

Letter to the Capital Region
Church of God in Christ Community

August 2012

FORWARD

It was recommended to me to keep writing and explanations to a minimum because this is a community of individuals incapable of thinking for themselves. It is with that knowledge and the understanding of that knowledge I will do no such thing. You can choose to ignore this coming storm and leave yourself to its perils or you can arm yourself with knowledge, understanding and wisdom. You can choose to think for yourself or let someone else think for you, but know in your choice is your fate. Know and understand that in judgment you stand alone and on your works and your deeds. The single thing which separates man from all of God's creations is the ability of cognitive thought; it is this in which we are made in His image. In relinquishing your right and responsibility to think for yourself you have forsaken your humanity and in turn you have forsaken God who created you in His image.

ONSET

As a means of introduction my name is Christopher Davis, son of Pastor James Davis of Christian Memorial Church of God in Christ. I grew up in the Albany area attending church as a toddler at St. John's and most of my childhood and adolescence at Christian Memorial COGIC under both Pastor Charles Guthrie and later, my father, Pastor James Davis. When I came of age and left for college my ties and connections to the church and COGIC ceased. In fact, other than funerals or weddings, until recently, I do not believe I had been to a regular church service in about two decades. My thoughts and memories of church and COGIC can be summed up as basic and fundamental lessons of morality, some of which was biblical and some of which was denominational doctrine.

In January 2012 Blessed Hope Worship Center, a COGIC affiliate under Pastor Ronald Howard, experienced a fire which damaged their church home on Central Avenue in Albany, New York. The damage to the church was extensive and Pastor Howard recognized his limitations in navigating the church through the many hurdles they would have to face in rebuilding. Through then Superintendent and Pastor James Davis, Pastor Howard contacted me, to ask for my assistance in their endeavors to rebuild. After several weeks of exploring how we could be of mutual benefit to each other I was engaged by Pastor Howard and Blessed Hope to provide them professional expertise as an advocate for their needs in insurance negotiations, strategic planning, process management, and project management.

In building a personal and professional relationship with Pastor Howard we engaged in hours of conversation and continue to do so. As I had not been involved with the Albany church community or COGIC in decades I questioned Pastor Howard about the environment, the people, the relationships, the fellowship amongst churches, etc. In this process of familiarizing myself with the larger church environment the topic of security as it related to Blessed Hope came up. Pastor Howard and I engaged in lively discussion concerning the current state of affairs with churches and specifically COGIC with respect to acts of leadership and insurance coverage. As we explored the topic, issues of children's security came into focus which led to numerous other questions and continued discussions. At some point early on in these discussions a particular and singular incident of child abuse by a local COGIC pastor came to be highlighted. It is from this, known to me at the time as an isolated incident of pedophilia that I began to ask more questions.

One of the first questions, posed to my own mother, Sister Linda Davis, only hours after the revelation conversation between Pastor Howard and myself, was if she knew about the incident of abuse. Her initial response was a non-committal indication that she sort of heard something about an incident. Moreover, her comment, like many I have gotten since, was that she didn't "know." Being both dissatisfied with the non-committal answer and not understanding why the person, later to be made aware of as being a documented pedophile, was still in the pulpit I immediately began probing and asking questions. For me there existed a basic incongruous situation I could not reconcile. How could an individual who would not be allowed to be a greeter at a Walmart be allowed to be a pastor in COGIC?

In delving further into what I believed was a singular incident of abuse by a pastor against a 10 year old boy I uncovered another incident of abuse by the same pastor. This additional incident had resulted in both an arrest and a plea arrangement which was known to a chain of command in COGIC leadership. As time went on additional speculation surrounding numerous other incidents of abuse with this particular pastor came to my attention. Still at this stage I believed that this was one rogue individual who had carried out depraved acts against children, primarily adolescent boys.

As I began to explore the acts of pedophilia by this one pastor, I was introduced to a victim who was willing to tell his story. In May 2012 I began a series of interviews with this victim. The victim has long been a member of various COGIC and non-COGIC churches as a musician. The victim provided a fairly detailed account of abuse he had endured beginning at the age of 6 and continuing through becoming an adult. According to victim's testimony, abuse in COGIC began at St. John's church at the age of 12. For this individual, the cycle of church abuse began with a minister who at first was musically connected to the victim but soon this connection led into sexual activity which continued over several years. In addition to the victim's adolescent involvement with the aforementioned minister, testimony of involvement with an elder involved with numerous musical groups, an adult church musician, a minister and an adult church lay member were all detailed. Of the five noted pedophiles, three were members of St. John's and two members of Wilborn's Temple at the time of the abuse in the mid-1970's. Abuse by the elder involved with numerous musical groups began at the age of 14 years old and involved not only the abuser and the abused but other adults and minors as well. The abuse victim states that he was introduced to orgies in the loft at Garland Brothers Funeral Home. While the victim now attests to having been delivered from "the lifestyle" he has provided testimony of numerous incidents of homosexual activity and affairs with church members and leadership spanning over three decades.

Like some of you, I was both shocked and in disbelief of the seriousness and perversity of the crimes which were detailed to me in the testimony of the victim. Given my suspicious nature and the gravity of the accusations being leveled I was compelled to do more investigation, not only to qualify the testimony but to provide contextual depth to the nature of the allegations. In delving into the nature of the accuser, I like many have found a troubled man with a troubled past. While I have grown to question the motives behind bringing forth the allegations, I find no cause for their creation. In fact, the victim has detailed conversations and provided contacts and information, which though at times distorted, the bases of which have proven to be true.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Given the nature of the crimes and the seemingly irreconcilable discrepancy between the acts and the lack of response by the church organization I was compelled to act. As I continued to gather information, both specific and referential, I began work on a document to be presented to the local superintendents. My inability to reconcile the knowledge I had gained in a few short weeks with the apparent silence which seemingly extended for generations regarding pedophilia within the local church community kept me awake, wholly consumed, and disgusted for weeks on end. In not being able to understand the silence I began to explore why and how. I realized in many ways these questions had the same answer, a conditioned community. A community of church goers who have for generations been taught to keep silent about what goes on within the community and to defer to the rule of leadership, even when in conflict with the word of God. Not having been involved in the community for decades, but having a basic understanding and belief in God, for me the path was simple. That simple path was and is the truth, because only in the knowledge of the truth can earnest and real repentance be obtained, reconciliation be achieved and healing begin.

I enlisted the aid of my father, Pastor James Davis, to gather the superintendents for a meeting at a neutral site. At the same time, realizing I was going head on into at least a protocol conflict with a group of die hard life-long COGIC leadership members, I choose to enlist the assistance of one of their own. After more than 20 years of absolutely no contact, I reached out to Dr. Charles Guthrie. I choose Guthrie with the simple conclusion that he was a man who had been through much conflict in COGIC and would be able to render some valuable advice. After meeting with him he agreed to assist in any manner in which he could and cautioned me to stay true to the mission. While Superintendent Clark and Superintendent Davis agreed to attend the meeting along with myself and Dr. Guthrie, Superintendent Johnson sought my parents help in quieting me and once again “sweeping things under the rug.” When alerted to the plea of Superintendent Johnson, I instructed my parents to give him my phone number should he wish to discuss matters prior to the meeting, I received no call.

In the meeting with the superintendents and Dr. Charles Guthrie, I asked each of the participants at the meeting if they knew about incidents of abuse. While none at the meeting were forth coming, Superintendent McKinley Johnson commented that he did not “know.” At that time, having already been otherwise informed of McKinley’s at least cursory knowledge of pedophilia in St. John’s, I posed two questions. The questions I posed specifically to McKinley were “When was the last time he talked to God?” followed by “When was the last time he sat down with Jesus?” The point being we often know things without the physical and direct knowledge of the occurrence, it is the indirect evidence which often tells the story. The point of knowing have been clearly made, I offered all participants the opportunity to leave the room if they felt they had been assembled in error, none left.

I presented to the superintendents and Dr. Guthrie, my findings to date, my resolve to move forward with the issue and how I would move forward. Initially, there appeared to be more concern about the dogma and doctrine of COGIC on the part of all, save Dr. Guthrie, than what was right or wrong. Over the course of the few hours in which we met, there appeared to be a change of heart by the participants to address the issues which had been brought to light. In that meeting, the particular issue of a pastor

was discussed and it became apparent that the church organization leadership, at least through Superintendent Clark the pedophile pastor's district superintendent, knew of more instances of abuse than the issue which had been formally dealt with by the court. In the meeting Superintendent Clark seemed to be confused at first of which incident of abuse was being referred to and in doing so highlighted other incidents of which he had been made aware. He also affirmed that these additional concerns had been brought to the attention of the Bishop Wright. More recently I was alerted to a situation in which Superintendent Johnson was directly involved with that same pastor when the pastor in question was in leadership at St. John's. The pedophile in question had lured and then accosted an adolescent in a vehicle. The young man escaped the pedophile's vehicle by busting out a window of the car. Upon learning of the attack, the father of the victim apparently went down to St. John's, weapon in hand, looking to exact justice for his molested son. The account as I have been told is McKinley Johnson interceded in the incident and convinced the grieving father that the situation would be "handled." This particular incident happened prior to the abuse which occurred with respect to the court case and numerous other incidents which have since followed.

In addition to the documented sex offender pastor, I brought forth the issue of the elder involved with numerous singing groups over the past several decades. To further cement the referential information I had gathered on the elder, I played to the superintendents a recording in which a victim explicitly details his involvement and the nature of his involvement with the elder. To ensure all the participants were aware of the recording I played both the beginning of the session where I explained who I was and whom I was interviewing, then forwarded them to a section in which the victim detailed his involvement with the abuser.

My request was for the immediate removal of these pedophiles from their positions in COGIC to protect children and in doing so provide time to evaluate and investigate the situations. Once again, the concern of procedure over protection became evident. In the case of the elder with the musical groups, Superintendent Johnson had the authority to remove the elder, but he chose not to. His response was that the elder was not in a position to do harm and leadership had not allowed him in a role with children at St. John's. The question I posed to myself at the time was if there was no presumption of wrong doing on the part of the elder why would there have been a need to keep this elder away from children.

In the case of the documented pedophile, the superintendents stated their inability to act based on the bylaws of COGIC and it would require involvement and decree by the presiding Bishop. In response, we collectively teleconferenced in Bishop Wright. In the conversation with Bishop Wright both accused individuals were mentioned and he effectively reserved comment until a later time. I reminded the superintendents that my purpose was truth and healing and my purpose would lead my path. At the onset of the meeting and at its terminus I explained to them that while I thought it was proper to include them in this process of truth and healing that I was not a member of COGIC and would not be deterred or confined by the explicit or implicit protocols of the organization in bringing about resolve. The meeting terminated with the understanding that the issue was on the table and there was a time frame to the process.

FAILURE TO ACT

Having been encouraged through the meeting with the superintendents I called upon Bishop Wright on the following day to impress upon him the need to move forward and do the right thing. In that conversation we spoke only of the known registered pedophile and his continued role as a pastor in COGIC. Bishop Wright's comment was that the issue had been handled by Bishop Anderson and that without additional new evidence he was not doing anything. Based on the previous day's meeting with Superintendent Clark having disclosed additional issues with the offending pastor I was quite confident that Bishop Wright had to be aware of these issues as well. In the end, Bishop Wright stated that his concern was exposing the church (COGIC) to a lawsuit from the pedophile and that the jurisdiction didn't have money to deal with the victims anyways. Completely disgusted with the response from Bishop Wright I alerted him of my resolve to contact the national church organization and that I would bring this issue to the forefront in the coming months. Soon thereafter, I contacted Superintendent Davis and Superintendent Clark to make them aware of my conversation with Bishop Wright and that I would be moving forward on the path to seek the truth and expose the darkness.

The following day, I was contacted by Superintendent Davis who alerted me that Bishop Wright had seemingly been advised to handle matters differently and that he would be travelling to Albany on the coming Monday to further investigate matters. Having experienced the close mindedness of Bishop Wright and knowing the history of the church organization burying scandals, I decided to act to lessen the possibility of burying this generations' long tragedy. I contacted the pastor in question and set up a meeting with him for the following day, Saturday. I met with the beleaguered pastor and brought forth the concerns I had presented to the superintendents and warned him of the coming lynching at the hands of the Bishop. We spoke for about an hour in which he neither conclusively admitted nor denied any allegations. I questioned the individual if he had been molested as a child to which he answered affirmatively. The seemingly remorseful pastor said that through his various travails I had been the first one to pointedly confront him on his transgressions. I advised him to prepare a letter of resignation. I requested he end in his pastoral role and work with me in developing a way to help those within the organization who had been abused to be provided counseling. While I have made attempts to contact the former COGIC pastor, beyond a brief conversation I had following his resignation, he has not returned any calls.

I requested an opportunity to speak in person to Bishop Wright and his council, which included Bishop Melvin, Superintendent Griffin and an Elder Alexander, the Bishop's secretary. I was provided the opportunity to speak to the assembled group which included the aforementioned plus Superintendent Clark, Superintendent Davis and Superintendent Johnson. After being escorted from the meeting room by a Bishop Melvin, I was called back in to the room 15 minutes later. After letting me know that I was being provided this time at their grace they permitted me an opportunity to speak. In introducing myself I was quickly questioned by Bishop Melvin and Elder Alexander as to my motives. Again in disgust I explained that truth, correction and healing were my motives. What I could not understand is that in the face of the gravity of the topic at hand and having clear knowledge of at least some acts why would anyone's motive detract from the issue. Perhaps because of my vast experiences outside of the

church I was shocked by the attempts to intimidate and coerce me, a thinking grown man, into accepting a concept that somehow I was to show myself subservient to these men with titles just because they had titles. The childish and sophomoric attempts to move me from my resolve only strengthened it; meanwhile it became apparent that these intimidation tactics were time tested within the church community. My failure to submit to the authority of the Bishop's position, without respect or regards to his reasoning, was questioned by Superintendent Johnson, nevertheless, I remained rightly respectful though resolved throughout the ordeal. What this particular group of men did not realize is that I had sat and debated in rooms and at times at odds with billionaires, CEOs, a governor, U.S. senators, and some of the greatest minds in our country. Their veiled attempts to dictate control by their position and protocol but not by the truth, rational argument or the righteousness of their stance made it clear to me that Bishop Wright and his ad hoc council were wholly incapable of dealing with the issue at hand.

What became so clear was the concern over protecting their selves, the church organization, and, by default or with intention, the abusers. As Bishop Wright had said but a few days earlier, the jurisdiction was not in a position to help the victims anyways, thus the conclusion being doing the right thing was not feasible. In this meeting and their quest for information I again informed them of the information they already had with respect to the documented case. I then brought to light and questioned why the pastor had been removed from one church and allowed to become pastor again in another church. They informed me I was at the meeting to provide them with actionable information and not to question the jurisdiction's actions and decisions. With respect to the accused elder involved with the numerous musical groups they asked for proof or validation and I turned to Superintendent McKinley Johnson. Just 5 days prior, McKinley sat in the room with the other superintendents and Dr. Guthrie as I played a portion of the aforementioned recording. When questioned by the Bishop's ad hoc council, McKinley both failed to reveal the comments on the recording as well as the participants and stated he heard some things but didn't know really exactly what he had heard. In the superintendents meeting McKinley sat no more than 5 feet from my left and when queried later all the other participants confirmed the recording its contents and participants. Moreover, the group at the superintendents meeting entered into conversation regarding what was on the tape, so clearly McKinley had heard the contents of the tape.

As attempts at reasonable and rational conversation had failed, I informed the group that my mission was to reveal the truth with the hope of doing so in a manner which led to correction and healing. I reminded them that I was not part of their church denomination and have no obligation to abide by their arbitrary rules and protocols. I also informed them that their unwillingness to investigate the claims on their own given both clear and cursory knowledge of abuse would lead me to taking additional necessary steps to ensure this issue was not once again "swept under the rug." I let them know that I was the gatekeeper of the information and that in this role I was responsible for the flow and dissemination of the information I had gathered.

While the issue of the pedophile pastor had been handled through resignation, the issue surrounding the elder involved with numerous musical groups was still on the agenda. It is my understanding the

elder in question was asked if he had abused any children to which he calmly answered he had not. It was further mentioned by a couple of those attending the questioning that the elder was devoid of emotion as such heinous accusations were levied against him. The accusations I had presented to the superintendents in recorded testimony concerning this elder were of pedophilia of an orgiastic nature involving numerous youth simultaneously. Nevertheless, upon answering in the negative the elder was released from the Bishop's council and remains an elder in COGIC to date.

It is my understanding, as corroborated by Bishop Wright and Bishop Melvin; the church organization must act on reasonable accusations of abuse as it relates to children. My understanding of the legal and ecclesiastic intent is to remove then evaluate when there is a question of child endangerment. So even when confronted with specific and direct information Bishop Wright has failed to act at the minimum standard of removing both a documented and an accused pedophile from their leadership roles within COGIC. Of far greater concern is the number of other similar cases which have likely gone through the ranks of COGIC and have fallen upon the deaf ears of Bishop Wright.

OPPORTUNITY TO ACT

On the advice and recommendation of Dr. Guthrie, I contacted Superintendent James Childs of Kingston. Dr. Guthrie believed the character, reasoning and temperament of Superintendent Childs would further the cause through the denomination. I had at best a vague memory of Superintendent Childs from my childhood though he had no direct memory of me. I met with Superintendent Childs and broadly detailed to him my findings and thoughts regarding the issue of pedophilia in the Albany area. As all those before him, including my own parents, Superintendent Childs questioned me with great skepticism both about the information I had provided him and my intentions and motivations. By this point I had become annoyed with the fact that one needed motives other than doing it because in such an abhorrent situation it was the right course of action. I explained to him how I had come to be involved with the situation through the apparent poor decision of allowing a known child predator to continue on as a pastor. Additionally, I explained to him that I had never been molested, had been wholly unaware of the Albany issues prior to the onset of the Blessed Hope project and couldn't understand how an entire community could suppress such despicable acts.

I left the conversation with Superintendent Childs with guarded optimism because, while he seemingly had reservations about the information I had provided for him and the scenario of generations long abuse, in the few hours we had spent I had witnessed his thoughtful process of evaluating a difficult situation. Like with Bishop Wright I was not seeking unearned agreement but inquiry and investigation which eventually could lead to correction and healing. After several days of silence, I reached out to Superintendent Childs and engaged him to look into some of these matters for himself. Not long thereafter I provided Superintendent Childs with one of the recorded conversations I had with a victim. Again, I waited for a response for several days. Not wanting to wait any longer for a response, I attended services in Kingston at Pointe of Praise on Father's Day of this year. In the gracious manner as he has demonstrated is his character Superintendent Childs invited me into his home with his family for dinner on his day. After dinner we discussed the contents of what he had heard on the recording I provided him and he expressed great concern about the nature and subsequent handling of the apparent crimes.

Given the knowledge of the abuse as detailed to him through my investigation, the recorded testimony of a victim, and the apparent reluctance of the jurisdictional governing body to act, Superintendent Childs agreed to attempt to put the issue in the hands of the national leadership of COGIC. Superintendent Childs brought the issue to a member of the COGIC General Board. The initial response by General Board member Bishop White was to offer an opportunity to bring to the Board the findings and context of the pedophilia activity in the Capital District area. Though like much of what I have seen within COGIC the flame for inquiry was short lived and since that initial response there has been silence on the national front.

PROTECTING PEDOPHILES

In the course of my continuing investigation to better understand and quantify the problem of pedophilia within the local COGIC churches I set up a meeting with Superintendent McKinley Johnson. Many of the victims and abusers had strong ties to St. John's and much of the direct and referential information included the involvement of the past and present leadership of St. John's as complicit in the concealment of the crimes. In meeting with Superintendent Johnson, he brought along his son Elder Bernard Johnson. I wanted to provide McKinley the opportunity to tell his side of the story as to his knowledge and or role in the incidents or cover-ups. I inquired as to the validity of information concerning his son-in-law at which time McKinley refused to enter into conversation regarding this topic. Moreover, he questioned whether I was willing to expose truths about my own family in the quest for truth. I responded the truth is the truth and right is right. The conversation continued in an unresponsive manner with McKinley and Bernard both saying my path was going to start a fire which could not be controlled. The implicit reasoning that the generations of abuse was not worthy of the wildfire it would cause in bringing the wickedness to light failed to sway me from the path. In closing, Superintendent McKinley removed his glasses and requested I look in his eyes so I could tell he was telling the truth as he denied "knowing" about the issues of pedophilia in the area. Furthermore, he placed his hand on my shoulder as he looked into my eyes and warned me that he was "praying for my safety." The veiled threat having been understood I informed him that I had long since expected the possibility of my own endangerment and had taken steps to ensure that the contents and context of my investigation would survive my own demise. I then cautioned him that in my hands the information was being handled delicately but in the hands of those whom I had entrusted such grace would not be shown and that while I sought not to dig up graves such discretion would not be exhibited from my confidants.

I also engaged in a conversation with Pastor Christina Guthrie-Stanton of Empire Christian Center. I had grown up with Christina Guthrie in my pre-teen adolescence but had no contact with her since that time. Through a number of people in the church community I had surmised she was aware of child abuse within COGIC. In our meeting she admitted to having been made aware of numerous cases of pedophilic activity within the local church community. While the majority of the abuse cases I had been made aware of involved boys and men, Christina opened my eyes to the vastness of female based pedophilia activity as abusers and abused. She detailed a particular case of a 15 year old female who had come to her mentoring program and she detected a homosexual presence in the young lady. The following week Pastor Guthrie-Stanton said the young girl confessed abuse she had endured at the hands of her babysitter a woman in leadership at a local COGIC church. Realizing this case, unlike the majority of the other cases, was active in the sense the young lady was still a minor and the events had occurred quite recently I challenged Christina to act. Her response was that as a spiritual leader and confidant to the adolescent she was not compelled to bring this abuse to the authorities. I strongly dissented with her opinion though she had not provided me with enough information to act on my own.

FACT NOT FICTION

I have had numerous conversations with dozens if not hundreds of individuals over the past several months. Some people have come forward and expressed to me stories of abuse endured as a child they had never told anyone prior. A few have detailed long standing explicit abuse at the hands of clergy and church members. Others have expressed their own involvement yet a deliberate unwillingness to go against the grain and publicly disclose the abuse they endured. Others have said they would react only at the involvement of the law. Most have admitted some cursory knowledge of events regarding pedophilia though have chosen not to get involved. So many parents, like my own, have noted they kept their children away from certain individuals because of what they sensed or had heard and out of certain situations because of their knowledge of abuse occurring in similar situations.

The spirit of secrecy and darkness overwhelms that which is right and righteous. Not being a member of this church community I cannot understand how this community can reconcile acts against the base genetic code God has implanted in all of his children with the apathy, willful concealment and direct abuse which occurs here. As I recount my experience with both past and present members of this church community I get the response that I, Chris Davis, am so courageous in confronting this issue. I am appalled by such responses because I cannot see how this community, a community based on the belief in God, could not have come to the conclusion to act generations ago and cast out the demon spirit of pedophilia from the aisles and pulpits of the churches. This group silence dynamic reminds me of a recent tragedy in Chicago where a much larger group of people witnessed the beating death of a teenage boy by a few unarmed bullies yet did nothing to save the boy's life. This is a community which has played spectator to decades of abuse, abuse which has led to death, destruction and continued depravity. A very dear and loved father figure and advisor to me hurt me to the core without knowing recently. As a highly respected member of your church and secular community and having been privy to my inquiries from the early onset he questioned whether or not bringing this darkness to the light was the right thing. From others I would expect this, knowing he was not actually questioning my motives as he understands they are based in my inability to reconcile incongruent facts, I became painfully aware of how fully encompassing is the conditioning within the community. I also became aware that I am the catalyst for this endeavor because no one within the community could be carnally expected to forsake all that which they are connected to even given the stakes involved. Even in the knowledge, understanding and within the grace of God we as people remain carnal. As often said by a friend's grandmother "I don't have a nickel in that quarter" so that which would be suicide to you is simple for me. In bringing a spotlight to that dark corner this community can no longer deny that which you see, know or has been made apparent. For while the light was not cast upon the problem you could deny its existence, deny it now at the peril of your own salvation for in judgment we stand alone.

COWARDICE, COURAGE AND CHANGE

In failing to present that which you know for fear of judgment by the church denomination, you have forced judgment on the next generation of abused, for fear of involvement, you have involved children of the next generation in the ills of past generations, for fear of embarrassment you have ensured the embarrassment of the next generations. For fear of clinging to what is true and what is right and what is just you are insuring a continued lie, upholding that which is wrong and empowering the unjust.

The future is in our collective hands but know failure to act will ensure a continued result. Failure to confront the wickedness and those who would seek to conceal it guarantee continued systematic protection of those who carry out pedophilic acts against children. Those who have been abused, the victims of predators, have an incredible power that none other possesses, the power to set right that which is wrong, to break the chain so that the next generations need not suffer the ills of the past generations.

Those families who have been scarred by the abusers and the concealers of truths, I admonish you to come forward to tell your stories and let the record reflect the truth. Too long has this systematic and systemic abuse been "swept under the rug." The time to act is now, let us not let another child be the victim of our own selfishness our unwillingness to be involved in ending this abominable generational abuse.

I am constantly and continually amazed by the reluctance of this community to take responsibility for corrective action. When faced with the option of action or inaction one must consider the results of each. Inaction assures a continuance of the perpetual abuse of children and moreover the continuance of systematic protections. Action provides for the real opportunity to direct a future in which the churches are not havens for pedophiles and a future where children have not to endure molestation and rape at the hands of known pedophiles due to a community's apathy. Be not that image of men, your Bishops who lack the moral fortitude to act, your superintendents who were complicit in covering up offenses, your pastors who follow orders not to engage in exposing the despicable acts and you the abused, the families, and friends of abused who have been conditioned into inaction by your oppressors in defiance of God, the image in which we are all made.

CONDITIONED, CONFINED AND CAPTIVE

While I had learned that slavery was abolished in 1865, what I wasn't told is that it ended. For this community the slavery has not ended. The conditioning and confinement required to conceal the nature of such heinous crimes against children could only be the accomplishment of an enslaved society. The titles have changed with the masters having been replaced with pastors and the fields with churches but the enslavement continues. A leader recently told me the problem with the denomination is peoples' refusal to think and blindly follow leaders, like lemmings off a cliff. The only thing which makes humans different from the rest of animals is 2% of their DNA which is responsible for our cognition, the ability to process thoughts. My inability to reconcile that which I discovered and uncovered given the guiding principles of the group with which I was dealing led to the conclusion that if I was unable to reason an answer one of my assumptions was incorrect. I have a community who as their base principles are taught of right and wrong of good and evil, even with the grace and compassion to deal with those principles, yet there exists a clear and decisive unwillingness to uphold and act on those principles. The conclusion is that I have implicitly assumed people, you the church community, are thinking.

The paradigm in COGIC is one where the pastor has become the focal point of the congregation and the church. The conditioning has placed more importance and sanctity with the leadership, particularly the pastors, superintendents and bishops than with the sanctity of the word of God. How else does one explain the silence of such acts against children, known at some level by the majority of the community, yet not dealt with even though in clear conflict with the fundamental teachings of right and wrong and good and evil found in the bible?

A good instrument looks to be kept sharp, clean, and well tooled so as to serve its function. If a leader is an instrument of God should they not want to be kept mentally sharp and clean, challenged and questioned to ensure they are maintained in top condition? I had the opportunity to visit a local church recently, one which is plagued with generations of pedophilic activity. Upon entering the sanctuary I felt as though I had walked into a wax museum where nothing had changed in the past 30 years since I had been there last. To hearken back to an earlier time and generation the church was hot and people were still using wooden handled hand fans, the preacher shouted in an inaudible tone which made the for the impossibility of receiving the message yet and still an older woman continued an almost scripted answer and retort with the preacher so as to affirm the congregation was involved. If this is the instrument by which you are to get a clearer vision and understanding of God, what are you seeing?

Leadership is to be an instrument of clarity for your relationship with God, but never to detract from or endanger that relationship on which your judgment rests. The issues of pedophilia within the church organization and how they have been mishandled by leadership should serve as a clear and constant reminder of your need to focus on what you know to be true and right. I implore you to look to your leaders for guidance but to do so in a manner which you do not have to compromise your relationship with God. I am so troubled by the fear and deference shown to leadership particularly when if but a modicum of that same fear and deference were shown for God this atrocity of abuse would have been derailed so long ago.

CHOICE: LIVE OR PERISH

The moral compass of a community which allows this scope of such wickedness is so far askew the road to restoration is one which will be long and winding. But there is hope because there is God. I ask you not to turn away from your pastors and leaders but to focus on God and His word, question those things which you have come to know, divide dogma, decree and doctrine from divinity. In this quest for those basic and fundamental truths the choices facing you become simple. But because a decision is simple does not mean that it is not hard work.

You have been in a coma, not living but existing. I have been summoned here to wake you up. Now that you are awake you have a choice to make, to choose life or to perish. The cloud over Albany which so many of you speak of is the cloud of protection and restraint. It is only through the grace of God you have been spared and your life-support tended to but in that state you cannot and do not enjoy that which comes with conscious living. In your slumber of existence God has provided you protection much as the hull to the seed. But much like the hull which protects the seed for a time, until that hull is removed and the seed exposed to the elements growth cannot and will not occur. Seeds are full of perpetual potential when exposed to the elements being allowed to grow into a plant or tree which can provide fruit which in turn can produce many more seeds. In the same that seed can overtime slowly wither in some storeroom losing its potential due to inactivity and thus decay. I am here merely to expose you to the elements and remove you from the storeroom; should you choose to refuse to plant and tend to your seed you will perish. The seed about which I speak is the one that God has provided man that he didn't to his other creations, cognition, the ability to reason, think and subsequently act. We as humans are seeds, while individually what we do here on earth is limited to our biological existence that which we imprint, those ideas and works we do, can and do live on for the future generations. Should you choose to live, to think, to reason, plant and tend to your seed, Our Father has promised the increase. Should you choose to lie fallow when exposed to the elements nature will take its course and you will perish, having been full of potential yet having never grown. It's often spoken about the seeds of destruction as though they grow and bear bad fruit. I beg to differ, the seeds of destruction are those which do not grow but in not doing so convince other seeds to not grow and perpetuate death. Be wary of those who would not have you think, those who would steal from you that which God gave to man in the Garden of Eden, choice. Be not enslaved by another man's thoughts for in doing so it is impossible to serve God, God who has given and charged us with the opportunity and obligation to think.

Before you can plant your seed you must tend to the field, clear away the brush and weeds that has grown whilst untended, turn over the soil to provide fertile nutrients from below, and construct a new storeroom to protect the seeds of future crops. I cannot tell you what to do or what to think and have no interest in interfering with your choice. I am but here to let you know you are now awake and that the choice is yours, live or perish.

LIARS AND THEIVES

Be not liars to yourself, believing that concealing the depravity and the truth frees you from the obligation of knowing. Be not liars to yourself, being armed with the knowledge of wrong doing that you are not to employ wisdom and understanding. Be not liars to yourself, that the trinity of knowledge, wisdom and understanding would lead you away from action in dealing with pedophiles within your own church. Be not liars to yourself, believing that grace and repentance repeals the fundamental principle that we must reap that which we sow. Be not liars to yourself, trusting that the words of your leaders supplant your obligation to come to your own resolve. Be not liars to your brothers and sisters, concealing the truth at the expense of another's injustice.

Be not thieves of children, in which your silence demands they pay with the price with their innocence. Be not thieves of the unarmed innocent, because your internal depravity would seek to steal away their purity. Be not thieves of freedom, because you demand unwarranted enslavement in the field of the church. Be not thieves of humanity, because you seek to enslave others to your own thoughts and unrighteousness cloaked in the name of God. Be not thieves of the opportunity of the ignorant of exposure to know God, because they see the wickedness rampant throughout the churches. Be not thieves of your brothers' flock, like a vulture festering on the carcasses of discontent. Be not thieves of Caesar, because you have chosen to preside and judge those matters which Christ has said are for Caesar. Be not thieves of Our Father, because you demand the fear and obedience which belongs only to Him.

The answer regarding the preponderance of not just sinful but the most reprehensible immoral behavior within the churches is simple: liars and thieves don't trust one another. Why within the churches where there should exist harmony and unity with a singular mission of ascension is there turmoil: liars and thieves don't trust one another. Why is there such complexity in the tales of woe within the church when the truth is so simple: liars and thieves don't trust one another.

CALL TO ARMS

I am calling on you predators to turn from the nature of your wickedness and to choose life and understand we reap that which we sow to choose life and with that the opportunity to gain peace and earn repentance to choose life and live it abundantly.

I am calling on you parents to protect your children and the children of your brothers and sisters from the wiles of the wicked to choose life and expose the scars and darkness not to exist as the helpless but to choose life and live it abundantly.

I am calling upon you the abused to unveil the cloak of secrecy to choose life and air the wounds so that they may heal to not merely exist as the disenfranchised but to choose life and live it abundantly.

I am calling upon you the concealers to confess the wickedness to choose life and live it abundantly.

I am calling upon you leaders to lead by example to choose life and understand your role as clarifier and magnifier not an obscurer to choose life and live it abundantly.

I am calling on you Pastors to relinquish the reigns of the slave master and through your acts of devotion to your flock prove yourself worthy to choose life and realize in doing so you will water the seeds within your own churches to grow to choose life not to merely exist as an enslaver but to live as helper and manager to choose life and to live it abundantly.

I am calling upon you Bishops to prepare yourself for the coming storm to choose life to prepare future generations through thoughtful organization not to merely exist in the constructs of the past but to choose life and live it abundantly.

I am calling upon myself awakened from my slumber to choose life to think and produce thinking in the minds of others not merely to exist as a drifter through life but to choose life and live it abundantly.

I am calling upon you the children of God, made in his image, to cling to humanity, to think, to know and act upon that which is right and rebuke that which is wrong, to show a healthy fear of God, to respect your leaders, to never supplant doctrine for divinity, to know and understand that you will sit in judgment alone and that your works and deeds are yours alone to choose life and live it abundantly.

You are now awake, do not deny your existence because in doing so you will perish. That covering which has maintained and preserved the conditions here in Albany is being lifted. If you choose to live know you are free to act but bound to think.

