

TX NM staff offer a good way forward

Jun 15

To Our Friends in Texas and New Mexico,

The past few months have revealed the need for extreme growth in certain areas of our fellowship.

We fully acknowledge that a lack of understanding and open communication about CSA/SA has contributed to the current crisis within our fellowship. We are deeply sorry for the betrayal of trust that has understandably caused many to doubt the integrity of the ministry and those in positions of responsibility.

The main focus of this communication is to deal with the most urgent issue at hand, CSA. Our primary concern is for the victims. Combined with that is our sincere purpose to rid our fellowship of all perpetrators, creating the safest environment possible for the Lord's people. We are committed to meeting the Kingdom's needs. Our love of God, and for His people, has been our source of strength.

As stated in our previous letter, we had three action steps that were identified at the conclusion of our workshop:

1. Develop and share a policy on identification and response to CSA/SA
2. Develop and share procedures for identification of Red Flag Behaviors and how they are reported to law enforcement and/or a 3rd party professional organization for investigation
3. Finalize the agreed upon Internal Guidelines for Conduct for TX/NM Staff
Our Child Safe Policy is complete, as well as a Resource Document that outlines Red Flag Behaviors for identifying predators and specifying when and to whom reporting is required. Both of these documents are attached below. The SA policy will be forthcoming. The Internal Guideline for Conduct for workers has been developed and will be presented to our staff when we are all together the third week of July.
Resource Development
We also wanted to inform you that we have continued developing a resource

library for
our ministry that addresses the 5 topic areas identified during our workshop:

4. Godly Order: Internal guideline of conduct for the ministry
5. Honoring the Calling: Guidelines for beginning in the ministry, how to support workers through different stages in the ministry (First 10 years, 10-40 years, 40- to finish), how to help someone transition out of the ministry if they are unable to continue (not including someone removed for criminal behavior).
6. Worker Health: Physical/Mental/Emotional
7. Oversight & Accountability: Co-oversight, transparency, the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets (I Cor. 14:32).
8. Continuing Education: Emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, culture of appreciation, technology, personal accountability, etc. Our purpose in sharing these 5 areas is to assure each of you that we are committed to addressing the areas of concern expressed by our friends. We are making efforts to collaborate with our co-workers from other States, sharing resources, lessons learned, and best practices.
Listening Tour
While we are always available for personal and open communication with our friends, we are also committed to implementing a special Listening Tour throughout Texas and New Mexico, potentially before our fall conventions. It will be a voluntary attendance forum where anyone can come and ask questions regarding CSA/SA or other areas of concern. Our stated purpose for these open-dialogue sessions is to:
9. Apologize
10. Acknowledge our mistakes

11. Acknowledge how our ignorance on CSA/SA in the past led to this current dilemma
12. Repent and regain trust
13. Listen
14. This forum is a Listening Tour. We want to hear what you have to say.
15. We commit to answering the questions that we can. If we do not have an answer, we will investigate the question and do our best to provide an answer within a designated time frame.

We understand that other changes are needed in our fellowship and we promise to address those items as soon as possible. We recognize that some of the other issues that have been brought up are also very important and may have even contributed to the magnitude of the CSA/SA problem. However, our first priority is to eliminate all CSA/SA and ensure the safety of everyone, especially our children.

We hope to regain your trust through hearing your concerns, listening with sincerity, and letting the Spirit guide us in taking appropriate actions going forward.

Sincerely,

The Texas/New Mexico Staff