

IMBKCAC

I AM MY BROTHER'S KEEPER CHRISTIAN ADVOCACY COUNCIL
TAKING A STAND FOR SURVIVORS OF CHURCH RELATED ABUSE
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ADVOCACY HOTLINE
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11/03/2017

The Most Reverend Bishop Charles E. Blake
Presiding Bishop Church Of God In Christ Inc. Memphis, TN.
Wes Angeles COGIC
3045 Crenshaw Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA. 90016

Dear Presiding Bishop Blake,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who was, who is and who is to come!

Bishop, it has been quite some time since we last spoke, however I write to remind you of the concern that I have regarding our great obligation toward survivors of clergy and church related sexual abuse and clergy sexual sins.

I need not remind you that sexual abuse is a devastating plague, effecting over some 60 million American citizens. Nearly 25% of women and 20% of men have been abused at some point in their lifetimes. It is estimated that roughly 90% of offenders have no prior or previous criminal background or history and, in the majority of cases, are familiar with their victims both socially and casually. What makes matters even worse is that by far and large, the actions of most criminals go unreported.

Similar to the fallout experienced in the world, the church has not actually shown themselves to be any better in resolving issues pertaining to crimes of sexual abuse. While claiming to be a place of healing, what we have actually done is provide a set of instructions to criminals on what their due process rights are, while offering nothing but prayers and even chastisements to survivors and victims.

Since I have been actively engaged and vocal in this area of reform within our church, we have begun background screenings and sexual harassment training that is now standard from coast to coast for clergy personnel. However, a cursory glimpse of our sexual harassment policy and clergy black book and green & white supplements display a robust set of instructions directed towards the the rights of alleged perpetrators of

crimes and those who have committed criminal sins, which very little to nothing offered to victims except instructions to contact proper authorities.

Quite frankly, I find it hard to believe that as a church we are taking the welfare of victims seriously when nearly every measure that has been taken to "prevent" sexual misconduct provide, if not instruct, the alleged perpetrators of the crimes on their due process rights and basically how to secure themselves and their ministerial futures.

One would think that in light of the serious fallout and devastating effects of sexual perversion that have been displayed on the news, that our organization would take the lead in dealing skillfully with survivors and seek to assure the public that our churches are a safe place for all worshipers, and for those recovering from all forms of abuse. However, to simply say such means little if we are not carefully, thoroughly and honestly evaluated.

That's why we have created the "Safe Church Certification" program which is a church evaluation process examining the structure of individual churches, the relationship of ministers and church leaders to their respective congregations and organizational preparedness in dealing with those who have been victimized by these deadly and ungodly acts and sins.

Bishop, I believe that we should not only make sure that incidents of sexual impropriety are avoided, but also minister to those who have suffered victimization at the hands of church personnel helping them to become re-integrated back into the community of faith, with the goal of fostering opportunities for individual and family transformation and renewal.

While I don't believe that anyone's constitutional rights are checked at our doors, I do believe that we have a higher moral duty towards them that have been abused and a greater priority to restore trust which has been compromised under our banner the name of Christ.

I know that you do not set the rule of the church by yourself. I am aware that it takes many moving parts and many people dedicated to change in order for change to occur. It is my hope in making this appeal to you, that you would encourage your peers and the church in general to seriously undertake a true and sincere victim's advocacy as we continue to outline, and help us take measures to the floor of the General Assembly so that the

church can forge and adopt a solid plan that will not only pay great dividends in our current political and social climate, but within our church for generations to come.

I would appreciate your leadership and input in this vitally important area in securing and restoring the faith and trust of those among us that have survived these dastardly acts. It is my pleasure and the pleasure of IMBKCAC to avail ourselves to the continued restoration process and removal of shame that survivors of sexual abuse often experience.

I would love to meet and discuss this and the implementation of a Victims Advocacy Plan in personal council with you and or your staff during our 110th Annual Holy Convocation if a small amount of time can be spared for such conversation. Please feel free to have your assistants contact me at either (800)728-0352 or by email at Dunamis1@netzero.com. I would be thrilled to display just what a COGIC Victims Advocacy Plan should look like and what a Safe Church Certification entails.

Thank you and may the Lord continue to bless you and your family and our church in each and every way.
Thank you.

In HIS Service,

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Supt. Harvey Burnett

IMBKCAC ~ Executive Director

New Bethel COGIC

Il. 3rd Jurisdiction

Bishop Robert R. Sanders