

BEFORE THE BOARD OF BISHOPS
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC.
CHAIRMAN, BISHOP JOHN H. SHEARD

IN RE BISHOP KURT THOMPSON (CASE NO. 2020-KT-0831)

FINAL ORDER AND JUDGMENT

Now on this 6th day of April, 2022, this matter comes before the Board of Bishops chaired by Bishop Albert Galbraith, in response to the request of Bishop Kurt Thompson, Auxiliary Bishop and Interim Bishop of Texas Southeast First Jurisdiction (“Respondent”) to exercise his rights pursuant to Rule of Process and Procedure No. 7(c) in the above referenced matter.

I. RELEVANT FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

1. On or about February 25, 2020, Bishop William H. Watson, III, Secretary of the Board of Bishops, received a complaint from Elder Dae’r L. Kyles and Elder Roland Fitzgerald (collectively “Complainants”) against Respondent alleging that he: (a) Count I -- failed to abide by the rules and regulations of the Church of God in Christ when he did not issue a Notice of Dismissal following a decision by the Texas Southeast First Jurisdictional Pastors and Elders’ Council that there was insufficient evidence to warrant a trial of Pastor (formerly Bishop) Rufus Kyles, Jr. (Article VIII, §D, ¶1(a)); (b) Count II – engaged in malfeasance by placing three additional stipulations or restrictions on Pastor Rufus Kyles, Jr. preventing his return to the pastorate of Evangelist Temple Church of God in Christ (“Evangelist Temple”) (Article VIII, §D, ¶1(b)); (c) Count III – engaged in conduct unbecoming a bishop by showing a clear bias against and hostility toward members of Evangelist Temple (Article VIII, §D, ¶1(h)); and (d)

Count IV – willfully or maliciously failed to make an account and report of Evangelist Temple funds (Article VIII, §D, ¶1(f)) (“Complaint”).

2. On or about March 5, 2020, Bishop Watson informed that Complainants by letter that the initial Complaint failed to conform to the Board of Bishops Rules of Process and Procedure pleading requirements, as the initial Complaint did not contain the requisite affirmations and signatures. In that email communication, Bishop Watson also provided Complainants with copies of the relevant rules.

3. On May 26, 2020, one of the Complainants, Elder Dae’r L. Kyles, contacted the Board of Bishops seeking to know the status of their Complaint and attaching a copy of the initial Complaint (“Resubmitted Complaint”). The Resubmitted Complaint suffered from the same defects as the original version filed in February 2020.

4. On that same day, Bishop Watson responded to Elder Dae’r L. Kyles’ email inquiry informing him that the initial Complaint (and the Resubmitted Complaint) were both deficient, as neither version aligned with the Board of Bishops’ Rules of Process and Procedure pleading requirements. He stated that matter could not advance unless and until the pleading requirements were met.

5. No other official communication between the Board of Bishops and the Complainants occurred until August 21, 2020 when Bishop Watson emailed them to ascertain whether they intended to pursue the Complaint.

6. The Complainants responded on August 23, 2020 and submitted a conforming complaint with the necessary affirmations (“Amended Complaint”). The substance of the Amended Complaint, however, did not change.

7. On or about September 23, 2020, Respondent submitted his response to the Amended Complaint (“Response to Amended Complaint”). He stated generally the following:

- (a) That he was appointed Interim Jurisdictional Prelate of Texas Southeast First in January 2018 by the Presiding Bishop and members of the General Board (attaching a copy of the letter of notification to the Jurisdiction signed by then Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake);
- (b) That Respondent has been called to the Evangelist Temple on numerous occasions to settle disputes, which required Respondent to seek the assistance of local law enforcement (attaching a copy of a November 3, 2019 Police Report); and
- (c) That Elder Dae’r L. Kyles and Pastor Rufus Kyles, Jr. removed the hinges of the doors of Evangelist Temple. The response noted that Elder Dae’r L. Kyles is the son of Pastor Rufus Kyles, Jr. and one of the Complainants.

8. On October 4, 2020, Complainants, by and through their attorney Ysidra M. Kyles filed the First Addendum to Complainants’ Petition of Official Charges (“First Addendum”). The First Addendum added Counts V and VI, alleging that Respondent: (a) Count V – engaged in malfeasance by seeking a Temporary Restraining Order from the civil courts (Article VIII, §D, ¶1(b)); and (b) Count VI – engaged in malfeasance by seeking an expedited hearing for a ruling with respect to the Temporary Restraining Order (Article VIII, §D, ¶1(b)).

9. Although there were some concerns regarding the procedure for filing the First Addendum, the Grievance Committee fully considered the claims set forth therein.

10. On October 26, 2020, the Grievance Committee requested that the Respondent respond to the First Addendum.

11. On November 02, 2020, Respondent filed his response to Complainants’ First Addendum (“Response to First Addendum”).

12. On November 17, 2020, Respondent submitted an additional response to the First Addendum (“Supplemental Response”).

13. The Amended Complaint, Response to Amended Complaint, First Addendum, Response to First Addendum, and Supplemental Response were forwarded to the Grievance Committee for investigation.

14. Once the Grievance Committee received the Amended Complaint, Response to Amended Complaint, First Addendum, Response to First Addendum, and Supplemental Response, it investigated Complainant's allegations and Respondents' responses. The investigation includes the review of various documents and a video relating to the allegations and responses.

15. On or about April 15, 2021, after it completed its investigation, the Grievance Committee issued a Statement of Alleged Violations. The Statement of Alleged Violations described in great detail the nature of Respondent's infractions and set forth two counts (Counts I and IV) of misconduct for which the Grievance Committee recommended trial.

16. On May 4, 2021, before the Grievance Committee's recommendation could be reviewed by the Judicial Committee, Respondent exercised his rights pursuant to Rules of Trial Procedure 7(c). Specifically, Respondent admitted to Counts I and IV of the Statement of Alleged Violations. Additionally, pursuant to Rule of Trial Procedure 7(c), Respondent waived his rights to an adjudicatory hearing and his rights to a sanction hearing.

17. Following Respondent's submission of his Rule 7(c) admission and waivers, the Executive Committee of the Board of Bishops met and recommended by a majority of its members that the following sanctions should be imposed on Respondent, Bishop Kurt Thompson:

- Respondent will be publicly reprimanded by the Board of Bishops for not issuing a Notice of Dismissal as required by Article VIII §B, ¶2(c) of the COGIC Constitution following the Texas Southeast First Jurisdiction Investigatory Committee's determination that just cause did not exist to try

Pastor Rufus Kyles, Jr. for the charges brought within the jurisdiction. Such reprimand will be filed with the General Secretary, the General Board, and filed and published in all appropriate publications.

- Respondent will be publicly reprimanded by the Board of Bishops for violating Article VIII, §D, ¶1(h) of the COGIC Constitution for willfully or maliciously failing to make an account and report regarding Evangelist Temple funds. Such reprimand will be filed with the General Secretary, the General Board, and filed and published in all appropriate publications.
- Respondent is directed to submit to the Board of Bishops and the General Board, within sixty (60) days after date of entry of this Final Order and Judgment an accounting of Evangelist Temple's funds from January 17, 2018 to the present. Such accounting will be reviewed by the Bishop Christopher Milton, Bishop Nathiel Wells and Bishop Jewel Withers ("Thompson Accounting Review Committee") to determine whether the accounting provided by Respondent meets the standards required by Article VIII, §D, ¶1f of the COGIC Constitution. As such, pursuant to the Board of Bishop's authority set forth in Article VIII, §D, ¶2j to fashion remedies that are in the best interest of the Church, the Board of Bishops will retain jurisdiction over this matter until such time that the Thompson Accounting Review Committee determines and submits a written confirmation to the Executive Committee stating that the accounting is adequate or, alternatively, recommends to the Executive Committee that additional action be taken. Such findings will be shared with the Evangelist Temple membership as appropriate. If the Executive Committee recommends additional action, such action must be approved by the Board of Bishops.

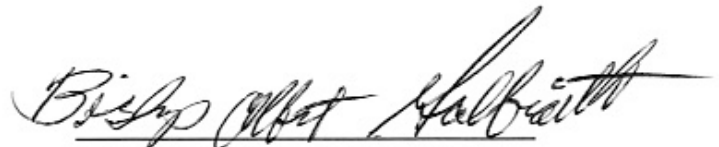
WHEREUPON, the Board of Bishops, by a majority of its members present and voting, after reviewing the Statement of Alleged Violations, the proposed Final Judgment and Order, and Respondent's comments regarding the same find:

1. That Bishop Kurt Thompson has admitted to Counts I and IV of the Statement of Alleged Violations;
2. That Bishop Kurt Thompson has waived his rights to an adjudicatory hearing under the Rules of Trial Procedure and Article VIII of the COGIC Constitution; and
3. That Bishop Kurt Thompson has waived his right to a sanction hearing pursuant to the Rules of Trial Procedure.

IT IS THEREFORE CONSIDERED, ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that the Board of Bishops, pursuant to its authority, set forth an Article VIII, §D, ¶2(j) of the COGIC Constitution determined by majority vote of its members, that penalties assessed to Bishop Kurt Thompson above, which are described and set forth in this Final Order and Judgment are appropriate and shall be imposed and implemented. In addition to the aforementioned penalties which are being levied against Bishop Kurt Thompson, the Board of Bishops by a majority of its members present and voting have determined and decreed that a condition for the penalties set forth in this Final Order and Judgment Bishop Kurt Thompson will indemnify and hold harmless the Church of God in Christ and the Board of Bishops from any and all claims, injuries damages, losses, or suits including attorney fees or cost, arising out of or in connection with the facts alleged by the Amended Complaint and First Addendum in this matter. If Bishop Kurt Thompson fails to indemnify and hold harmless the Church of God in Christ and the Board of Bishops, the Board of Bishops may modify the terms of this Final Order and Judgment by Motion of the Executive Committee.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated April 6, 2022


BISHOP ALBERT GALBRAITH
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF BISHOPS