart as I endeavor to communicate the spiritual implications of what I consider to be a very, very important matter.

Galatians 6:1 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

First of all, let me express my admiration for your obedience in *going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature.* I also acknowledge that in the unstable environment of open-air ministry many things are possible and the atmosphere can quickly become unpredictable and very combative. There is no doubt in my mind that Brother Chuck was provoked and that the situation in which these actions occurred were anything but normal, but rather, extreme. This is not in question. I also realize that there have been very few men in America who have ever faced physical persecution. Therefore, with these things in mind, I approach you with the greatest of care and with the lowest humility. Needless to say, I don't relish the idea of being unnecessarily tempted in this area of my life. However, I write to you as a fellow-soldier, one who by the grace of God has faced similar situations.

1 Tim. 5:1 *Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father...*

Secondly, I realize that some of you (*Brother Jed and Brother Chuck*) are my elders in the Lord, therefore, I write this letter with a broken heart as I passionately entreat you to look at these actions in the light of God's holy, just, loving, and benevolent character. My intentions are to provoke you, as fathers in the faith, to consider this event with meekness and a ready mind to pursue the strictest adherence to Biblical standards as set forth by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

I found the defense you offered for your recent actions to be both spiritually illogical and, unfortunately, Biblically inconsistent. I realize that you offered me a more complete examination

of the events as they transpired through the video advertised in Brother Jed's newsletter. However, I cannot fathom sympathizing with even the severest of circumstances as I dogmatically oppose and abhor the notion of defending oneself while preaching the gospel. Thus, viewing the video would not change my opinion. In my estimation the question is not how intense the circumstantial atmosphere was, but rather, what is the Biblical response to such a scenario. What does the Bible teach us about this topic?

Perhaps the question may be posed to me, "Are you so close-minded on this issue that there can be no argument offered that can cause you to think otherwise?" My answer to this is, " Present me with a clear, thorough, and Biblically logical argument and I will more than gladly concede the errors of my way!" Let us remember, the Bible says that the last days will be characterized by God "sending men strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Why is this? The Bible clearly teaches this is a result of "men not receiving the love of the truth" and because they take "pleasure in unrighteousness." Therefore to avoid strong delusion we must love the truth and hate sin! What is it to *receive the love of the truth* and hate unrighteousness? I believe it is to hunger and thirst for the pure truth of God's Word even to my own undoing. If I may, allow me to suggest that we approach this matter with the gravest sobriety. Let us not view this topic dishonestly, hoping subconsciously to locate a *Biblical loophole* whereby we may justify ourselves. May we truly search ourselves in the fear of God under the scrutiny of His holy Word! What is the pure mind of God concerning this issue? Indeed, what is the most excellent way? If we come before God's Word with any other attitude then we will surely find what we want, instead of what we need. May God help us to receive the love of the *truth* lest we receive a strong delusion from God, via His Word!

The following are some points that I ask you to soberly consider:

Citing Old Testament saints as examples to justify your actions is an illogical and inconsistent thesis. It's as if you are saying, "These O.T. saints are our examples. They shed their share of blood, and God was pleased with them. Their cause was just, and so is ours."

Let us take this argument to it's logical end. If I am called by God, and filled with His Spirit I might justify any act of violence, even killing someone, as long as this act was directed against someone who was responsible for what the Bible deems as evil. Simply put, if the person deserves it, and they are escaping justice, let'em have it. For example, Bill Clinton, who by virtue of his Presidential veto power, is personally responsible for the cold-blooded murders of literally multitudes of unborn children through abortion. Consequently, would it be within the will of God for us to assassinate our God-hating, God-rejecting, womanizing, and bloodthirsty president? I assume your answer would be no. Why not? Justice must be served? If we apply your premise without alteration equally to this plot we can easily justify such an action. Certainly if the judicial process of our land is so lacking in moral fortitude mustn't someone take action for the good of our nation? Surely, God is raising someone up to put a bullet in Bill Clinton's head, right? Let us consider such a scenario. First, let us suppose such an individual has fulfilled this so-called God-given mandate to assassinate our president. Afterward let us imagine that he is apprehended,

and swiftly brought before a court of justice. As the trial begins and the court springs into session the charges are read and the accused is asked to enter his plea.

He stands and with great confidence says, "*Not guilty!*"

Once the plea has been officially recorded the judge asks the defendant if he has an attorney.

"*I have no lawyer,*" says the man.

The judge then offers the services of the State's defense lawyers who sit nearby in the courtroom.

With this the accused man shocks the courtroom, "*I have no need of a lawyer as I will defend myself. Furthermore, I am a Christian and this assassination was merely the fulfilling of my Christian duty.*"

The judge leans forward in his chair and with furrowed brow asks the question that most naturally follows the defendant's unusual statement, "*How can you justify such an act of violence and at the same time call yourself a Christian?*"

Dear brethren, listen closely as the accused man boldly and brazenly gives his twisted reply…

"*David slew his Goliath, Samuel hewed his agag, Ehud stabbed his Eglon, and I have shot the President! Praise God!*"

The courtroom burst into chaos, the judge sighs with unbelief, and the defense attorneys stand and gravely pronounce the defendant *insane*. '*Insanity*', is indeed the only word that can describe the defense that seeks to justify such unchristlike actions by citing the lives of the O.T. saints. May we blush at such foolishness. This kind of logic will lead to anarchy.

The government of Israel was theocratic, meaning, they were governed under the direct influence of God. Under the Old Covenant the law was given to Israel. This law was not only her spiritual rule of life but her civil code as well. The spiritual/secular leaders of the nation of Israel were the priest, elders, prophets, judges, and kings. When the Bible records the accounts of Samson (*a judge*) slaying the Philistines, or David (*a future king under the direction and blessing of the ruling king*) killing Goliath, or Gideon (*a judge*) gathering together an army, or Samuel (*a prophet*) hewing Agag to pieces, or Elijah (*a prophet*) executing the prophets of Baal, we have a picture of God's delegated magistrates executing God's righteous judgments upon the evil doers of their day. Incidentally, this is consistent with the New Testament view presented in Romans 13. How, may I ask, can we conclude from these accounts of history that we can defend ourselves when persecuted for righteousness sake? We must view these acts as they were, events in the history of the nation of Israel, which are types of the spiritual battles we face today, not as justifications to personally avenge ourselves. As we know, murder was wrong in the O.T. and

therefore these acts of which we speak must have been justifiable acts ordained by God through the institution of government. Otherwise, these acts would have been condemned with all other acts of sinful violence. A better example of the topic with which we are occupied would be the account of Moses killing the Egyptian. This action was obviously wrong and Moses' conscience bore witness to his guilt as he hid the slain man's body and then ran for fear of retribution.

If you will, please take notice of the following passage of Scripture...

Luke 9:54-56 *And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went toanother village.*

Here, we see the disciples citing O.T. saints to seek and justify a wrong attitude of heart. This was the response of James and John as the villages of Samaria spurned Jesus. Did not these Christ-hating, Christ-rejecting infidels deserve the severest of judgments? Would not fire falling from heaven be deserved? The answer to these questions is a unwavering *yes*! Yet, Jesus clearly points out that this execution of judgment was not to be desired, sought, or carried out by His disciples. May we guard our hearts lest we find ourselves possessing evil motives while we quote the Bible to justify ourselves! We are the Church, and we are to follow Jesus!

According to Scripture there are three God ordained institutions: the *family*, the *government*, and the *Church*. Let us briefly examine the institutions of *Church* and *government*. We must not confuse their unique functions, for they are completely different. It is extremely important for us to make a distinction between the contrasting services that are to be rendered to God by the *Church* and the *government.* In the epistle of Romans, chapters 12 and 13, these services are briefly summarized.

The general function of *human government,* as instituted by God, may be said to be threefold: [1] To protect its citizens, [2] To punish the evil doers, [3] And to promote the general welfare of the community where its laws are in effect. Moreover, it is important to note that the thought that is expressed at the end of Romans 12, the passage of Scripture that we will examine momentarily, flows quite naturally into Romans 13. Yes, the church is to offer her service and the government is to offer another! Having defined the function of government according to Romans 13 let us take a closer look at the duty of the church. I believe in the first two verses of Romans 12, the Apostle Paul gives us the basic calling of the church of Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren [the Church], by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

How are we, the Church of Jesus Christ, to serve God? We see three basic admonitions given to us by the Apostle. [1] That we would provide a body as a living sacrifice, [2] Furthermore, we are not to be conformed to this world, its ideas, or principles - in other words, we are to do things differently than the *pagans*, [3] And thus, in submitting to these first two ideas, we will naturally, prove the good, the perfect, and the acceptable will of God! We are the BODY of CHRIST! This is the Church's principal duty and should be her foremost characteristic, to be Christ-like! We are called to give Jesus our body whereby He can manifest His very life to this lost and sin-bound world. Why is this? So Jesus can live in 1998 through us! So that wherever we go, we can say what Jesus would say, do what Jesus would do, and be what Jesus would be. *Hear me brethren*! Don't be deceived! If we give Jesus Christ a body today, He will do with that body the same thing He did with His own when He walked this earth. He will offer it up without reservation to be crucified.

Hebrews 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

Let us remember that this premise of offering our bodies for the service of Jesus Christ is the foundation whereby the Apostle builds the rest of the chapter. Now, read the end of chapter 12...

Romans 12:17-21 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Whose steps are we to follow in? Whose life will be manifested through the living sacrifice we bring to God the Father? And what was the example He left for us to follow? What spirit is represented here in verses 17 - 21?

Listen to what Adam Clark says in regards to Romans 12:19 - *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves* - "Ye are the children of God, and he loves you; and because he loves you he will permit nothing to be done to you that he will not turn to your advantage. Never take the execution of the law into your own hands; rather suffer injuries. The Son of man is come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save: be of the same spirit. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. It is the part of a noble mind to bear up under unmerited disgrace; little minds are litigious and quarrelsome."

Again, Jesus is never pictured in the Bible as defending Himself against physical attack. We are the Church and this is our reasonable service to God, to offer a body in which Jesus can manifest His life! In these verses the person of Jesus Christ and the example that He left us is perfectly depicted. This is our calling, to follow in His steps and thereby prove the acceptable will of God...

1 Peter 2:19-23 *For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled,reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously...*

As Christians we are to keep our eyes fixed upon the person of Jesus Christ and His life is to be our rule for all conduct.

Hebrews 12:2-4 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

Jesus submitted to God the Father and the plan of the cross though it meant shame, suffering, and ultimately death. It is interesting to note that Jesus not only refused to take justice in His own hands to execute vengeance upon His enemies, but also willingly suffered the wrath of the corrupt judicial system of His day. What a contrast between your actions and the actions of the Lamb of God. How does God the Father react to His worst enemies?

Romans 5:10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

God the Father uses the Son to reconcile the world unto Himself. May God give us grace that we may detect the difference between the roles of the *church* and the *government*. In this final point allow me to use an illustration to express this difference: it would be a righteous thing for the state of Mississippi to arrest and execute every abortion doctor in the state, but it would be murder for me to take justice into my own hands and kill one.

Brother Chuck, you also mentioned the prayer Jesus said He could have prayed in his own defense as evidence that God would honor your actions. I find this to be most disturbing. I will not judge the motive of your heart, but there can only be two explanations for such a poor interpretation of Scripture, ignorance or dishonesty. Let us read these verses...

Matthew 26:50-54 *And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father,*

and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Jesus here is not pointing out what he wanted to do, but what he refused to do! Indeed, this prayer, nor the answer to such a prayer could be considered unrighteous. God does not desire evil nor does he execute evil. To this we all agree. However, how does this correspond to the events that took place at Kent State? Believe me brethren, there would be no need for this letter if God would have supernaturally sent angels to avenge Brother Chuck. God's legions could have broke their noses and their necks, there would have been no complaints from me. Brother Chuck did you pray for God to send angels? If not, then why do you use this passage of Scripture to try and justify your actions? It is one thing for God to send angels to protect you, it is another all together for you to protect yourself! The question is not what Jesus could have prayed, but rather, what did Jesus do? Even though such a prayer would not have been sin, Jesus chose not to ask for intervention. Now, let me pose another question. Is it not a condition for discipleship that we follow Christ? And if a condition for discipleship is to follow Jesus then is it not fair to say that what He did I am to do, and what he did not do, I am forbidden to do? Why don't we accept our call to follow Jesus?

1 John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

Jesus obviously was opposed to using violence to defend Himself. He rebukes Peter for taking up arms against a man who was in the process of partaking in the greatest injustice ever committed, the abduction and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Did not this man deserve to be not only smitten, but endure the greatest of punishments? Yet, Jesus reproved Peter for his spirit of vengeance. Don't you see Brother Chuck, Peter was willing to fight for *Him* that was right, but He was unwilling to *die for those who were wrong.* This spirit always separates true Christianity from religion. The cross must be evident in our lives and many times that means we must suffer for the unjust.

Indeed, how will the Scriptures be fulfilled when we refuse to drink the cup of God's call on our lives? Let me remind you brethren, lest you confuse me with a sin-loving, sin-excusing, kumba-ya singing, campus crusader who has never so much as faced anyone with the gospel. Sinners have swung at me, not once but many times, and they have made contact. I am one of your own! And I plead with you for the sake of Jesus Christ to prayerfully consider this issue with fear and trembling. If you don't humble yourself and refuse this false notion it could hinder the gospel of Jesus Christ! It could cost men their souls! It could cost you your soul! We preach a God that we should fear. *Fear Him Brethren!* Search this matter out by the Word of God. If you are right I have lost nothing, certainly God would not condemn me for taking a beating and loving my enemies. On the other hand, if I am right, where does that leave you? Unjustifiable violence is a serious matter before God.

Psalm 11:5 *The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.*

Here are some other Scriptural thoughts to ponder.

Matthew 5:38-39 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

Shall we spiritualize this verse away? What does this mean? How can you boldly defy this command by Jesus Christ and instead suppose that He meant something other than He said?

John 18:36 *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

How can you explain this away? Clearly Jesus says his servants do not fight. We are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign and hostile land. Let us live above the fleshly bickering of the sinful!

1 Thes. 5:22 *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

2 Tim. 2:24-25 *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth...*

When we read here that "...the servant of the Lord must not strive," what is exactly meant? We know that it cannot mean that we cannot contend for the faith verbally, with passion, delivering rebuke with great authority and intensity. Why? Because the Bible instructs us to do so, and we have many examples of such in Scripture. Yet, something is meant when the servant of the Lord is forbidden to strive. What is this? To strive means among other things to fight!

- Strive: (*Greek*) *makh'-om-ahee*, To war, fight.

1 Tim. 3:3 *Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous...*

- Striker: (*Greek*) *plake'-tace*, A smiter.

According to the Bible this is a qualification for leadership in the Church! Will we ignore this?

James 5:6 *Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*

It appears that the just have suffered at the hands of the rich and powerful of the world system and why? Because the Holy Ghost says they have not resisted them. The *just* do not resist their persecutors.

2 Cor. 10:3-4 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

Ephes. 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

We are not fighting a battle that can be won in the natural. We are to be spiritual beings and the nature of our battle is in the spiritual realm. That which is birthed out of the fleshly or natural realm will not further the kingdom of God.

James 1:19-20 *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Let me ask you some questions Brother Chuck. By whose direction were you prompted to deliver these crushing blows to your persecutors? Whose wrath was it that prompted you to strike your antagonists with such force that it sent them to the hospital? [Moreover, if you were merely fulfilling the duties of the authorities would they not have simply restrained these men, lest they be accused of using excessive force?] Tell me frankly brother Chuck, do you think Jesus would have responded as you did? Are you willing to boldly testify that you were led by the Holy Ghost to shatter a man's nose? The same Holy Ghost who comes to lift up and exalt Jesus, to display Christ through the vehicle of the Church, and who inspired a New Testament which is void of an example of even one saint who ever defended himself against his persecutors! If you can answer "yes" to these questions then perhaps you need to be reacquainted with the Biblical Jesus. Yes, He hates sin! Yes, He proclaims judgment upon all hypocrisy! And Yes, He manifests the displeasure and anger of God as clearly as divine love, but let us be cautious lest we, too, redefine Jesus. I know the professing church-world has painted a picture of a long-haired, limp-wristed, effeminate Jesus who is just begging for someone to give him their heart so He can have a place to live. I know this is not the Biblical Jesus. But let us not allow the pendulum to swing to the opposite extreme. Neither is Jesus punching his enemies in the nose and sending them reeling for cover. Jesus is doing what He has always done for His enemies…He is dying for them!

I know the doctrine that you preach. I know it and I believe it. We say that the Christian is to live in obedience and holiness. How? The Christian is to walk in the love of God and thereby fulfill the law of God. And what are the characteristics of love?

1 Cor. 13:4-5 *Charity suffereth long…Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil...*

Are you willing to tell me that the love of God within you {the love that waited 987 years before God sent the flood to destroy a violent world} was brought to its limit because of some vandalism, losing a few possessions, and an angry degenerate swung at you? Is this the love of God? Brother I know the "love of God" has been perverted, but can we allow ourselves to justify this? Have you met with this man whose nose is broken? Can you look into his eyes and say, "Bruce I broke your nose in the love of God?" Try as we may, we can't remove this element from the character of Jesus Christ.

How can you hold to such an unscriptural position? Brethren, will you shun the counsel and testimony of the Apostles, the record of church history, the blood of every martyr, and the reformers and revivalist? Yes, you may find a small minority that would agree with you, but very few. Men like John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, John & Charles Wesley, Francis Ausbery, John Fletcher, Charles Finney, William and Catherine Booth, and the like would all disagree with you. I beg you to take immediate action and forsake your erroneous ideas!

There was a time in my life when a violent and wicked young man promised to beat me every time he saw me preaching in a particular area. I took this as a direct challenge from the enemy as I believed he was trying to intimidate me. Though it was difficult, I purposed in my heart to continue to preach in this area regardless of the cost. True to his word this man was there to meet me and yes, to physically attack me. I never defended myself. For weeks he would come, play Satanic music until he was worked into a demonic frenzy, taunt me, and finally physically beat me until one of the unbelievers would mercifully pull him off of me. Weekend after weekend he would meet us there on the street, face me, and generally ask me a simple question like this, "Am I a sinner?" To this I would reply, "Yes, you are a wicked and evil man, and if you do not repent God will cast your miserable soul into Hell!" This would generally spark the beatings. We began fasting and praying for this man's soul. Finally, after weeks of prayer he tired of beating me, became discouraged, and even intimidated. He basically quit showing up. We continued to preach the gospel, Jesus was exalted, and the devil was overcome. We noticed that the people that observed this were amazed and no one could question our integrity. This of course was not accomplished by any man's strength or courage, all glory must go to God, as He provided abundant grace!

In closing let me say that I believe what I am saying is by divine direction. I believe that I am speaking to you as the oracles of God. I have been unable to shake the burden that the report of this incident has placed upon my heart, until now. I now have delivered my soul. I believe the Holy Ghost has already prepared your hearts for this letter. I boldly call you to repentance. Brethren, don't allow your doctrine of sanctification to hinder your confession of wrong doing. I've seen many a man refuse to repent because he feared to confess that he was less than sanctified. I beg you to hear me.

As I see it, the only thing you can do is humble yourself and go to the men who you physically harmed, go before the student body of Kent State, as well as those who received "The Campus Ministry" newsletter, and repent. If you refuse to do this I humbly ask you to give me a Biblical response to explain your reasons.

Your concerned and burdened brother,

-B.W.