

January 5, 2016

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Beilstein
The Blueberry Patch
1285 Hanley Road West
Mansfield, Ohio 44904

RE: Concern over upcoming psychic event

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Beilstein,

We trust that the LORD has blessed your family, and your blueberry business over this past year; the frigid winter and early wet summer the Heavenly Father provided probably made for a robust berry-picking season in 2015. Recently it has come to our attention that your business has been advertising on your signs and your coming events calendar inviting the public to an event on January 8, 2016 which includes a psychic reader.

A flier disseminated to customers and located on the Blueberry Patch website reads that psychic Jen Lopez will conduct readings using astrology and numerology, that she will be accurate, and that fifteen minute readings will cost fifteen dollars.

While the Blueberry Patch has been an important community partner, selling nutritious fruit to the public, and playing a prominent role in the annual Blueberry Festival in the Village of Lexington, this upcoming psychic event inviting the public has brought great sorrow to a number of area congregations, families, and most notably local pastors. **As chaplains of this community, we strongly believe the upcoming psychic event is associated with deviant behavior, is not in harmony with the identity of our community, and will tarnish the reputation of the Blueberry Patch and therefore advise that the event be cancelled.**

It is our desire that the Blueberry Patch does not jeopardize its blueberry business, nor its standing in the community. This is why we have chosen to support the Blueberry Patch by saying the following:

The practice of foreseeing future events with various means including but not limited to: reading omens, the use of astrology, numerology, the use of necromancy, and the like is called divination. **The Bible clearly forbids divination.**

Leviticus 19:31 clearly states “Do not turn to mediums or necromancers, do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them. I am the LORD your GOD.” Similarly, this practice of fortune telling in the marketplace was actually opposed by leaders of the faith in Acts 16: 16-19. In fact we are instructed to not believe every spirit but to test the spirits to determine if they are from the Spirit of GOD (1 John 4:1-2). Other similar Biblical texts can be located in Deuteronomy 18: 9-12, 1 Chronicles 10:13-14, Galatians 5:20, and Revelation 21:8. As a business owner, you are free to run the Blueberry Patch contrary to these texts; all things considered, your practices may not gain the approval of your customers and loyal patrons.

Ultimately businesses prosper when they provide good customer service, and **we are persuaded that successful local businesses must strongly consider the Bible based heritage of its clientele.** A 2006 study on churches in Richland County found that nearly 47,000 people in Richland County belonged to a Bible based congregation.¹ The Richland Community Prayer Network, which conducted this study cites that there are presently at least two hundred-thirty Bible believing congregations in Richland County, not counting home churches.² This comes as no surprise when Mansfield, Ohio historically is known as the “City of Churches.”³ It bears worth noting that clergy in the past have publicly addressed this issue of divination and the occult and the dangers it poses.⁴ For your review, a copy of an op editorial article has been attached to this letter discussing the public outcry over a fortune teller that came to the Renaissance Theater.^{5, 6, 7}

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In closing, as (36) thirty-six spiritual leaders of this area, we are convinced that hosting a psychic reading will jeopardize the good standing the Blueberry Patch has with Richland County, **imperiling the individuals that attend this psychic event, and endangering the financial well-being of the fruit farm.** Psychic reading is fraudulent and can involve financial scams of unsuspecting persons. By bringing this fortunetelling event to your business, loyal patrons will unfortunately equate manipulation and fraud associated to psychic reading with the Blueberry Patch; this would be tragic! The members of our local congregations are very familiar with the teaching in the Bible about good fruit and bad fruit. Jesus told his followers that a bad tree cannot bear good fruit and a good tree cannot bear bad fruit (Matthew 7:18). Our hope is that your fruit farm bears good fruit and fruit that remains. With that being said, it is our moral responsibility to warn you so that you take steps to have as bountiful of a harvest as you had in 2015. In short, this psychic event leaves a sour taste in peoples' mouths, so we ask that the Blueberry Patch stick with what you are the best in the state at doing: growing blueberries and educating us on this remarkable berry.

Sincerely,

Reverend Jerry Laudermilk, Abundant Life Tabernacle
Reverend Russell Stanford, All Believers in Christ
Reverend Ted Howard, Apostolic Holiness
Reverend Gary Lambert, Belmont Community
Reverend Merle Stewart, Bethesda Fellowship
Reverend Mike Stine, Clear Fork Alliance
Reverend Les Vnasdale, Cornerstone Grace Brethren
Reverend Chris Thomas, Diamond Hills Baptist
Reverend Bruce Copley, Faith Chapel
Reverend Bill Henderson, First Baptist
Reverend Floyd Glick, First Church of the Nazarene
Reverend James Streib, Fusion Church
Reverend Dennis Nezrick, Grace Evangelical Free
Reverend Eric Byrom, Grace Fellowship
Reverend Ferlie Yates, Hanna Road Church of God
Reverend Sylvester Ginn, Hesed Agape Fellowship
Reverend Dr. Bruce Philippi, Journey Life Center
Reverend Kevin Evans, Liberty Baptist

Reverend Ron Kosa, Living Word
Reverend Robert Kurtz, Mansfield Baptist Temple
Reverend Don Wilson, Mansfield Faith Assembly
Reverend Dave Guild, Mansfield Foursquare
Reverend Art Kennard, Maranatha Christian Center
Reverend Les Farley, My Father's House
Reverend Harrison Gapter, Mt. Zion Lutheran
Reverend Henry Bradley, New Community Temple COG
Reverend Larry Hulver, New Liberty
Reverend Patrick Bailey, North Bend Church of Brethren
Reverend James Spencer, Peoples' Baptist
Reverend Mark Barth, Real Life Community
Reverend El Akuchie, Richland Community Prayer Network
Rabbi William Halbrook, Sar Shalom Messianic
Reverend Darrin Thurber, Seventh Day Adventist
Reverend Rick Lewis, Shelby Church of God
Reverend Doug Tackett, Taylortown Community
Reverend George Lewis, Temple of God

Cc: Washington Township Board of Trustees
Mayor of the Village of Lexington
President of the Richland Area Chamber of Commerce

References

- 1 "The Nehemiah Project," survey of 150 area pastors and census of 220 local congregations conducted by Richland Community Prayer Network, 2006, contact 419.884.3648.
- 2 Countywide congregation listing, last updated 1.03.15, compiled by the Richland Community Prayer Network, contact 419.884.3648.
- 3 "Mural will be dedicated during open house," Tribune Courier, November 28, 2013, p. 5. Large mural dedicated with historic slogan "Mansfield: City of Churches," depicting steeples throughout Mansfield's skyline dedicated in public open house. Slogan "Mansfield: City of Churches," was mentioned as early as July 1, 1911 in the Mansfield News.
- 4 "Occult films can be danger, pastors say," by Jeff Brumley, Mansfield News Journal, August 5, 1999, p. A1.
- 5 "Medium's upcoming show ignites protests," by Jami Kinton, Mansfield News Journal, November 14, 2008, A1.
- 6 "Protesters pray for audience," by Angel Taylor, Mansfield News Journal, November 24, 2008, p. A1.
- 7 "Renaissance Theatre fires top executive: CEO cites dismal economic situation," by Jami Kinton, Mansfield News Journal, January 23, 2009