



COUPLES FOR CHRIST

Families in the Holy Spirit Renewing the Face of the Earth

June 12, 2007

Our Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are weary of these email exchanges, but as our silence may be misconstrued many ways, we are constrained to respond to Bro. Frank's open letter to the CFC global family dated June 10, 2007.

We are deeply saddened by said open letter of Bro. Frank. We recognize the love of our Bro. Frank for CFC and his passionate service to the community for the past 26 years. We honor our brother for leading the community for the past 26 years and we are privileged to have worked with him side by side.

We also honor the other countless CFC leaders who have likewise dedicated their lives to the LORD through CFC. CFC is indeed the work of the Lord as He has called us to pursue HIS work that has grown in leaps and bounds. There are in fact two brothers (Ben Donato & Jun Frias) who have given up their lives in pursuit of the call.

Indeed, every member loves CFC, and we have seen and talked to many leaders and members who, by their love of CFC, do not want to be distracted by what is happening and simply want to continue to do the work of God – evangelization, pastoral formation, work with the poor. We honor all of you.

Conflicts among Leaders

We have issued official announcements regarding the disagreements and conflicts of certain top leaders as one of the reasons for their resignation. Our Bro. Frank publicly articulated more of the "conflict" in his CFC-GK 3 paper and just recently his open letter to the CFC global family dated June 10. We have silently addressed the issues stated in the paper, together with the GK Board, and are making some progress. However, we ask for patience as many of these issues have been there for long time, have become deep-seated and have become intertwined with the personal and therefore has become complicated and will take sometime to fully resolve.

Our statements did not dwell with the details of the specific individual reasons of the three brothers that led to their resignations. We left that to the brothers to articulate as they saw fit, which in fact they have on some occasions.

In the case of disagreements among or with elders, our culture and practice is active submission. We discuss and debate certain directives from our leaders. After such debate, however, all are expected to obey and implement such directives, and this is particularly true of CFC Council decisions, even if one disagrees with these. This is because a major foundation stone of our community is that we respect the anointing and mandate of our leaders, specially the CFC International Council.

Part of our culture is also to make corrections when there is a need for such.

With deep regrets in our hearts, we have to express our view that certain actions, particularly email exchanges, tend to sow disunity and disrespect to CFC, its culture and its life and mission. We believe that certain issues can be solved within the structures and processes of the community, without going public.

We regret that the matter of holding our elections which will chose the new leaders of our community, a clearly internal matter for us, has been brought up to the Bishops, in what is clearly a solicited position.

But first, we need to refresh our memory to when this all started, to understand what is currently happening.

Bros. Frank, Tony & Lachie voluntarily resigned from the Council in February 2007, and endorsed to the whole community the four remaining members (Joe Tale, Ernie Maipid, Rouquel Ponte and Joe Yamamoto), to continue to function as a Council until the regularly scheduled elections in June 2007. The four remaining Council members were prayed over by the three who resigned together with the entire Metro Manila Mission Core.

Notwithstanding his resignation, Bro. Frank continues to be very active in CFC's life. This we appreciate for we hold him in very high regard and respect. He writes to all of CFC thru his Lamentation series. He gives talks to the Metro Manila sectors and provincial areas. He has met with GK workers and leaders regarding the issues raised in the GK 3 paper.

On our part, we performed our mandate as a Council, and as if that alone is not heavy enough as a responsibility, we also faced certain unique challenges. A few raised questions on our continuing mandate and anointment. Others questioned the way we handled things, such as involving other brethren in helping us introduce reforms in the Home Office. It was almost like every action we were taking was questioned. Some young leaders, we thought, were also acting with disrespect to the Council. A power point presentation that went around SFC, for example, traced to the SFC leadership, states that the Church does not recognize the resignation of the three brothers in February, implying that they should still be part of the CFC Council.

In all of this, we got little support from Bro. Frank in terms of defending the authority and the anointing of the remaining four Council members.

What is the Concern?

Bro. Frank states that at the heart of his concern is the tension between CFC and GK.

Luis Oquinena, GK Executive Director, and Issa Santos, Head of the GK Partnership Management Group, has replied to Bro. Frank. We leave it at that, together with our commitment to resolve the issues and concerns concerning GK. In addition, in the same way that we ensure the constant spiritual nourishment of our CFC brethren serving in GK, we also need to nourish spiritually those who are indifferent to it.

Bro. Frank also refers to his relationship with Bro. Tony Meloto. We have been working on this, but ask everyone to be patient. Clearly, this is not just up to the Council to resolve.

In the case of the Council and Bro. Frank, we have had several meetings, both amongst ourselves and with the Bishops.

About Power and Control

Bro. Frank resigned voluntarily in the context of lamentation and also highlighted that he is not interested in power and control.

He has been the longest running CFC Director. He indeed has seen it all from 1981 and have been responsible for most of the directions CFC took. When he resigned last Feb 20, we all agreed, including himself, that the three will submit to the authority of the remaining four.

We regret then, that when he is not in agreement with the way we view and run things, he withdrew such posture and joined those who were questioning our mandate and anointing, instead of helping us and defending the institution of the Council.

We regret then that he was trying to convince many that we should not stand for re-election any more. The Board of Elders did not agree, and in fact, included one of us in their nomination slate. Luis and Issa of GK also did not agree, and confirmed that they believe in the anointment of the Council, including our being nominees for the election of the new Council.

We regret then that he allowed the Bishops to be dragged into our controversy in what is clearly an internal organizational matter of CFC. The Bishops' position was clearly solicited. Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, on the other hand, while leaving the matter to the three Bishops he designated, also said that he told the Council that we have our constitution and by-laws to observe. We had requested a dialogue with the Bishops concerned, but this request has not been granted.

Our Appeal

Our dear brother Frank has led us for the past 25 years and we are beneficiaries of his teachings and guidance. He showed us how to rely on God especially with respect to the future of CFC, since our community is God's work and not ours. When a chapter head resigns our posture is, the Lord will raise a new leader. The same should be true for all of us in the Council.

Our appeal to Bro. Frank is to truly let go and let God. Please honor the discernment of the Council and the Board of Elders in their choice of nominees. We ask him to let the Lord choose the new Council thru the leaders that he helped the Lord raise for the past 25 years. Let us trust God that He will take care of CFC by anointing a fresh 7-man Council of His choosing come June 22. We are just following the same rules and process we have always observed over the many years.

Together, we can convince our Bishop to allow us to proceed with our elections.

Once elected, our strong recommendation to the new Council is to call for a pastoral congress to tackle the various suggestions on how to pursue the work in the next 24 years. We may not be in that next council. We will just humbly follow the Lord on where He will lead us after June 22. We will humbly and joyfully submit to the Lord's decision through our brethren.

As we see it, the issue here is obedience, honor and respect. We ask our dear brother to humbly heed the Council whom he prayed over together with the whole community last Feb 20. We ask our brother to be at the forefront of working at healing and unity, rather than engaging in a posture that leads into the undermining of our established leadership structure. We assure our brother of our brotherly love and hereby express our desire to

restore friendship and fraternity. Nothing in his list of concerns points to a fundamental difference between us and his positions.

We are praying and will do our utmost to reconcile with each other, including Tony with Frank. We firmly believe that God can heal all wounds in His perfect time. We cannot take the whole community into this issue by making this a precondition to continue with our work in the vineyard. We don't require chapter leaders and cluster leaders who have a falling out in relationship to first talk and reconcile before we install a new set of leaders from the ranks. We also do not burden the next leadership to first settle such differences from the former leaders before they continue on their work.

We appeal to our dear brother to agree that we mutually stop email exchanges that sows disunity. We humbly ask him to respect CFC's principle and culture of the anointing of leaders and obedience to authority.

CFC Council

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