



## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

202 WALNUT STREET, WEST PLAINS, MO 65775

Please read the following statement prepared by Pastor John King:

Due to information that has recently been made clear to the leadership of First Baptist Church West Plains, our church has made the decision to not partner with Kanakuk Kamps for ministry until the truth of their knowledge about what happened with Pete Newman is openly confessed. We believe in grace and that God can and will heal. The process of healing is being delayed because of the lie that Kanakuk tells claiming they did not know what was taking place until 2009. Based on depositions we now know that the leadership of Kanakuk certainly knew that there were felonies against children committed in 1999 and in 2003.

While we hope for the restoration of the reputation of Kanakuk, we feel more strongly about standing in truth with those who were victimized by the abuse allowed to occur due to the indecision and negligence of the leadership of the Kanakuk facility. Kanakuk leadership continues to lack transparency in order to step aside from the responsibility that they carry in what happened to the young men who were victimized after they learned of Pete Newman's actions. Those young men are still reeling from these consequences while Kanakuk tells the world that they didn't know until 2009 while, in reality, they knew in 1999.

We have made this decision for four reasons:

1. We do not want to introduce people from our community to an organization that we no longer feel we can trust.
2. We want to send a message to the victims of the original abuse that we hear them and that their voice matters and their healing is of great importance to us.
3. We want to send a message to those who have suffered harm in other situations that this is not God's intentions and that the church is to be a place of refuge from abuse. Our church is a refuge and will not stand for abuse or with those who hide it.
4. Finally, and with clarity we want to invite every church to stand for truth. We invite Kanakuk to see what happened with the victims between 1999-2009. We ask that they take responsibility for that abuse that would not have happened if they had terminated Pete's employment in 1999. We invite every church who cares for the abused to take similar actions in protecting and standing with those who have been wounded.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John King".

John King  
FBC Senior Pastor