



When God Walks Out

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I Samuel 3: 21 *“And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh...for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.”* The text implies that God had been away.

Moffatt translates this verse to read: *“Once more the Eternal was to be seen at Shiloh.”*

The very context of this passage pre-supposes that there had been gray days through which God had not been seen. The reality is that God was never absent. He was not seen because of the idols that blinded people from seeing the visible and invisible God. In our humanity we create so much stuff such as religiosity and symbolic inauthentic worship that God becomes to us as if He were distant or as if He were dead. The people said to Aaron, ***“up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses...we know not what is become of him.”*** When Moses died, God withdrew because all they could see was in the personality of their great leader. Three centuries later, God returned. With the arrival of Samuel, the Lord *“appeared again at Shiloh.”*

I see a parallel for COGIC. I am opposed to this divisive, Godless political system of campaigning, borrowed from other denominations that has prevented us from experiencing the fellowship with each other and the fullness of the Holy Ghost. Will the Lord appear again in COGIC? Our feigned worship consisting of fake *“praise breaks”* and multiple fads will not bring God back. You can have so many meetings that you can meet yourself coming from meetings, but that will not bring God back. In fact meetings have become the perfect place to *“avoid God.”* Our meetings have become “fund raising and social gatherings” with little or no room to celebrate the God who created us. The text supports the premise that God walked out for three centuries after the death of Moses and gave the people what they asked for until they came to understand who they really needed.

Matthew 21: 17-20- Is it not strange that the cursing of the fig tree was the only negative miracle that Jesus performed? All of the other miracles were constructive. We are compelled to ask why does the Creator of all life





stop to curse what appears to be an innocent tree and say in candid words, *“may no one ever eat fruit from you.”* Some commentators state that the tree deceived Jesus and from its appearance was *“asking to be picked.”* (some Palestinian fig trees produced fruit first and then leaves. The tree pretended to bear fruit and Jesus cursed its trickery and deception. The cursing of the fig tree comes after the cleansing of the Temple. Merchants sold sacrificial animals at high prices, taking advantage of those who had come long distances. They used Temple currency instead of secular currency to deceive foreigners who did not know the exchange rate. Their dishonest commercialism frustrated people attempts to worship, a behavior that angered our Lord. Jesus zeroed in on the heart of the matter: *“my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of thieves.”*

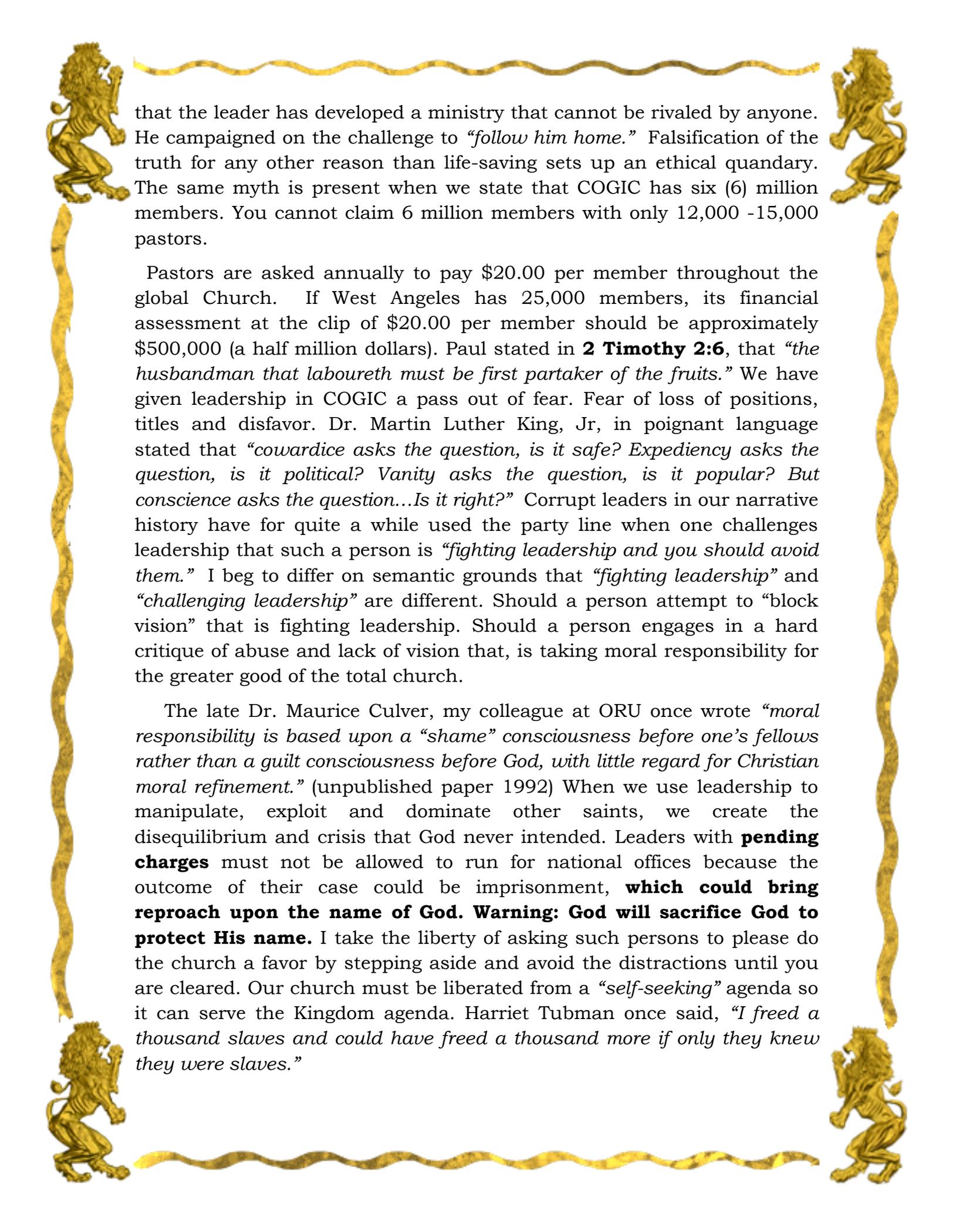
The Temple became a perfect place to really avoid God. The corpse of religion was propped up as a cover to fleece the poor and exploit the innocent. Rather than curse the band of thieves who had corrupted and violated the Temple, Jesus cursed an innocent fig tree. As Jesus and His disciples passed near Bethany not far from Jerusalem, they noticed that the fig tree had withered.

This scene reminded me of a COGIC Convocation where vendors not only pay thousands for space but worshipers must pay to sit in either the silver, gold or platinum sections based on a price. This practice is linked to greed and idolatry rooted in pride. Two young pastors stated recently that they plan to go to St. Louis for the Convocation but the assessment of \$400 will make it impossible to participate in the General Assembly.

Is the Presiding Bishop paying his fare share of financial assessments?

Problem for a Case Study: Does West Angeles have 25,000 members? Let’s keep this simple. The North campus at West Angeles seated approximately 1,500 people. The new facility seats 5,000. It has been confirmed that both services are never filled to capacity. Let’s assume that they are filled. Simple calculation would mean that 10,000 in the AM at both services and approximately 400 in attendance at the PM service at the North Campus. When does the 25,000 members referenced since the new facility was built attend? It may be reasonable to speculate that 25,000 both living, dead and migrated passed through West Angeles. The late Bishop O.T. Jones, Sr. once stated, that *“if a minister projects a large number when asked about his membership...cut it in half.”*

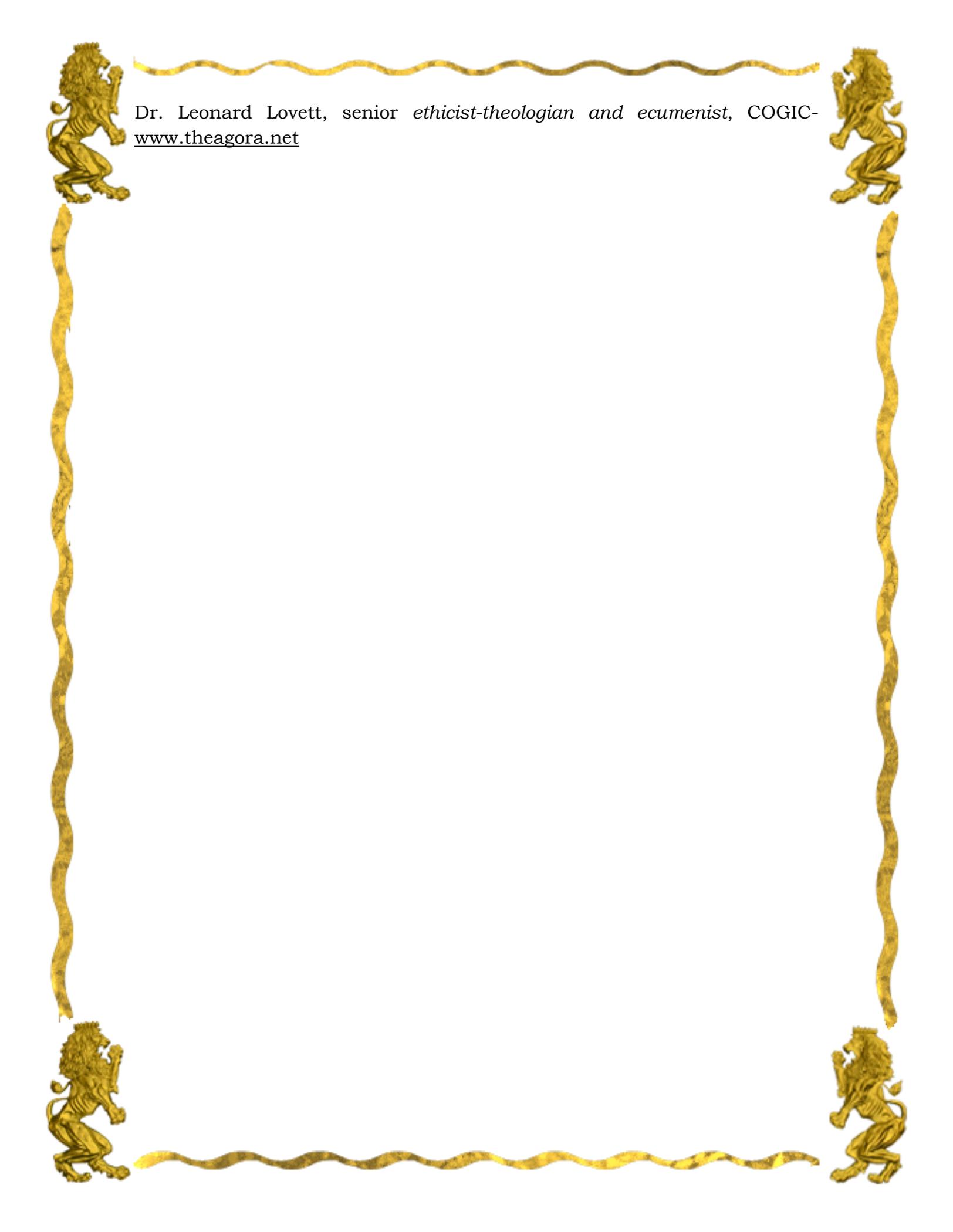
In ethical shop talk this is called *“falsification of the truth”* for whatever reason. It may have been done for political reasons to give the appearance



that the leader has developed a ministry that cannot be rivaled by anyone. He campaigned on the challenge to *“follow him home.”* Falsification of the truth for any other reason than life-saving sets up an ethical quandary. The same myth is present when we state that COGIC has six (6) million members. You cannot claim 6 million members with only 12,000 -15,000 pastors.

Pastors are asked annually to pay \$20.00 per member throughout the global Church. If West Angeles has 25,000 members, its financial assessment at the clip of \$20.00 per member should be approximately \$500,000 (a half million dollars). Paul stated in **2 Timothy 2:6**, that *“the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.”* We have given leadership in COGIC a pass out of fear. Fear of loss of positions, titles and disfavor. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, in poignant language stated that *“cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency asks the question, is it political? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience asks the question...Is it right?”* Corrupt leaders in our narrative history have for quite a while used the party line when one challenges leadership that such a person is *“fighting leadership and you should avoid them.”* I beg to differ on semantic grounds that *“fighting leadership”* and *“challenging leadership”* are different. Should a person attempt to “block vision” that is fighting leadership. Should a person engages in a hard critique of abuse and lack of vision that, is taking moral responsibility for the greater good of the total church.

The late Dr. Maurice Culver, my colleague at ORU once wrote *“moral responsibility is based upon a “shame” consciousness before one’s fellows rather than a guilt consciousness before God, with little regard for Christian moral refinement.”* (unpublished paper 1992) When we use leadership to manipulate, exploit and dominate other saints, we create the disequilibrium and crisis that God never intended. Leaders with **pending charges** must not be allowed to run for national offices because the outcome of their case could be imprisonment, **which could bring reproach upon the name of God. Warning: God will sacrifice God to protect His name.** I take the liberty of asking such persons to please do the church a favor by stepping aside and avoid the distractions until you are cleared. Our church must be liberated from a *“self-seeking”* agenda so it can serve the Kingdom agenda. Harriet Tubman once said, *“I freed a thousand slaves and could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves.”*



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