

February 20, 2026

Dear Brethren,

The theme for this letter is one of reconciliation. The *Merriam-Webster* definition of the word: *reconcile*, is to restore a relationship that has faltered to one characterized by friendship and/or harmony. God wants His people to repent, and therefore reconcile and restore our relationship with Him. He also wants those He calls to live in harmony with the brethren, and to the extent that we can, live peaceably with our family, friends and colleagues, as long as doing so does not compromise our primary relationship with God.

The inspiration for this message derives from a popular song from the late 1980's. The title and name of the band is not relevant. However, many of you may recognize the song. It begins: *"Every generation blames the one before and all of their frustrations come beating on your door. I know that I'm a prisoner to all my father held so dear, I just wish I could have told him in the living years."* My message for all of us is also the theme of this song: restoration and reconciliation. We should use every opportunity to reconcile with one another, if the willingness is present and the purpose is consistent with God's commandments. Above all others, we must reconcile our lives with God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

As the lyrics continue: *"It's too late when we die, to admit we don't see eye to eye."* Of course, as humans we cannot always see life and decisions as our loved ones and colleagues do, and all too often the result is a wedge that we drive between ourselves and the ones we care most about, and yes, even with God. In Proverbs 10:12 we read: *"Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins."* Continuing in verse 13: *"Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding. But a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding."* Those who have God's Spirit and love for one another are more likely to employ patience and understanding, and the opposite is the case for those who lack such things in this life.

Instead, as the song continues: *"We open up a quarrel and we sacrifice the future."* This refers to becoming so invested in the pride of our arguments that this is what drives us, perhaps to the point of losing all that God has blessed us with. We can become blinded by our resentments towards one another and even towards God. We have an antidote for this in Ephesians 4,31-32: *"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."* Paul used a play on words here in verse 32: "to be kind" is translated from the Greek: *Chrestos*, and he completes the sentence with, *"even as God in Christ forgave you."* We gain reinforcement for this message in Romans 12:18: *"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."* As we sing in our hymn from Psalm 34:14: *"Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it."*

God reminds us that vengeance is not ours to deliver, but reserved only for Him. However, God also commands that we separate ourselves from this world, or specifically, the things of this world that can compromise our faith, our calling, and our eternal life with God and Jesus Christ. We cannot fix the structures of this world; we cannot make the violence in our cities better, and we cannot persuade the parties to the many conflicts to obey God. This is the purview of the Father and His Son. We can however, encourage one another in this life—these *living years*, or, conversely, we can cause our family, friends and brethren to stumble if we cannot find compassion and support them in their repentance and reconciliation with God. Consider Psalm 34:18: *"The LORD is near to*

those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit." Let us, as brethren, be the ones to uphold this in our walk of repentance.

As true Christians, we learn that we cannot possess a contrite spirit and at the same time harbor conflicts or worse with loved ones and the brethren. We see this in Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

We appreciate Paul's intention in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." We know that our trespasses, the wrongdoing and sins of mankind, were placed on Jesus Christ, the One who knew no sin, for our reconciliation with God the Father that we may have a share in the Kingdom.

Sadly, most of us will put off reconciliation with one another and with God. Why is that? Well, of course, we are sometimes still carnally-minded, and it is far easier to ignore a sinful challenge that is difficult to overcome than to face it. We always assume that we will get to it tomorrow, or the next day. However, remember the lyric: "*It's too late when we die.*" Allow me to add a new lyric and a new end to the song: "*be brave, reconcile and obey God; all else will fall into place.*" If we do this, it will never be too late as the death of our human bodies is meaningless, and we will enjoy eternal life with the Father and Jesus Christ.

If we commit to reconciliation, we will become stronger and more productive in the Church, and we know that obedience to God is the tie that binds us as members of God's true Church.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank W. Bruno', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frank W. Bruno