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Dear fellow members of MEDA:

I am writing to you -- stunned but no less interested in conciliatory communication -- in response to the Notice of Special Meeting dated October 20, 2009 that you have received concerning the proposal of MEDA's Board to remove me as a member of MEDA.

I have to say at the outset -- I honestly do not know why MEDA has chosen this path of expulsion, which is fraught with administrative and legal complications--not to mention spiritual arrogance.

Despite my request to exercise my rights as a member under Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation law, MEDA has not allowed me to send this mailing myself, or to even know the names of you as fellow members--I am told there are about 2,000 of us, but that is all I have been told. Instead, I am reliant on MEDA to send out this statement on my behalf. That is only the latest indignity in among many in how I have been unfairly and unlawfully treated by current MEDA management and the Board.

It is a sensitive thing to criticize our management and Board. I believe strongly in the value and ministry of MEDA and in its Mission and Vision. I am not engaging in critique of MEDA's program, and I never have. I challenge only its current agenda--to me an unbelievable agenda--of ridding the membership of my voice and participation as a member, based only on my activities and interests and views as a lawyer, publisher and advocate.

Pennsylvania law says that in order to expel me, you as members need to give me a trial and convict me. Those are the words used.

But search as I might in the 10/20/09 Special Meeting Notice (the "Notice"), I cannot find any "charges" on which my prosecutors seek to convict me.

The closest that I see to a charge is in Paragraph 22 of the Notice, which recites a Board conclusion that "Mr. Leichty's motives in continuing his membership in MEDA are not to further MEDA's Mission and Vision but are, instead, at least in part, to use MEDA's resources to highlight his work with [Good Information

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Advocates], and to disseminate information propagated by GIA, neither of which are in furtherance of MEDA's Mission, Vision and goal to alleviate poverty worldwide."

This conclusion by the Board is totally unfounded. The Board has never met with me. I support MEDA's Mission and Vision, professionally and personally, and I think those who know me best would recognize that. It is only because some have supposed otherwise that I apparently find myself in this defensive position. But no one has been willing to engage in dialogue with me about what ideas or positions I have advanced that are inconsistent with MEDA's Mission and Vision. In any case, how could I possibly "use MEDA's resources" to serve my own agenda?

You may not agree with my work as a lawyer and advocate--work that is inspired by my Christian faith (see [www.goodinformation.org](http://www.goodinformation.org))--but then again, I may not agree with some of the things you are doing in your respective businesses, either, and I may even believe you haven't been acting completely consistent with MEDA's mission and vision. In fact, I can think of examples of where that is true. But really, that isn't a sound basis for expelling a member.

One of the things that I will be telling MEDA, and that I expect to tell you on November 5, is that MEDA is proceeding against me illegally, because of the failure to identify a clear instance of where I have breached a requirement of membership in MEDA. How can you convict me and expel me, when there is no applicable law? And that is not the only problem with MEDA's proceeding against me, which follows its earlier unlawful attempt to expel me by means of unlawfully having the Board amend a bylaw providing for the termination of membership. (As noted below, the Board has since reversed itself and "rescinded" that act--but you wouldn't know it from reading the 22 paragraphs in the Notice).

But I will assume for the sake of argument and for the moment that MEDA's procedures would be acceptable under Pennsylvania law. This idea that I am trying to "use" MEDA as an organization is simply preposterous, even if it were possible. As I told members at Columbus in 11/08, I didn't come to MEDA seeking the floor, but only to exhibit and sell materials to interested members. How could I as one single member, without even a MEDA chapter to relate to where I live or work, "use" MEDA? I have no ability to make MEDA do something against its will. I have no ability except the power of persuasion to get someone to act as I would like them to act. Nor have I ever sought to disrupt or disrupted a MEDA gathering. My presence as an exhibitor in Columbus was authorized in advance--and when it was revoked, MEDA compensated me in full. I spoke from the floor to voice my concern about MEDA's act of ousting me as an exhibitor. A member should always have the right to speak about his corporation's conduct at an annual meeting.

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So what can be behind this drive to expel me? Is it nothing more than the goal of suppression of information itself? Am I, like our forbears, effectively being ostracized for my beliefs? From the least likely of orthodoxies? Fortunately, the MEDA Board owns no gallows and wields no sharp instruments, but from whom are they deriving their heritage?

I will now respond within time and page limits to MEDA's Notice, but I respectfully urge you to think about these questions, and to keep an open mind to me until you hear me. Whatever you do, please don't shy away from the 11/5 meeting because of the "heat" that is being generated by this drive to remove me--come and shed some light instead! I would like your support, but even if you don't support my ongoing membership, I urge you to attend.

Here follow my comments on some of the specific contentions made by MEDA in the Notice, using MEDA's paragraph numbers as reference:

1. MEDA has told me that I haven't been much of a member, in terms of giving or participation, and a similar inference may be drawn from MEDA's recitation about the history of my membership (which I cannot independently confirm). I suggest to you that MEDA has allowed members at all levels of giving and participation, and that I have done what I could for MEDA, and that MEDA has no basis for determining what I may hope to do for MEDA's program in the future.

But to set the record straight, I have not only supported MEDA with my money as I have been able, I have supported MEDA's goals in my personal and professional life. I have represented poor people, and people from all over the world--and sometimes they are the same people. I have worked for Mennonite World Conference. I have written a successful grant proposal for a development project in an impoverished area of California. These are not the kinds of things I have advertised, nor should it be necessary that I do so. I mention them here only to put my history with MEDA into context.

3. It seems clear that the MEDA board wants to penalize me for publicizing on the GIA website the acts that MEDA took against me. Think about this: do you think MEDA's name would have ever come up at all on this site, [www.goodinformation.org](http://www.goodinformation.org), had MEDA handled matters differently at Columbus?

4. Mr. Stjernholm left out some important details when he told you that, "At the Annual Meeting, Mr. Leichty attempted to sell materials in his capacity as a principal of GIA, propagating Holocaust revisionism." Whoa, there are so many problems with that statement that it will take me a full page to detail them.

--First, it is false to say that I attempted to sell materials "at the Annual Meeting." MEDA does two things at its annual

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conventions. It offers speakers and seminars and tours under the theme, "Business As a Calling." It also holds an annual corporation meeting. What I signed up to do at Columbus--and what I paid \$300 to do--was have a table for Good Information Advocates as an exhibitor. This had nothing to do with MEDA's Annual Meeting, as that term would normally be construed in a notice of a Special Meeting. The only reason I spoke at the Annual Meeting was to question my treatment as an exhibitor. I did not attempt to sell or distribute materials "at the Annual Meeting" of members.

--The guidelines for exhibitors allowed sales to be made, contrary to the implication of impropriety in the Notice. That would be normal for a business. During the very brief time that my exhibit was up, I also offered some free literature that I thought might be of interest and relevance to some members.

--It is not clear whether Mr. Stjernholm is contending that I propagated Holocaust revisionism, or whether my materials did. Let it be clear, however, that even as to materials relating to the Holocaust, most of the materials offered by GIA related to the unlawful U.S. deportation and subsequent imprisonment of German dissident Ernst Zundel, married to former Mennonite author Ingrid Rimland; and that the exhibit was not set up to champion any single historical account, whether orthodox or dissident.

--In fact, I had materials for sale at my exhibit from a Christian ministry in Indiana whose founder has told me he disagrees sharply with Holocaust revisionists; and from a Canadian filmmaker who relied extensively on Jewish academics; and from a writer who told me that one of her good friends (now deceased) was a Holocaust survivor. The materials exhibited were far from being one-dimensional, and yet the MEDA Board has chosen to tell you only that the exhibit "propagated Holocaust revisionism."

--I am interested in many historical subjects and current events, and in the intersection between the two. I think it is important that we as Christians, and particularly as Christians in business, be aware of information that does not make it into the mainstream. As I explained to anyone who cared to listen, the materials I offered were offered because they were authored either by Mennonites or those who knew Mennonites well or lived among them--people known to me personally or known to others in our communion.

--What did this have to do with MEDA's mission and vision, you ask? It had as much to do with MEDA's mission and vision as some of the other exhibits: in other words, it was not a criterion for exhibiting that the business exhibitor have a focus or have materials directly related to MEDA's mission and vision. I always thought that at a MEDA convention, members come and share annually from their own unique work, which is part of what keeps it lively.

6. I was not merely restricted from selling any of the materials I brought with me to Columbus: I was prevented from doing so. That is why I asked brothers Stjernholm, Sauder and Good (and there many have been others present) to reimburse me for my costs. Mr. Stjernholm agreed that MEDA would do so while we were still in Columbus, although payment was never volunteered and was made only in January 2009 after I had submitted my costs in December 2008.

7. My statement about the lack of "coincidence" between my interests and of the mission of MEDA is lifted out of context in the MEDA Notice. When I made that statement on the floor at Columbus, I was telling MEDA members that I would NOT do precisely what I am now being accused of wanting to do: I was telling them that I recognized that it would NOT be appropriate for me to address the floor about the interests of GIA, since not all of my interests would coincide with the interests of those in attendance.

8. There is a significant omission in MEDA's recitation of facts that belongs between its paragraphs 7 and 8. Beginning in December 2008, I asked Howard Good several times to provide me with a copy of MEDA's bylaws. I wrote him again with that request in January 2009, and again in March 2009. I didn't press for the Bylaws after that. Howard never provided me with even the courtesy of a response to any of my queries. Other than posting an account of my ouster as an exhibitor on the GIA website in December 2008, that is all I did in regards to MEDA after the Columbus convention--until suddenly I was informed in September that I was offered a telephonic hearing on my prospective expulsion by a MEDA membership committee. Only then did I insist again that I should be given a copy of MEDA's bylaws, and only then did I finally receive them.

MEDA refers in this same paragraph to "Mr. Leichty's actions." What actions? Is it the action I took in coming to Columbus as an exhibitor, which MEDA officers conceded was proper--to the point of reimbursing me? Was it speaking at the annual meeting, which was my prerogative? Was it asking for Bylaws? I surely hope not, because that should be fundamental to members of a nonprofit corporation. Was it my audacity to post an account on my own website of what had been done to me? or detailing my views and controversial associations, all of which are thoroughly based in my beliefs and values as a Christian? Someone please enlighten me.

9. While Mr. Stjernholm has told you that MEDA held a "duly called and noticed meeting" on June 6, 2009 to discuss amending your bylaws, what he has not told you was that under Pennsylvania law, a bylaw pertaining to termination of membership can only be amended by members. Yet on 6/9/09 MEDA's board purported to amend the bylaw governing expulsion of members. MEDA's board has now rescinded that amendment, at a telephonic meeting held October 20, 2009, after I pointed out the unlawfulness of the Board action.

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11. At all relevant times I have been motivated to be a member of MEDA because of MEDA's vision and mission, and because of the work it is doing, and for no other reason.

12. Mr. Stjernholm's representation that Bylaws were "promptly provided" to me in 9/09 should be viewed in the context of my requests as detailed above, made beginning in December 2008.

14. It is not true that the Board provided me "the documents and information requested," when the reference is to Paragraph 13 where members are told that I made a request for "the charges upon which [I] was to be considered for expulsion." I was never told what the charges were, other than vaguely that my conduct didn't conform to MEDA's mission and vision statements. I still haven't. I have never been charged with any immoral or illegal conduct.

16. At no time was I ever told that the earlier expulsion hearing was canceled "in hopes of encouraging discussion between Mr. Leichty and the Board...." I was told that it was canceled in the same short paragraph where I was told that MEDA never intended to do anything unlawful.

20. As mentioned, MEDA has now refused my request to inspect the membership register. MEDA representatives cited confidentiality, something that doesn't exist under Pennsylvania law as to members' addresses. Some members of nonprofits may feel uneasy about their addresses being available to other members. They shouldn't. This disclosure is necessary for people to gather together to do charitable work and enjoy the protections of state law governing that work. The addresses are to be used only to communicate about the business of the nonprofit. That is all I ever intended. Nor did I ever "narrow my request" to inspect records--I simply told MEDA, after it raised the specter of confidential donor information, that I was not interested in confidential donor information. The MEDA Board claims to know that I had an improper purpose in demanding my right to inspect membership records, but has given me no evidence for that conclusion. I didn't.

In closing, I accept that members have the right to remove their fellow members from a nonprofit corporation incorporated in Pennsylvania. But it pains me that I am targeted for removal from an organization that I support and identify with, and I believe the circumstances raise larger issues about faithfulness and dissent. I trust that you will prayerfully weigh these comments as you consider attending and voting at the Special Meeting 11/5/09.

Sincerely,

Bruce Leichty

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