

We, the children of Community Chapel during the 1970s and 80s, would like to formally acknowledge the passing of Donald Lee Barnett.

Because our experiences are so vastly different from those of our parents and leaders, you who chose to follow Don of your own volition, we feel compelled to speak out on behalf of our generation. We want the truth of what we experienced to be known. It is a painful truth that many do not want to hear, but truth carries with it the opportunity for freedom—both ours and yours.

In early February, just weeks after what we now know to be the date of Don's passing, many of the Community Chapel Christian School youth began interacting with one another again, on an old forum that took a new direction. We began to tell our stories—remembering our teachers, our classroom antics, our friendships, and our earliest faith experiences. More former students joined the conversation as the sharing continued, and bonds of friendship that had been lost—many of them abruptly on a Friday night in February 1988, exactly 30 years earlier—had reemerged again.

And in this safe place, the brave among us began to share the darker parts of their stories:

- The despair so deep he tried to end his life.
- The shame and fear from being disfellowshipped, shunned by her own parents, and estranged from every friend she'd ever known, at the age of 15.
- The world-shattering pain when her father chose another woman's family over his own.
- The deep grief from losing lifelong friends to drug addiction and mental illness.
- And then there was the disgust more than a few felt when an innocent picture of the CCBTC parking lot, of all things, was posted. Buried memories emerged of when "the love of God" was "ministered" to 14- and 15-year-old girls in the cars of married men. Thirty years later, we know there's a different name for what was done to these young girls. It was sexual abuse and it's illegal.

Finally, we shared the confusion and anger many of us carried for years—and many still carry—over how this all could have possibly been done in the name of a loving, forgiving, and just God.

As we shared our memories, some never before spoken aloud, we began to weep together and experience the kind of healing that only comes when a wound is allowed to be aired out. The kind of healing that comes when there is understanding and compassion from those who know exactly what you've experienced.

We share our stories with you now, not because we are intent on maligning a man's legacy—let the cards fall where they will for that—but in hopes that maybe some of you contemplating his legacy will finally hear our voices. The passing of Community Chapel's founder has, whether by providence or coincidence, become a memorial for the children of Community Chapel. In the days and weeks that followed his then-unknown death, we found support from one another and a safe place to be heard. And much that had remained in the shadowy corners of our hearts finally made its way into the light.

We are grateful for those who were in positions of leadership at the Chapel—teachers, elders, and others—who have communicated to us their sorrow and repentance over what we endured. You have brought us healing when you have come to us in humility and without excuses, acknowledging what you had done, or the system of control you supported, or simply what you allowed by ignorance or inaction. We sincerely thank each of you who took the time to do that. We sincerely thank those of our parents who have done the same.

And if there are more of you whose hearts might be moved to do likewise, or to do it again when more of us are now listening (more than 400 of us at last count), we welcome you to do so.

These are the grievances we feel merit acknowledgment:

- If you broke the vows of marriage and the trust of your children and called it holy, it was wrong, and you wounded us.
- If you judged or punished us harshly for "worldly" behaviors such as listening to secular music or sneaking to a movie, while defending lust and selfishness that was destroying lives, it was wrong, and you wounded us.
- If you counseled our parents into adultery instead of protecting the family unit, in support of an indefensible and unscriptural doctrine, it was wrong, and you wounded us.

- If you took part in or supported the brash and un-Christlike policy of disfellowshipping “rebellious” teens and even pre-teens—or as we see them, confused and angry youth dealing with strife in their homes—it was wrong, and you wounded us.
- If you ignored our basic needs for food, shelter, sleep, safety, and parental relationship while spending countless hours pursuing the next move of the spirit, gazing in your connection’s eyes, or “ministering” to others, it was wrong, and you wounded us.
- If you subjected us to an abusive and confusing “deliverance” session without regard for our free will and basic dignity, it was wrong, and you wounded us.
- If you pressured a child or teen into forming a “connection” with an adult and subjected us to inappropriate kissing and touching at a vulnerable time in our development—or if you made us feel less spiritual if we didn’t do so, it was wrong and you wounded us.
- If you knew about the abuse or molestation of a child or teen and protected the abuser with your silence, it was wrong and evil, and you wounded us. It was also illegal.
- If you placed blame for abuse or molestation on a child rather than on the perpetrator, called him or her promiscuous, deceptive, or otherwise responsible, it was wrong and evil, and you wounded us.
- If you counseled a teenager to get an abortion to protect the image of the church, or counseled one of our mothers to get an abortion because you thought our families were too poor and didn’t want us to be a burden on the church, or if you knew of those in leadership who did so and said nothing, it was wrong and you wounded us.
- If you discouraged us from pursuing a higher education or neglected to prepare us for the real world in relation to career or finances because the imminent rapture would make those pursuits worthless, it was wrong, and you wounded us.
- And if you passed onto us the spiritual and psychological abuse and the emotional manipulation that you yourselves were subject to, instead of protecting us, it was wrong, and you wounded us.

These gross offenses are not one person’s story. They are the experiences, in many cases, of dozens. They also are not the whole of what was experienced, as many among us have not yet found the strength to utter what was endured. And while we may not know every child’s story, what we do know is that the Chapel legacy for dozens and possibly even hundreds of us has included at least one of the following: post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, suicide, symptoms of sexual abuse even for those who were not directly abused, night terrors, phobias, inability to trust, alcoholism, sex addiction, drug addiction, depression, rage, anxiety and panic attacks, divorce, debilitating shame, confusion that the world hasn’t ended despite regular indoctrination that we wouldn’t see adulthood, and the gnawing sense that our best efforts will never be good enough for our parents or for God.

Please hear our hearts — we know that many of our parents, leaders, and teachers loved us and had good intentions toward us. And we are grateful for many aspects of the foundation we received. But it is painful when the evil that was done to us is ignored, denied, justified, excused, and dismissed. When we have tried to talk to you and you have refused to hear us, or made no honest acknowledgment of what happened, or subjected us to nostalgic tales of glory and bliss or reprimanded us that we should move on and forgive, we feel the sting of our wounds all over again. Many of us have forgiven our transgressors and moved into greater emotional health, and many of us are still in that process. But whatever part of our journey we are in, we don’t consider the plea for honesty, for space to be heard, or in some cases, for justice, to be akin to bitterness or unforgiveness.

The simple truth is that the treatment of children on a macro level at the Chapel was nothing short of a travesty. Our collective prayer is that thirty years past, this truth will be heard, and our stories will matter in the final accounting of the legacy of the man who built and then tore down Community Chapel and Bible Training Center.

Signed by the children and former students of Community Chapel:

Abigail Faylor	Alison Clark (Alison Dahlin)	Amie Heasley
Amy Morris Mittelstaedt	Andrea Martin	Andrea Scantlin (Bowker)
Angela Estabrook	Angelica Aguirre (Bowker)	Angelo Lowrie
Anna Hamill	Anna McClusky (Fideler)	Anna Panasiuk
Annie Garrelts (Cobb)	April J. Robertson (April Grefthen Robertson)	Barbie Yokers
Becky Alberts Burnham	Bekki Stice (Hanson)	Bliss Reese (Menzel)
Brandi Babcock	Brenda Rice Frank	Brian Briggs

Brian Linderson	Brian MacPhail	Cami Bayer (Cooper)
Camille Wagner (Moore)	Carly Rose-Fufa	Carrie (Bergin) Fenner
Casey Colbern	Casey Faylor	Casey J Taylor
Cate Deluca (Marce Weidner)	Celeste Casello	Chani Hayes
Charlene Morgan	Chelsea Shaw	Chris Deluca
Chris Ellis	Christopher Gran	Christopher Metcalfe
Christy (Kamp) Bernabe	Christy Anderson	Crystal Campbell (Connon)
Crystal Kollias (Sanger)	D'Lynn Holloway (Weiss)	D-Ann Weller Ross
Dan Schmidt	Dana Larsson (Lowrie)	Danielle Haviland
Danielle Weller-Roche	Darcy Drake Gildon	Dave Todak
David Hicks	David Lister	Dawn Gaylor
Deanna Goble	Debbie Hiliker	Deborah Vasey
Dr. Kristine Mensonides Gritter	Emily Degenhardt (Hultkrantz)	Emma (Jemima) Skjonsby
Eric Jenott	Erik Willis	Erika Bandy
Erin Elise (Willis) Lister	Esteven Falcon Hayes (Steve Hayes)	Frank R Austin
Gabe Colbern	Geoff Ping	Glen White
Greg Heasley	Greta Guenther	Harvey Buck
Heather Slaminski	Heidi Andrade (Barta)	Hillary Dawn McElvain
Ian Frank	Israel Jeremiah Gamache	Jackson Brady DuBois
James Ochs Jr.	James Standridge	Jamie Koppang
Janna Wiley	Jason Benson	Jason Lister
Jason M. Mobley	Jason Webb	Jeffery Lufkin
Jennie Hultkrantz	Jennifer A Hieb (Konopka)	Jennifer Russell
Jennifer Withrow	Jeremy Cameron	Jesse Aaron Sanger
Jessica (Jessie) Case	Jessica Brown (St.Laurent)	Jessica Kolla (Dowling)
Jessie (Meyer) Williams	Jillian Wittman	Joan Sackett
Joe Fiene	Joe Miller	Joel Mensonides
Johanne Patterson	John Emory	Jonny Price
Julene Connon	Julie Yokers White	Karen Alberts
Karen Steinhauer	Kathleen Ochs (Marian Hicks)	Kay-C Hayden
Kelly L. Rumsey	Kerry Annette Wade	Kim Williams (Kimmy MacKenzie)
Krista Love	Kriste (Hanson) Solomon	Kristina Solheim
Krysti Mecham (Lockrem)	Laura Bell	Laura Lepasca
Leah Perez Rixmann	Lenette Feighner	Linda Ridley (Hicks)
Lisa Dandurand Davis	Lisa J. Yokers	Logan Jenott
Lori Alberts	Lori Baxter (Perez)	Luke Meier
Lydia Ashman (Yokers)	Lyndsay Burley (Lyndsay Shaw)	Mariam Burkett (Jackson)
Mary G.	Matt Eldridge	Melissa Davidson (Benson)
Micah Averiett (Heil)	Micah J McMonagle (Gibson)	Micah Knox
Michael Hansen	Michael Maurice	Michele Cruzat
Michelle Lowrie Griffith	Mickey DuBois	Molly Magistad
Monte Menzel	Naomi A Bishop	Naomi Gunn
Nate Barton	Nicole Salazar	Nina Todd (Lembo)
Olivia (Maurice) Megargle	Pamela Grace Hallen	Patrick Fuhrman
Pete Avis	Rachel Motland Goodman	Rachel Zoda (Fuhrman)
Rebecca Darling (Lockrem)	Rebekah Gibson Schoepel	Rebekah Schwartz (Becky Schwartz)
Romy Godfrey Martin	Sam Marmon	Samuel (Sam Kitchell) Forbes-Roberts
Samuel Vert	Sandy Leyde	Sara Thompson Semingson
Sarah Dowling-Rapacz	Sarah Markham	Sarah Schmidt
Shannon Beck (Shannon Shaw)	Shauna Lofgren-Desjardins	Shawna Heflen
Sheila Yokers	Sheri Larsen (Gifford)	Sonja Yokers
Stacie Cruzat	Stephanie Connon	Steve Weidner
Susannah Hanley	Susannah Karlsson	Sybil Lemke

Tamara Walker
Tanya Frank McDonald
Teresa Fothergill Emery
Tiny / Teggy Benson
Troy Hicks
Zack Karlsson

Tami Brown Vondran
Tara Legg
Timothy Austin
Tracie Walters (Tyree)
Wade J. Sackett

Tamis Nelson
Taunya Ward
Timothy Drake
Trisha Smith
Wendy Kitchell