

Tokoroa Elim Church
P O Box 415
Tokoroa

Wednesday, 6 February 2008 [edits 3/5/2018]

Re: Apology in relation to the letter dated 5 December 2007 and subsequent matters of concern.

I wish to apologise for the vindictive manner in which I published the letter regarding "My description and recollection of events surrounding the issues that developed between Barbara Taylor, Pastor Brian Hagger, his wife Lorraine, the Tokoroa Elim Church and myself." I observe that publishing that letter on the internet without at least giving opportunity for Brian and Lorraine, along with the Eldership, to respond to the questions raised was unfair. The letter was published on the internet on the 6th and withdrawn on the 12th, the same day as the Elders meeting at which it was presented.

As to the demand made by Brian Hagger and subsequently by the Eldership given to me verbally at the meeting dated 9th January 2008, I am unwilling to apologise. I believe the demand was unfair as, clearly, I was not permitted to speak or communicate freely as I believe I am entitled to do.

I make the following explanation of matters which are to me, and I think should be to anyone associated with this fellowship, of concern. It is assumed that the hearer or reader is familiar with the contents of the first letter mentioned above.

I learned on the 7th of December 2007, since penning the letter, that Brian and Lorraine had instructed their solicitor to write a letter dated 27th November 2007 to Barbara Taylor stating in paragraph two, "Mr Hagger confirms that he and his wife have never intended nor do they wish to make any monetary profit by the purchase of the property by themselves and then on transfer to you." The words "have never intended" were and remain in conflict with my understanding of what has transpired between Barbara Taylor and Brian & Lorraine Hagger. I wish to point out that Barbara was not conscious of that particular statement in the letter until my exclamation of it to her when I read it that same evening.

At that point it was not completely clear to me what that solicitor's letter implied. I did, and still do believe, that the statement highlighted above was a lie. Also at that point, I had no evidence apart from my own observation of Brian and Lorraine's words and actions (e.g. "why would I enter such an arrangement without profiting by it in some way?") and Barbara's statements to me: that Brian had made comments to Barbara suggestive of the idea that Brian and Lorraine were contemplating keeping the house and allowing Barbara to use it on a rental basis until such time as she had no need for it; that Brian had asked for \$10,000.00 for his services to Barbara should the house ever be sold; and that \$15,000.00 was demanded by him for his help to her in purchasing the house in their meeting with the mortgage broker on or about the 14th of October 2007.

On the 12th of December 2007, I requested that Barbara provide what documentation she could find in relation to these matters. She agreed to do so and noted the mortgage proposal which she had previously been unsure as to whether she had. I had on a previous occasion asked if there was any such documentation. On that occasion she had stated that she knew of no such document in her possession. This

document clearly shows that an amount of \$15,000.00 was made by someone. Further, by the nature of the document, it would not have been possible for Barbara to produce such a document without considerable effort, foresight, and devious intent. It is and was obvious to me that none of those conditions existed and that realistically, such a document could not be fabricated by her. Given those factors, and the date that it was prepared, 24th October 2007, and that Barbara did not know or expect that Brian and Lorraine would dispute that a financial demand was made to her until the 7th of December 2007, I was satisfied that Barbara's position and testimony were adequately documented. However, the Eldership have not sighted and do not wish to sight that original document and have deemed it ambiguous and therefore without significance. That position I consider perplexing.

At the Elders meeting on the 12th December 2007, I was not completely certain that the solicitor for Brian and Lorraine had correctly stated their position, that they "have never intended" to profit from this arrangement. When Brian made reference to that letter in the meeting, I was certain then, that this statement was clearly intended and that there was a clear contradiction. Someone is lying.

What then, is the significance of these matters now? Do I and everyone else ignore that there is a question surrounding a demand for \$15,000.00? If it is unclear that Brian made such a demand then ought there not be at least a caution that this situation is in question and that a careful study of the situation is warranted? I wish to make some observations which, for me makes the answer to this question self evident.

[1.] Put yourself in Brian's shoes, what would be your likely approach to Barbara's position under these circumstances? You have secured a home on her behalf and over the course of time you rethink the situation. "I am helping Barbara for free. Hmm. It might be reasonable to make a charge for the favour I am doing her." Or, you might think "I am glad that I am helping Barbara. Perhaps she could be a little more grateful, but, no matter. God is pleased with me." Which ever state your mind might take, you would have some idea as to what course your mind might take whether it is something like what I have stated or something else entirely.

[a.] Brian has clearly stated that it is possible that he did indeed make a demand for \$15,000.00.

Barbara has clearly stated that he did make such a demand and has not deviated from that statement from the outset.

[b.] Brian has clearly stated in my and Barbara's hearing that he would wish to profit from this situation.

[c.] That it is confirmed that he definitely did not at any time wish to profit in any way, that he may have inadvertently asked for \$15,000.00 and if he did he does not remember doing it.

To my understanding, there are some clear inconsistencies in his statements.

[2.] Another observation is that we know ourselves well enough to know, regardless of whether we remember it or not, whether we are the kind of persons that would ask for [more] money for doing someone a favour after having already agreed to do it without charge [or having already agreed to price]. Brian seems to be saying that he is just such a person that might ask under those circumstances.

[3.] A further observation is that the non-trivial amount in question makes the situation binary. Brian either knows that that he did ask for \$15,000.00 or he knows that he did not ask for \$15,000.00. There is no third option. I say that because it is

not possible under normal circumstances for a person of sound mind to ask for and expect to receive \$15,000.00 without remembering that he or she did so. A person might forget \$15.00 within a month or so. A person might forget \$150.00 within a year or so. A person would not forget \$1,500.00. A person would definitely not forget \$15,000.00.

If I were to make a charge for money, I would be spending it in my head, planning ahead. If I were to ask for \$15.00 I might be thinking of buying some lunch; \$150.00 I might be thinking of dinner with my wife; \$1,500.00 I might be thinking of a new computer; \$15,000.00 I might be extending the house or considering buying one or a new vehicle. Not an easily forgotten train of thought.

It seems clear to me that in financial matters, we all seem to have uncannily good memory. Debts of money seem to be the last thing we forget. Is Brian an exception to this? The magnitude of the amount strongly suggests that the situation is very black and white or binary. We don't "maybe" or inadvertently ask for \$15,000.00. We did or we didn't. We don't forget such large amounts of money.

In light of these observations, is it not now clear that \$15,000.00 was indeed demanded just as Barbara has stated?

I am concerned that at this late stage, the leadership have not yet followed any form of procedure, policy or guidelines that I am aware of. There seems to be an unwillingness or inability to properly investigate and process these issues. The communications and form of the meetings to date, seem to me to be lacking in structure, purpose and do not provide adequate security for those who might be abused by them, myself included. Given the seriousness of these issues and the inflammatory nature of this situation I am of the opinion that, a prior and published agenda, standardized and predictable form, and clear guidelines for how and when parties are to present to these meetings is warranted. As it is, it appears that no-one, including myself, is certain as to what, when or how to make proper contribution to the meetings thus far. The messages I am getting are largely either absent or unclear to me.

From my first learning of this situation between Barbara and the Hagers, my concern was that there might be an abusive relationship setup between them. As time progressed my concerns were deepened. However, after our second meeting between Brian, Barbara and myself, I was satisfied that Brian had put right what had appeared to be a problem. For my part, that should and would have been the end of the matter.

When I received the rent demand, I started to believe that rather than having solved this issue, Brian had decided to escalate the apparently abusive relationship with Barbara, to include me by using his position in the running of the Church facility.

I believe now that my approach to the leadership however badly conceived, rather than resolve this situation, the leadership has thus far, only served to escalate the abuse. A clear example for me is the use of the term 'robber' to describe me.

Brian asked me on Monday, 7th January 2008, what amount I considered reasonable for a weekly rental of the office I occupied. My answer, a guess of \$20.00 per week, was then used to say on the 9th that, "by my own words, I have robbed the church of \$860.00." An amount which is described by both the Eldership and Brian as very conservative. Such reasoning defies any system of logic I am aware of.

If I were to offer a sack of potatoes to my friend once a week for a period of weeks, say ten weeks. He accepts my gift. At the end of ten weeks, I turn to him and ask him "how much do you think a sack of potatoes is worth?" He answers, "Maybe \$10.00 per

sack." The next day I approach him and say, "by your own words you agree that those potatoes are worth a total of \$100.00. You have robbed me of \$100.00. You have opened those sacks, boiled those potatoes, and eaten. In doing so you have robbed me." How do you answer me? What would you think of my reasoning? Is this not precisely the method of reasoning Brian has used and the Eldership agreed to?

In my efforts to alert the Eldership and others, of the serious nature of these problems, rather than find a solution to them or establish a way forward, the situation to me, seems to have worsened whether by design or neglect or something else equally unpalatable. Personally, I seem to have been afforded no protection from the demands made by Brian who, to my way of thinking, is clearly the character in question. The Eldership have clearly stated in my hearing that they were unable to determine who is at fault, and despite this, have allowed Brian to act with little or no restraint. Every demand he has made, that I know of, has been agreed to either largely or completely by the Eldership. I have been evicted from the premises, I have been labelled a 'robber', I have been asked to apologise without the freedom to defend myself or offer explanation or deviate from a censored document which I must agree to write or be disfellowshipped from this church. This document, which clearly does not comply with what has been demanded, is my reply to those demands and if you are hearing or reading this, then perhaps some progress may have been made after all.

Should the leadership continue to act as though the Hagers actions thus far are above reproach I for one will be deeply concerned, not just for my own safety but for my family and all those under this fellowship's sphere of influence.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Wilson.