

Troy – Church Relations Rep 2007 – 2014

Pam – Believer’s Café / Church Relations Admin. / Fulfillment 2007 – 2014

Sarrie – Staff kid / School of Discipleship Student / Strategic Giving / Field

Communications / GFA Canada Staff / Missions’ Department 2007 – 2015

### **Troy’s Testimony**

I first of all want to say that there are a lot of good things to say about GFA, but by no means should they give license to ignore the things that are wrong. When I removed Sarrie from staff on 3/14/15 I wasn’t part of the Diaspora. I had remained neutral, and if anything, focused on the positives of GFA. I did this because it is what God told me to do; I will explain more later in my testimony. It wasn’t until the evening of the 14th that I felt the Lord tell me that He was working through the Diaspora, and I needed to join what He has already put in place. I say this because there will be some of you who will think that I was lying and was covertly working for the Diaspora. My coming to them was as much a surprise to them as it is for you to see my testimony here. I, of course, worried what others would think and thought to wait a while until I told my story. But God said now and that I shouldn’t worry about my reputation. To love Him is to obey Him; my conscience is clear.

I’m not great at writing so I am going to stick to some of the more major events in my time at GFA. There are many, many more that would take days to write and I don’t want to spend that much time in front of a computer.

Things were rough for my wife right from the start: Within the first week, she had a breakdown. She went running out of the GFA building crying, right before a prayer meeting. I had no idea what was happening. As we sat in our car talking, I found out she felt like she was being forced into a “GFA box” by the women there. At that time, most of the women home schooled their children, ate only whole foods, and covered their heads. Pam did none of those things and said the women looked down on her for it. To Brother KP’s credit, he addressed the women in a meeting saying he wished they would send their children to public school so that they all could come into the office and serve. I told Pam that there is no such thing as a “GFA box.” I was wrong. I didn’t realize it until years later, but I was fitting myself into it.

A couple of years later, we were having a movie night at the GFA office. Before the movie, we ate dinner together in the café hut. Pam invited Brother KP to sit with us and about eight or so others. He sat with us and was telling jokes and we were having a great time when all of a sudden he turned very serious and implied that Pam was being unsubmitive because she wasn’t wearing a head covering, and he proceeded to make her feel like less of a Christian for it. They also started restricting the School of Discipleship students from spending time with Pam (even though they loved hanging out with her) because according to one of the leaders, she was shallow and had no spiritual depth.

Pam was a hair stylist and cut approximately 80 of the staff families' hair. One day I got called into a leader's office and he told me that someone told him that Pam talked negatively about GFA leadership while cutting this person's hair. So Pam wasn't allowed to cut hair anymore. The leader said this person wasn't willing to come forward and accuse Pam to her face. One of the lies that we are fed at GFA is that ministry comes before family. I am ashamed to say that I bought into that lie. I failed my wife and daughter several times and didn't protect them from abusive leadership. I have repented to both of them personally and publicly since. These failures of mine, although forgiven, are extremely embarrassing and probably my greatest failures to my family. I should have told this leader that this person needed to come forward and confront Pam before us and give Pam a chance to tell her side of the story, because Pam says that this never happened. But I knew if I did that, I would be seen as rebellious and my days there at GFA would be numbered. I've seen firsthand several times that when someone questioned leadership, they were on their way out, and planting churches in unreached villages was priority to me.

Sarrie had graduated from SD and was now on staff when leadership asked her to go to serve in our Canadian office. When Sarrie was a teenager, she went to India with other teens from the US office and the Canadian office. She became very good friends with Cassandra L. during this trip. Since then, her family had left the ministry but still lived near the Canadian office, so she wanted to hang out with her after office hours. Pat Emerick, the Canadian office leader, restricted Sarrie's time with Cass and eventually cut her off completely, telling her that Cass and her family were poison. I failed my daughter and told her to just submit to Pat because he had her best interests in mind, when I should have told Pat that my daughter is an adult and a very godly women whom I trust. If she says Cass isn't poison and is safe to hang out with, then let her hang out with her. But once again, I knew if I did that, I would eventually be asked to leave GFA. Ministry before family.

GFA was building a campus and there was going to be housing on it, but leadership said that you didn't have to live on campus, and if you did live off campus, if one of the spouses wanted to work a secular job part time to offset the living expenses, they could. We decided to live off campus and to allow Pam to cut hair part time again. GFA leadership has rules that can be twisted and manipulated to benefit GFA. Rules will apply to some families and not to others. They decided at the last minute, just when Pam and I were about to buy land and drop a mobile home on it, that she wasn't going to be allowed to work outside the ministry. If she wanted to do that, I needed to become a volunteer.

This was the final straw for Pam; she wanted out, but I wanted to continue planting churches. So true to form (ministry before family), I asked leadership if they would be willing to allow me to remain on staff, and not Pam. They currently had this same arrangement with two other families, one in the US office and one in the Canadian office, but both of the wives of those families were shunned from the ministry. They said your

wife will need to be shunned, and used Romans 16:17 as the Biblical reason: “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.” But the leader skipped reading the part of the verse that says “contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught.” My wife was not spreading false doctrine, but it was very obvious they wanted her gone. Once again, I failed Pam and accepted that unbiblical excuse to shun my wife, and accepted the agreement. Ministry before family. What’s funny is that two weeks after the shunning of my wife, the same leader publically in a staff meeting said that GFA doesn’t shun. At this same time, they brought Sarrie back to the US office.

One week later, on a Monday morning, I was called into Brother KP’s office with another leader. Lately, I had started seeing a prideful side to Brother KP. He would say things during staff prayer meetings like, “Don’t you think that you know better than me. I’m older than most of you and have been in ministry for over 40 years.” That morning I met that same prideful man. It was a 20-minute, one-way conversation, him to me.

When he would talk about my seven years of service at GFA, he could do nothing but praise me. But as a father and husband, he would be tear me down. He said, “If I let you serve at GFA and Pam doesn’t, she will end up leaving you because you’re not a man.” He said the staff member that was currently living in the shunning situation was a man and that was why it worked, but that I wasn’t a man and wouldn’t be able to keep my wife. He looked at me with such disgust, and kept saying I wasn’t a man. Then he said, “You aren’t a man, look at you. You have a rebellious wife and a rebellious son and your daughter, well she’d be a good girl regardless of who her father was.” Once I felt he was done, I said calmly, “Well sir, with all due respect you’re wrong, my wife wouldn’t leave me. But it seems no matter what I say, your mind is made up and I’m out of here.” He said “Yes,” so I stood up and gave him a hug and told him, “Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve here for the last seven years.” I was ushered out of the building and told to come back later that night after office hours to clean out my desk. They made me disappear. That night a leader escorted me to my desk, helped me clean it out, and that was it. I was gone. Leadership says everyone gets an exit interview to express any concerns; I didn’t get one.

The following day, Brother KP lied to the staff and told them that I left the ministry because I was having family problems and I needed to take care of those first. That was the only time I’ve ever heard him, or any leadership, mention family before ministry. Only when it’s convenient to them for an excuse of why staff disappears. I remember hearing that excuse given before and I believed it. And now here I was on the other side, hearing the lie and realizing that the other times were probably lies also (and found out later that they were).

I wasn’t offended by Brother KP. I live by a philosophy that if Jesus could lay down His rights and let His creation crucify Him so that I could live, I could lay down my rights so

that He could live through me; a servant is no greater than his master. So I've never needed an apology from Brother KP. I would need to be offended to feel I need an apology. Instead, I felt very sorry for him. Once I could get quiet before the Lord, I felt Him tell me that my daughter needed to continue to serve at GFA for a little while and that I needed to pray for Brother KP to repent of his pride. The Lord reminded me of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan whom He said He gave over 400 years to repent before He gave Israel their land. He said, "Give him some time to repent, pray for him. If he doesn't, pride comes before a fall and he will surely fall." So I had my command, and that is what I did for 10 months. I genuinely love Brother KP and all of leadership, so it wasn't hard for me to do.

I could not share any of this information while my daughter was on staff, for obvious reasons; I might have lost a daughter. They have been known to turn family members against each other; I'm proof of that. Brother KP was right about me not being a man, but not for the reasons he was saying it. I was not a man because I wouldn't stand up for my girls and defend them, and I allowed them to shun my wife. I have since undone that, and many other false GFA doctrines that got drilled into my brain. So when I felt the Lord tell me that it was time to pull Sarrie out, I wasn't taking any chances of her being turned against us during a two week notice. And I also wasn't going to let her feel like a lesser Christian and be looked down upon as though she has lost her call during that time (more false doctrine that we believed). So I talked to her and shared the whole truth of what really happened to Pam and me, along with many other stories of corruption, lies, pride and how power hungry Brother KP is. I then went on the campus covertly and moved my daughter out of her home, and then called leadership to let them know she would no longer be on staff. Dad finally showed up and protected his daughter.

Ultimately, my family's demise came down to the fact that my wife wasn't the quiet, meek, do-what-you're-told-without-question-while-wearing-a-head-covering woman. She had ideas and opinions that she didn't mind sharing, and if she saw something that was wrong, she pointed it out. She didn't fit into the "GFA box." But I want to publicly say that I have the greatest wife in the world. She's drop dead gorgeous, and is my best friend. And she has NEVER disobeyed me. We are trying to work as a team again rather than "I am the man hear me roar and you simply obey without question." Or probably more accurately, I'm loving my wife "as Christ loves the church" again, rather than the dictator husband that GFA created. Pam was never good at letting me get away with that anyway.

Six months after I was fired, Brother KP called me, offering me my position back in Church Relations. He said I didn't have to move on campus and that Pam could continue cutting hair (she started her own salon since). He said I could commute the hour and a half to campus once a week or so and could work remotely from my home the rest of the time. I'm not sure if this was a genuine offer or just damage control because he was concerned about the Diaspora. He wouldn't let me answer him and told me I needed to

pray and fast about it, but I already knew the answer. During that phone call, he defended/justified the things he said to me in his office when he fired me. No apology, which was fine with me, because I wasn't looking for one or needing one. Instead, I just felt sorrier for him. I never heard from him again.

Then the day that I removed Sarrie from the campus, he called me and left a voicemail asking for forgiveness for the way he treated me the day he fired me. This phone call I know was damage control. I can almost guess what GFA leadership will say about me to the staff one on one. It will go something like this: "Troy is bitter about how Brother KP let him go and will not forgive him." Yeah well, good thing I'm not worried about my reputation. My conscience is clear, no bitterness here.

### **Pammie's Part:**

I think my husband did an excellent job describing a lot of the events that have affected us, and just as he started, I will too—in saying that there was more "good" about GFA then there was "bad," which was the main reason that I tried to keep my mouth shut for so long. As a woman, I felt very belittled by some of the leadership. I'm not at all saying that I am the smartest person in the world, but I have run my own business for years and am a forward thinker and like to move ahead with new ideas. I found out pretty quickly that they don't like women's ideas, and/or they just didn't want to hear my ideas. I think I was "marked" from the beginning because I was not like a lot of the other girls. In fairness they did use some of my ideas, such as the volleyball court and moving my desk into fulfillment, etc. But realizing after a few years that I was not conforming was when they put the "squeeze" on, by hearing me less, putting restrictions on the students, restrictions on hair cutting, etc.

I have always said that GFA's got prayer times and spiritual stuff down. They did a great job with that, but were greatly lacking in the fun fellowship part, which A LOT of people were agreeing with!! So I was always asking to do fun events and even volunteered to do the legwork for them, but would get shot down about 70 percent of the time (which is why I was seen as shallow and not spiritual). Then one time I got reprimanded in an email for using GFA.net to invite everyone on staff to our house for a Christmas party. What???? Why???? After being there for a few years, I thought it was funny how we were always being preached to about "unity," yet leadership itself would make it extremely difficult on us to create close friendships and unity with each other. They were too afraid that we would create a coup against them.

One of the things that was sooo demeaning to me was that in the seven years that I was there, I was never invited into a meeting about ME!!! If I did something that leadership didn't like, they would call Troy into the office and tell him to tell me.

1. I felt like a little girl and they were tattling to my daddy about me;
2. I am an adult; talk to me so I can fill in information that may be missing or

misunderstood or explain my reasons; and

3. The Bible says in Matt. 18:15 that "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."

I had NO problem with them inviting Troy and me into a meeting together, but the verse does not say, go behind the person's back and tattle to her husband! I was actually working in the office the day that they asked me to leave. But again, instead of inviting me in, they waited until I left for the day and called Troy into the office a few minutes later. I wasn't even allowed to come to the office and clean out my own desk and/or say goodbye to any of my friends, which I was now no longer ALLOWED to talk to.

The majority of my issues with GFA can all be summed up in one idea: my PRIVATE life is PRIVATE! You have all authority to tell me what I can and can't do within your office walls and/or on office time, but if I want to go to a Bible study, work a part-time job, go evangelize, be on a bowling league, etc., as long as it isn't unbiblical or affecting my office work, it's none of your business. Staff was given the mindset that they may not fully know God's direction in their lives and were encouraged to ask leadership to do things, such as buy a house or a car or date a certain person, etc. Unfortunately I think this has given way too much power to [GFA] leadership in people's lives. You should have your own relationship with God and be praying about those decisions yourself. Maybe ask opinions of the leaders, but ultimately, it's between you and God. After years of this behavior, it seems like K.P. has decided his flock need him to tell them what they can and can't do.