

September 8, 2021

Steve Gaskins
Michael Manfredi
Roland Smith
Kevin Elwell
Adam Jeantet

RE: Request for Biblical Conflict Resolution

Dear Steve, Mike, Roland, Kevin, and Adam:

I want to begin this note by recognizing a few eternal truths: as followers of Jesus, we are part of the same eternal family. We are called to love one another as a visible representation of how Jesus first loved us. None of us are perfect. We are all sinners desperately in need of God's grace, and we have received that grace in and only by faith through Christ and His redeeming work on the cross.

In light of the grace we have each received in Christ and the status it accords us as members of one family, my hope is that we might be able to again experience peace together. Over these past few months, I have been praying daily and asking the Lord for wisdom and discernment regarding how we might best pursue our shared calling toward biblical peace.

I do have to admit I am still a little unclear on the exact nature of the current conflict, as my earlier requests to meet personally with Jeremiah Burke (the leader of the "Save MBC" group) and with you, Steve, were rejected. As best I can tell, though, the group with which each of you have associated - "Save MBC" - is actively seeking to remove the pastors and elders at MBC so that you can "take back the church." People associated with the "Save MBC" group are posting personal attacks online almost daily. These attacks are being regularly circulated to large distribution lists via email. Partnerships have been formed with secular media, with numerous private church documents provided to secular media companies for publication. Online personalities are now making large amounts of money by posting additional videos highlighting and inflaming the conflict at MBC. And each of you have now personally filed a lawsuit against the elders of the church individually and against McLean Bible Church as a whole.

There is much that could be said here about the conduct above and the ways in which the church must now respond. In the spirit of genuinely pursuing peace and reconciliation first, however, I want to offer an alternate path forward where we can actually get together in person, pray together, and talk through the present conflict as we explore potential ways to resolve this matter without resorting to online attacks and adversarial proceedings in secular courts.

To that end, the elders of MBC have unanimously authorized me to invite each of you to personally participate in mediated dispute resolution to be facilitated by a trained Christian conciliator. There are a number of organizations that provide this service, including Peacemakers, The Institute for Christian Conciliation, The Christian Legal Society, and others. In short, this process would be designed to help us pursue peace, resolution, and reconciliation together through a mediated agreement. There are several details we will need to address, including the appointment of a trained and licensed Christian mediator and the selection of a date in the near future for this process to take place.

If any of you are open to joining in this step toward biblical conflict resolution, please let me know as soon as possible. In addition, if there are any others in the “Save MBC” group who would benefit from this mediated process, especially those who continue to directly lead the group like Jeremiah Burke, Laura Burke, Mike Lynch, Sal Cordova, Abby Peregrino, Paul Peregrino, Jim Powers, or others, please let me know and I will consider how we might best be able to include them as a part of this conflict resolution process.

I look forward to hearing back from each of you soon.



Prayerfully,
Wade Burnett