

May 9, 2017

Pastor Brent Trask

District Superintendent

Christian & Missionary Alliance of Canada

Dear Mr. Trask:

Thank you for your letter of April 21. Your response is very encouraging to us. You have raised several questions which we would like to address in this response. We would also like to have a personal meeting with you to discuss the contents of this letter in more detail. It will also give you an opportunity to “feel the pain” and empathize with us, and hopefully to advocate for us.

You questioned why we have not accepted Ron Buschman’s “sincere and complete apology for the offense”. In our view, his words “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry” do not constitute an apology. If we look at the example of King David in the bible; when he was confronted with his sins, he acknowledged his guilt, expressed his sorrow and demonstrated his repentance [2Samuel 12:1-12, Psalm 32, Psalm 51]. Ron Buschman has not even acknowledged what he did that was wrong.

He accused us of publicly undermining his leadership of the Marriage and Family ministry, and as a result, said he felt he had no choice but to “summarily expel” us from any further involvement in this ministry. He never once provided us with any specific example whereby we had undermined his leadership. He never sought to meet and present us with this allegation and never gave us an opportunity to defend ourselves. Neither did Pastor Bon-Bernard intervene and seek to bring us together to resolve this difference so we could continue our ministry together, contrary to the law of Christ [Matthew 5:23-26]. Marriage and Family ministry is the deepest passion of our hearts and our greatest gifting from God to serve the church which we have been doing for the past 19 years. We have been arbitrarily, summarily and systematically shut out from God’s work, by ministry leaders at FAC, without any justification.

So, in our view, the Buschmans have borne false witness against us and abused their power as lay ministry leaders to shut us out of the ministry that God has called us to. Then they used lies, deceptions and cover-ups to justify their actions. Shockingly, the Buschmans even concocted a fabricated story, after our 27May2016 meeting with them, that we were no longer involved because “we had retired” from the ministry. This is the furthest thing from the truth. Why would we willingly retire from a ministry to pursue other opportunities in the church and then immediately report allegations of abuse by our former lay ministry leaders; that makes no sense at all!

Ever since we raised our allegations of abuse by the Buschmans, all we have heard is denials and cover-ups from the Pastors and Elders involved in our conflict. No spiritual leader at FAC, or elsewhere in the church district, has so far shown any interest or diligence to discover the truth and then faithfully act

upon it according to the Word of God. We understand the bible to say that the Christian church has been entrusted with the task of proclaiming and fighting for God's truth in the world and in the church and to utilize love to overcome a multitude of sins. What has happened? We are willing to take the necessary steps, are you?

Is this spiritual abuse in the church when lay ministry leaders fabricate lies, deceptions and cover-ups to misuse their positions of leadership and spiritual authority? Is it abuse to falsely discredit other volunteer servants in the church, so lay leaders can expel them from involvement in a ministry that God has called them to? Is it abuse when lay, staff and pastoral leaders quash all legitimate questions, suggestions, issues and concerns in order to remove any perceived threat to their status quo power and authority, as spiritual and organizational leaders in the ministries of FAC.

We believe it is! and what we have been seeking is justice: 1) acknowledgement of the wrongs that have been done, 2) sincere apologies from all parties involved, so we can begin the healing from our pain and suffering, 3) reconciliation and restoration of relationships so we can resume ministry where God has called us, in Marriage and Family Life ministry at FAC, and 4) motivate the church to put in place the necessary safeguards through appropriate and comprehensive "Conflict Resolution" policies and procedures, so that, what happened to us, doesn't happen to any other lay volunteers at FAC.

The bible says "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs" [Luke 12:2-3]. The truth will be told, either now or on judgment day – this is the choice we are setting before the Buschmans, Pastor Bon-Bernard, and the Elders involved in this conflict. The bible also says "For we know him who said, 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' and again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." [Hebrews 10:30-31].

Therefore, attached to this letter you will find the following documents:

- 1) Letter of apology from Ron and Teresa Buschman
- 2) Letter of apology from Pastor Les Bon-Bernard
- 3) Letter of apology from the Board of Elders
- 4) Outline for Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures
- 5) Our training and experience in Marriage and Family ministry

We would be pleased to discontinue any further action in this regard, once you have confirmed in writing to us, that the following actions have been completed:

- 1) Ron Buschman has signed and returned his letter of apology to us.
- 2) Pastor Les Bon-Bernard has signed and returned his letter of apology to us.

- 3) Dave Orr, on behalf of the Board of Elders, has signed and returned their letter of apology to us.
- 4) Church leadership [pastors and elders] agree in writing to put in place comprehensive "Conflict Resolution" policy and procedures, with independent committee oversight, to safeguard all members and adherents of the church, reconcile and restore fractured or broken relationships, and prevent spiritual abuse through the misuse of authority in the church.
- 5) District and church leadership provides all assistance needed to reconcile and restore our relationships with Ron & Theresa Buschman, Pastor Les Bon-Bernard and the Board of Elders who have been involved in our conflict.
- 6) Church leadership, specifically Ron & Teresa Buschman and Pastor Les Bon-Bernard, lovingly welcomes us back as lay volunteers into the Marriage and Family Ministry at FAC.

If anyone involved disagrees with the contents of any of these documents we have provided, we would be pleased to meet with them to resolve these differences, and a wording revision may be mutually agreed upon. However, these are not unfounded allegations. We have supporting documentation and/or eye witness testimony to validate every one of the "wrongful actions" and "failures to act rightly" included in our proposed letters of apology from the parties involved.

Because you are independent of the leadership at FAC, and not directly involved in this conflict, we are asking you to deliver these documents to the parties involved at FAC. We are also asking you to act as intermediary to ensure that all the actions we have requested above, are in fact, completed.

As mentioned at the beginning, we would like to arrange a personal meeting with you to discuss the contents of this letter in more detail. We are ever so grateful for the participation and support provided by Mr. Pat Nixon during this journey, and we respectfully ask that he be permitted to attend any meetings with you. Finally, we respectfully request that the contents of this letter, in any form delivered to you, remain **PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**, until we have had the opportunity to meet with you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Barry and Jennifer Pendergast

Letter of Apology

From Ron and Teresa Buschman to Barry and Jennifer Pendergast

May 2017

This letter acknowledges our offenses in the conflict that has been ongoing since January 2015 between the Pendergasts and the Buschmans at First Alliance Church. We individually take responsibility for our “wrongful actions” and our “failures to act rightly” which have caused you so much pain and suffering. We are sincerely sorry and humbly request your forgiveness.

| Our Wrongful Actions | Our Failures To Act Rightly |
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| We were wrong when we mishandled the reported breach of confidentiality in marriage mentoring, that took place at the Marriage team meeting on 19January 2015, by blaming the Pendergasts for not disclosing what they knew about it. | We failed to effectively deal with a breach of confidentiality involving marriage mentoring volunteers for Marriage & Family Ministry which led to this conflict. |
| We were wrong when we deliberately excluded the Pendergasts from our core volunteer team after the 29January2015 course & then we summarily expelled them from the Marriage & Family ministry on 27May 2016 because of an erroneous perceived threat to our leadership. | We failed to make a genuine effort as ministry leaders to meet with the Pendergasts and carefully listen to their concerns and then act to resolve the issues and strengthen the ministry team. |
| We were wrong when we abused our authority as lay ministry leaders by expelling the Pendergasts without any consultation or conflict resolution assistance from the supervising Pastor Bon-Bernard or any other third party. | We failed to consult with Pastor Bon-Bernard, our supervising pastor, to obtain his assistance in genuinely resolving the conflict between the Pendergasts and ourselves. |
| We were wrong when we told Elaine Young at Alpha Marriage Canada that the Pendergasts were no longer involved in the Alpha Marriage ministry, even before we had actually expelled them, which we knew would harm their reputation with Alpha Marriage & Family Canada. | We failed to provide the Marriage Matters team with a copy of their entire self-assessment inventory, for their own personal enrichment, because of difficulties we had experienced with it. |
| We were wrong when we told the Pendergasts on 8mar2017 that we planned to acknowledge their service and retirement from marriage ministry at a couples café on 10June2017, when we knew they had a dispute with us, and had in fact, not retired or resigned from ministry. Rather we had arbitrarily excluded them from involvement in Marriage & Family ministry since March 2015 and | We failed even now to put in place a written confidentiality covenant for all volunteers involved in Marriage & Family Ministry. |

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| then expelled them on 27May2016. | |
| We were wrong when we erroneously reacted to the Pendergasts questions and suggestions about Marriage & Family ministry as a perceived threat to our leadership. | We failed to fully and consistently comply with the FAC staff covenant in our leadership of Marriage & Family ministry. We failed to hold regular meetings, take and distribute minutes, invite questions and suggestions, delegate and build team vision. |
| We were wrong when we told the Pendergasts, at a meeting with 2 Elders on 8March 2017, that we were sorry for the hurt that we caused them, but we were unwilling to confess to any wrongdoing. | We failed to diligently arrange local church administrative and facilities support (ie. meal planning, budgeting, etc) for the Alpha Marriage course but expected the Alpha para-church organization to handle all these details. |
| We were wrong when we verbally abused both the Pendergasts in our emails and personal conversations, when they refused to tell us via email, who had breached confidentiality in marriage mentoring. Whereas, their refusal was to avoid causing another breach of confidentiality. | We failed to consult with our ministry team before changing the Couples inventory system from FOCCUS to Prepare and Enrich which could have solicited valuable feedback based on a wealth of experience. |
| We were wrong when we removed the Pendergasts as facilitators of the next Marriage course starting on 29January2015 because we thought they had a conflict with their co-facilitators. This concern was completely unfounded so we later re-instated them to facilitate the course. | We failed to stop the disclosure of confidential couples information at the only ministry team meeting held on 19January2015 and we took no action to enforce confidentiality rules during the meeting. |
| We were wrong when we failed to consult with our supervising Pastor Les Bon-Bernard before removing the Pendergasts as facilitators of the Marriage Course on 29January 2015. | We failed when we refused to meet with the Pendergasts to hear their concerns about these breaches of confidentiality, and rather, chose to respond through numerous emails, aggressively insisting they disclose the details of who was involved. |
| We were wrong when we invited the Pendergasts to a meeting on 27May2016 with the stated intention of soliciting their views on our leadership and the team's performance. However, at the meeting we quickly terminated the discussion, and summarily announced that we were expelling them from the ministry under authority of Matthew 18:15, for undermining our leadership authority in a public manner, but did not provide any evidence that this was true. | We failed to provide additional Mentor training courses for Prepare and Enrich mentors even though we knew that the initial training was inadequate. |
| We were wrong when we falsely reported at an Elder mediation meeting on 8March2017, that at an earlier meeting on 27May2016, the Pendergasts had asked to retire from the Marriage & Family Ministry in order to pursue other ministry opportunities. We were wrong when we denied | We failed to notify our ministry team, when we arranged a Marriage Course training event at FAC, using coaches from Foothills Alliance, to increase our pool of facilitators. No couples from FAC attended the training. |

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| that we had any telephone conversation with Elaine Young, National Director of Alpha Marriage & Family ministry prior to the meeting on 27May2016. | We failed to take sufficient leadership training to know how to establish policies and procedures, including how to resolve conflicts within a volunteer led ministry team. |
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Signed By: Ron & Teresa Buschman

Forgiven By: Barry & Jennifer Pendergast

Letter of Apology

From Pastor Les Bon-Bernard to Barry and Jennifer Pendergast

May 2017

This letter acknowledges my offenses in the conflict that has been ongoing since January 2015 between the Pendergasts and the Buschmans at First Alliance Church. I take responsibility for my “wrongful actions” and my “failures to act rightly” which have caused you so much pain and suffering. I am sincerely sorry and humbly request your forgiveness.

| My Wrongful Actions | My Failures To Act Rightly |
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| I was wrong when I accepted the report on this conflict from Ron Buschman, my lay ministry leader, without taking the time or personal interest to listen carefully to the Pendergasts concerns arising out of the 27May2016 meeting with the Buschmans. | I failed to provide adequate leadership training for the Buschmans before appointing them as lay ministry leaders and Ron Buschman as a Staff Volunteer for Marriage & Family Ministries. |
| I was wrong when I chose not to get involved in resolving this conflict until I was instructed to Pastor Tim Beadle, even though I am responsible for oversight of this ministry. | I failed as supervising pastor to put in place the necessary policies and procedures to govern the activities of the ministry, including clear written confidentiality guidelines. |
| I was wrong when I deliberately downplayed the seriousness of this conflict in my report to the Elder mediation meeting on 8March2017, when I knew from an earlier meeting in July 2016, the details of the Pendergasts allegations. | I failed to ensure that Ron Buschman acted in full compliance with the Staff Covenant as a Staff Volunteer, in charge of the Marriage & Family ministry, under my supervision. |
| I was wrong when I was unwilling to have open and transparent discussions with the Pendergasts and denied all their allegations on multiple occasions. | I failed to thoroughly investigate the reported breach of confidentiality involving marriage mentoring volunteers and to provide the necessary training to protect confidentiality. |
| I was wrong when I did not treat the Pendergasts with the care, sensitivity and compassion expected of a Christian Pastor. | I failed to meet with the Pendergasts in person or have any direct communication with them in any form until 22November 2016, even though they had been part of the lay ministry team for Marriage & Family Life under my supervision since November 2013 . |
| I was wrong when I denied the Pendergasts request [after the initial meeting with Pastor Beadle in July 2016] to hold the first mediation meeting with Pastor Ray Matheson, even though Ray is the most experienced staff member and a professional counsellor at dealing with conflict | I failed to give the Pendergasts adequate time to address their concerns directly with me. They had previously scheduled a meeting with me on 22November2016 but I only gave them 9 minutes of my time. |

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| resolution. | |
| I was wrong when I stated in an email response to the Pendergasts, that I didn't believe this was a situation that as Pastor of Family Ministries, I should get involved in, and asked them to contact the Buschmans to sort things out. | I failed to ask the Pendergasts how they were doing in the ministry and whether they had any concerns or observations to help the ministry reach more couples and parents, within and outside the church walls, even though they were part of my lay ministry team since November 2013. |
| I was wrong when I denied the Pendergasts allegations based on information given to me by the Buschmans. I didn't review or investigate any emails or other documents from the Pendergasts. | I failed to hear & understand the Pendergasts concerns in detail, until I was informed by Pastor Tim Beadle, after he met with them on 10 June 2016, which was 18 months after the conflict originated. |
| I was wrong when I asked via email that the Pendergasts witness, Pat Nixon, be responsible for ensuring all the proceedings were done with honesty, truth and transparency. Pat Nixon refuted the request, as this should already be addressed in FAC policy on conflict resolution. | I failed in my role as Pastor of Marriage & Family ministry to attend any Marriage Matters team meeting, nor did I insist that any agendas or minutes of such meetings be distributed to all team members, rather I relied solely on my contact directly with Ron Buschman. |
| I was wrong when I denied the Pendergasts requests for an unbiased and independent mediation of their allegations, several times over a 6 month period ending 30 November 2016. Then I finally realized I was in a conflict of interest and had to step down as their mediator. | I failed to provide any pastoral and leadership oversight to ensure that Marriage & Family Ministry team activities were being conducted in accordance with the FAC Staff Covenant. |
| I was wrong when I had private discussions with Elder Dr Brent Kinnie, about the Pendergasts allegations, before their first mediation meeting with him. This may have tainted his objectivity as the mediator of their conflict. | I failed to provide any coaching or teaching sessions on Marriage & Family issues for the personal enrichment of ministry team members. |
| I was wrong when I claimed, at the July 2016 district office meeting, that I knew of no conflicts between the Pendergasts and the Buschmans, because I already had discussions with Pastor James Paton, in late February 2016, about these issues, which the Pendergasts had raised with him. | I failed to make any enquires with the Pendergasts to obtain feedback on their evaluation of the ministry even though I knew they had many years of experience in Marriage & Family ministry. |
| | I failed to enquire why the Pendergasts were not facilitating the April 2015 Marriage course nor why they were not participating in the ministry after that time, even though they had been our facilitators at FAC for over 2 years |

Signed By: Les Bon-Benard

Forgiven By: Barry & Jennifer Pendergast

Letter of Apology

From FAC Board of Elders to Barry and Jennifer Pendergast

May 2017

This letter acknowledges our offenses in the conflict that has been ongoing since January 2015 between the Pendergasts and Buschmans at First Alliance Church. We take responsibility for our “wrongful actions” and our “failures to act rightly” which have caused you so much pain and suffering. We are sincerely sorry and humbly request your forgiveness.

| Our Wrongful Actions | Our Failures To Act Rightly |
|---|---|
| We were wrong when we did not make the effort to listen carefully to the Pendergasts concerns and chose rather to rely on reports from staff and lay ministry leaders. | We failed to insist that the supervising Pastor Bon-Bernard investigate the conflict & provide a pathway for reconciliation and restoration between the Buschmans and the Pendergasts. |
| We were wrong when we chose a member of the Elder Board to mediate this conflict who has no formal training or experience in mediation, rather than engaging a mediation professional. | We failed to put in place a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for conflict resolution within the church body for staff, volunteers & all members/adherents. |
| We were wrong when we have explicitly accepted various reports from Pastor Bon-Bernard and Ron Buschman about this conflict, without verifying the accuracy or completeness of such reports. | We failed to show the Pendergasts the same love & respect, but rather showed favouritism to the Buschmans & Pastor Bon-Bernard as ministry leaders in the church, contrary to the law of Christ (James 2:9). |
| We were wrong when we asked Pastor Bon-Bernard to investigate this conflict, without realizing that he was in a conflict of interest position, and could not act objectively or independently, to be a mediator in the dispute. | We failed to offer the services of Plan to Protect to individual members and adherents of our church, so they would have protection from spiritual abuse caused by misuse of spiritual & organizational authority in the church. |
| We were wrong in allowing this conflict to drag on since January 2015 without any resolution, and by not asking the Pendergasts what it would take to resolve their conflict with the Buschmans. | We failed to ensure that Pastor Bon-Bernard acted in full compliance with the Staff Covenant as a Pastor and staff ministry leader under our supervision. |
| We were wrong when we brushed off this conflict as a simple matter of misunderstanding and miscommunication, rather than a legitimate claim involving lies, deceptions, cover-ups and abuse of spiritual and organizational authority, designed to quash any threats to the status quo. | We failed to diligently verify the truth. Once we became aware of conflicting statements made by the Pendergasts and the Buschmans, following a meeting of these parties on 27May2016, we failed to have an independent party examine the evidence supporting each version of events. |

Signed By: Dave Orr, FAC Board of Elders

Forgiven By: Barry & Jennifer Pendergast

Outline for Conflict of Interest Policies and Procedures

Issue: How will the church resolve disputes between members/adherents of the church including Pastors, Staff, Elders, Lay leaders, Lay volunteers and all members/adherents in general?

Goal: To maintain the peace of Christ in the unity of the church through the bonds of love.

Obstacles: Pastors and staff involved in a dispute cannot act independently or objectively to resolve a dispute that they are involved in. Elders cannot act independently or objectively to resolve a dispute because they have a vested interest in protecting the Pastors and staff.

Solution: Establish a permanent Conflict Resolution Committee (CRC) of the Board of Elders elected by the general membership at the annual meeting for a period of 2 years. The nominating committee would recruit godly members who are spiritually mature and full of wisdom and discernment to stand for election. This CRC would hear all complaints involving members/adherents of FAC. The CRC would interview all parties who are involved in or have pertinent information concerning the dispute to ascertain the truth. The CRC would deliberate on the course of action necessary to resolve each dispute. The CRC would be entitled to seek expert counsel from inside and outside the church to aid in its deliberations. The CRC would produce a report to the Senior Pastor and the Chairman of the Board of Elders recommending the course of action required to resolve each dispute. Church leadership would be held responsible for carrying out the action plan and reporting back to the CRC on the results of its efforts. Any failure to report back to the CRC within one year would require an exception report to be presented by the CRC to the annual meeting of the general membership.

Result: Members and adherents of FAC are aware of and thoroughly understand the role of the CRC as a valuable resource, and are encouraged to utilize this ministry service to resolve conflicts they have with anyone else involved in the ministries of FAC.

“The Board of Elders at FAC is committed to implement a comprehensive “Conflict Resolution Policy and Procedures” with “Independent Committee Oversight”. The Board is committed to helping the members/adherents of FAC resolve disputes among themselves, so we don’t see a repeat of the mistakes made in the Pendergast / Buschman conflict.”

Signed By: Dave Orr, FAC Board of Elders

Barry & Jennifer Pendergast

Marriage and Family Ministry

A. Training Received

Alpha Course Training 1997-2002 Various locations

FOCCUS - Facilitated Open Couple Communication & Study Trainers 2005 - 2014 (similar to Prepare & Enrich)

Prepare & Enrich at FAC 2014 - Certified Facilitators

911 Marriage Training at FAC 2015

Alpha Marriage Training Conference with Nicky & Sila Lee, Calgary 2005

Alpha Marriage Training Conference with Nicky & Sila Lee, Vancouver 2009

Alpha Marriage & Parenting Training Conference with Nicky & Sila Lee, Winnipeg 2012

Marriage Session #8, Wrap Up Party Evening, Holy Trinity, Brompton, London with Nicky & Sila Lee 2013

Calgary Chinese Alliance Church, Calgary, Alberta 2015, Training Event With Elaine Young

B. Experience Gained

South Calgary Community Church: Facilitated 3 Alpha Courses 1998 - 2002

Provided Alpha Training at St Michaels Catholic Church & at Foothills Alliance 2001

FOCCUS Trainers 2005 - 2015

FOCCUS Couple Studies 2005 - 2014 (more than 50 done, similar to Prepare & Enrich)

South Calgary Community Church

Facilitated Two Marriage Courses

Okotoks Alliance Church

Facilitated Marriage Course 2005

Richmond Hill Baptist Church 2005 – 2012

South Calgary Chinese Evangelical Free Church 2012

Marriage Course Training for Alpha Canada

Facilitated numerous Alpha Marriage, Marriage Preparation & Parenting Courses

Facilitated Alpha Marriage Training & Awareness Building Workshop

Foothills Alliance Church:

Alpha Parenting Course Facilitator Training on two occasions

Canadian New Friendship Centre: Centre Street Church

Alpha Parenting Course Facilitator Training

First Lutheran Church 2013

Facilitated Alpha Marriage Course

Facilitated Alpha Marriage Training & Awareness Building Workshop

First Alliance Church

Facilitated 4 Marriage Preparation Courses - 2013 - 2014

Facilitated 1 Marriage Course - 2014

Facilitated 1 Marriage Course - 2015

Member of the Marriage Matters Team 2013 - 2016