

CONCLUDING REMARKS - TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>C.J.'s Limited Response & No Public Confession</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>C.J.'s 10 Month Refusal to Write</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Writing Is Detrimental & No Allowance for Potential Sins</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>The Need for Discerning & Courageous Friends</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>C.J.'s First Response to RRF&D & AFA - Commentary Added</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Correspondence with C.J. Regarding First Response</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Correspondence with the SGM Board Regarding C.J.'s First Response</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>The Sovereign Grace Board Weighs in on Brent's "Dissatisfaction"</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>C.J.'s Second Response to RRF&D & AFA - Commentary Added</u>	<u>57</u>
<u>Brent's Return to Sovereign Grace Ministries & Pastoral Ministry</u>	<u>79</u>
<u>Summary of C.J.'s Responses to RRF&D and AFA</u>	<u>82</u>
<u>"Honoring" Brent's Request for Greater Details</u>	<u>88</u>
<u>C.J.'s Numerous Denials and Rebuttals</u>	<u>90</u>
<u>Forgiveness Extended and a Succinct Summary</u>	<u>96</u>
<u>C.J. Only Beginning to Perceive Sin?</u>	<u>97</u>
<u>No Follow-Up by the Board of Directors Re: Allowance for Potential Sins</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Brent's Implication of Numerous Individuals</u>	<u>104</u>
<u>C.J. Referencing Himself as a Humble Example</u>	<u>105</u>
<u>No Damage Control in Sovereign Grace Ministries!</u>	<u>107</u>

<u>The Effect on Our Extended Family</u>	<u>113</u>
<u>What Happened to the A-Team?</u>	<u>114</u>
<u>Joshua Harris' Humility & C.J.'s Absence at CLC Members Meeting</u>	<u>117</u>
<u>The Blackmailing of Larry Tomczak</u>	<u>131</u>
<u>C.J.'s Letter to PDI Pastors Regarding Larry - May 19, 1997</u>	<u>134</u>
<u>C.J.'s Letter to PDI Members Regarding Larry - October 15, 1997</u>	<u>145</u>
<u>C.J.'s Letter to the Seven Leaders - July 16, 2002</u>	<u>157</u>
<u>C.J.'s Letter to Justin - October 16, 2002</u>	<u>158</u>
<u>Receiving Legal Counsel to Reveal No Details</u>	<u>160</u>
<u>C.J. Unwilling to Ask Larry and Doris' Forgiveness</u>	<u>164</u>
<u>Paul Palmer to be Commended</u>	<u>168</u>
<u>The Need for Confession Regarding Larry</u>	<u>172</u>
<u>Not Wise, Appropriate or Necessary to Confess Sins</u>	<u>173</u>
<u>Who Approved Keeping C.J.'s Sins Secret</u>	<u>176</u>
<u>Email Interaction Ended because of "Evident Fruitlessness"</u>	<u>180</u>
<u>Brent's Incomplete, Incorrect and Revised Narrative</u>	<u>193</u>
<u>Phony Baloney</u>	<u>198</u>
<u>Brent Sharing His Concerns with the Sovereign Grace Pastors</u>	<u>201</u>
<u>End</u>	<u>202</u>

CONCLUDING REMARKS

JUNE 8, 2011

Proverbs 28:13

*He who conceals his sins does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

Introduction

I have labored with the hope that this document, in addition to the previous two, will serve your soul, Sovereign Grace Ministries, and most of all the gospel. I remain grateful for the many years I was blessed by God to serve in your company and the company of so many people I love and respect. What follows is an expression of my love for you, my former friends, and the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I've found no joy in writing a "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" (RRF&D), "A Final Appeal" (AFA), and now "Concluding Remarks" (CR). I believe the Lord led me, and enabled me to write, but it has not been a pleasant task. In particular, I have not enjoyed making my case in such detail. I wish it were unnecessary but general appeals to you for repentance have never been effectual.

In fact, it is only in the face of overwhelming evidence, godly pressure from peers, and impending consequences; that one gains your attention and then with difficulty. RRF&D and AFA followed 10 years of correction.

C.J., I am genuinely grateful to the Triune God for the fruits of pride you've acknowledged, the changes you've made and the input you received from others. But I also remain deeply concerned because you and the Board of Directors are unaffected on so many important fronts. That is alarming. So here is my last attempt to focus your attention. I hope you find it redemptive.

C.J.'s Limited Response and No Public Confession

I made my final appeal in AFA. As a wrap up, I've decided to write CR. It consists of concluding comments. I sincerely hoped this third document would be unnecessary but that is not the case having received such limited responses to RRF&D and AFA from you and the Board of Directors. While I appreciated the restatement of personal pride in your second response, the issues addressed remained narrow in scope when compared to the wide range of moral issues I brought to your attention. Furthermore, you again expressed no desire, and no need for a public confession to the movement or

the Sovereign Grace pastors. Nor did the Board of Directors affirm the need for you to do so. In RRF&D and AFA, I appealed for repentance and confession, not mediation.

Over the past 12 months, I've repeatedly laid out two simple conditions as prerequisites for meeting together, believing them necessary components of repentance. Here is what I reiterated in AFA.

"Two simple questions remain. First, are you willing to provide a thorough response to "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal." Second, do you see the need for a public acknowledgement to the blogosphere, a general confession to the movement, and a more detailed confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors and staff?" (AFA, p. 165)

I was hoping for the earnestness, vindication, fear, longing, zeal, and avenging of wrong (2 Cor 7:11, NASU) that demonstrate godly sorrow. While not entirely absent, these virtues do not characterize your repentance on a broad scale. Just the opposite - they are noticeably absent. These expectations are biblical and in keeping with Sovereign Grace polity. They simply have not been met.

Finally, none of my most serious concerns for Sovereign Grace Ministries were addressed by you or the Board of Directors. Furthermore, there is no indication that any correction, discipline, or accountability has been introduced by you or the Board to any of the individuals referenced in RRF&D and AFA. For example, Dave and Bob have taken no initiative to ask forgiveness for the abuses cited in these documents. This does not require mediation or more information. In fact, all the people referenced in RRF&D and AFA appear approved by you for their actions except one - me. I am reproved for falsely implicating all the others.

Here again is what I said in RRF&D.

"Lastly and most importantly, I write because of my deep love for you and for Sovereign Grace Ministries. My greatest concern is for the increasing presence of deceit and hypocrisy rooted in self preservation and love of reputation. I'd be overjoyed to see you acknowledge these things to the movement, whether or not you ask my forgiveness for anything specific. Comparatively speaking, the later is unimportant. Ultimately, this isn't about us. It is about something much bigger. Therefore, I provide the history that follows for your careful consideration." (RRF&D, p. 3)

And,

"Primarily, I hope and desire to see a restoration of integrity, truth telling and justice in Sovereign Grace so there is no lying, spin, manipulation, lording,

cover-up, or partiality. I am concerned for the movement. Some men have followed sinful aspects of your example and leadership – the kind referenced in this response. These men have acted deceitfully, judgmentally, unbiblically, and hypocritically. Their example in turn, has harmed others and been corrosive in its effect.” (RRF&D, p. 128)

It is clear from both responses to RRF&D and AFA that you still believe none of these things are in issues in your life (except for sinful judging) or the lives of anyone you know in Sovereign Grace Ministries. You have not moved away from your fixed position as stated on July 2, 2010. “Brent, I don’t think Sovereign Grace in general or anyone I know in particular is “lying, covering up, manipulating, lording, etc.”

In AFA, I restated my concerns and conditions.

“Please humble yourself for the sake of gospel and respond to my appeals in a thorough going, written and public manner. If you do, it could have a tremendous impact on a large number of people, result in reform for Sovereign Grace Ministries and relational restoration in many other quarters for the glory of God.” (AFA, p. 167)

Now it is time for closure. “A Final Appeal” really was my final appeal. I hoped you would fully acknowledge your sins and then help others to repent who have imitated your example. We are far from that happening. I provided RRF&D (128 pages) on March 17, 2010 and AFA (165 pages) on October 8, 2010. You responded to them on December 16, 2010 (9 pages) and again on March 11, 2011 (10 pages). The Sovereign Grace Board of Directors responded to them on March 11, 2011 (3 pages). That means I waited an entire year for a total response of 23 pages.

In addition to these documents, we’ve traded correspondence over the past 18 months. I have included much of that extra material here in CR. It includes new material and additional comments on old material. For the most part, I present this material in chronological order.

While your first response to me in December was meaningful it was woefully incomplete. I asked for a second response hoping your repentance would be complete. As a result, I was adjusted by the Board of Directors for being “dissatisfied” with your first response and told my interaction with you had been “fruitless.” That did not anger me but it was of concern to me. I was disappointed because you did not follow through on your promise to address the array of issues I raised in RRF&D and AFA.

In this regard, your second response went no further than your first response. For example, you acknowledged no deceit, no lying, no hypocrisy (with one exception), no

resentment, no abuse, no partiality, no negative impact on others, and no need to correct anyone else. Instead you provided robust denials and justifications.

C.J., I am heartedly encouraged by the fruits of pride you have confessed. I am equally encouraged that a dozen men have now witnessed to your pride and provided illustrations from their own experience. But I remain very concerned. To my knowledge, no one has addressed you on my most serious concerns.

C.J.'s 10 Month Refusal to Write

This section chronicles your reasons for not wanting to respond in writing to RRF&D and AFA and my reasons for asking you to do so.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2010 2:26 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Letter from CJ

...I'd be open to talking to you about such [doctrinal] differences at some point in the future. But this should be a conversation not an e-mail exchange. And we've already experienced the limitations and deficiencies of e-mail my friend

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Letter from CJ

And just so there is no misunderstanding, I think our experience in ministry has shown both of us that these things are too important to be done by e-mail. If I have offended you, we need to have a personal conversation and meeting where I can hear your perspective, ask you questions, consider what you say and provide you with a personal response (not by e-mail).

RRF&D
March 17, 2009

"...I [Brent] suggest you interact with this material [RRF&D] and then write me back. Please let me know if you are convicted of anything. This is a necessary first step for me if we are to move ahead." (p. 126)

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Saturday, March 20, 2010 6:10 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Confidential

...Finally, I have a different perspective than you do on the effectiveness and accuracy of e-mail, particularly to resolve conflict and help produce reconciliation. I won't be putting together a written response to your document.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 3:59 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: Confidential - Response to C.J.'s Letter

...Your response makes it clear you are unwilling to write and let me know of any ways in which you are convicted of sin and feel the need to ask forgiveness... C.J., I am eager to meet after you explore the contents of my document [RRF&D] and seek to discover any ways in which you have sinned. I have written clearly. This is a small thing to ask of you. Please reconsider. I will gladly meet but first I need some assurance you have processed what I've written by providing a meaningful response. I do not expect complete agreement...It appears our correspondence has concluded for now unless you have a change of perspective.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 19, 2010 9:49 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: Request for Written Response

Dear C.J.,

Bob wrote me yesterday on your behalf. I thanked him for his note but explained that I'd like to continue corresponding with you directly.

As a next step, would you please provide me a thorough response in writing to my document, "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" (i.e., RRF&D)? After you do so, I am glad to talk about setting up a time to meet and discuss its contents including our friendship.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Sunday, June 20, 2010 6:36 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Reconciliation

...As for a written response I would simply want you to know that after reading your document I am aware of specific ways I have sinned against you and I desire to sincerely and specifically acknowledge those sins and ask your forgiveness.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2010 4:18 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Reconciliation

I sincerely appreciate your desire to meet and ask forgiveness. I look forward to such a meeting and I am eager to forgive you...

At the risk of being misunderstood, I must appeal again for a written response to my document that covers a plethora of important subjects. There is need for accountability. There is need for clarity. There is need for full disclosure. Therefore, I'd greatly appreciate if you were completely open and transparent about the matters I have raised with you...

In this regard, it is necessary to understand how you view the issues and concerns I've brought to your attention. This could go a long way in our pursuit of reconciliation and remedy. So while I sincerely appreciate your willingness to meet, and wish I could accommodate your request, I cannot do so until I have a written and plenary response to issues I have raised with you.

In responding to the larger document, please be perfectly honest and share your thoughts in a comprehensive manner. For instance, what aspects of my presentation troubled you, helped you, or convicted you? What points do you agree with or disagree with? Do you believe there is a need for "a restoration of integrity, truth telling and justice in Sovereign Grace so there is no lying, spin, manipulation, lording, cover-up, or partiality?" Do you think others have sinned against me? Or do you believe I've sinned against them?...

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Friday, July 02, 2010 4:33 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Question

...Brent, I am not familiar with your approach requiring written communication, especially of such detail and length. It appears I have a different perspective than you (if I correctly understand your perspective) in that I think written communication on issues of this nature is less helpful and doesn't necessarily ensure accuracy... So, although I have a number of questions about what you've written, I think trying to address and resolve them in written form is unwise and would only prove unhelpful.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2010 4:49 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Response

...After our last exchange I am not sure how we can proceed and make progress in pursuing reconciliation. I asked the guys here for their counsel and they thought it wise to contact Ken Sande. Bob called Ken and without divulging the specifics communicated that we were attempting to work through the events of the past few years and had reached an impasse in how to proceed as you would like a written response to all you have sent and I prefer to meet personally...

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2010 5:15 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Response

Real quick...sitting down to dinner. I asked for a written response as a precursor to meeting not as a substitute. Please reconsider. I want to meet with you in person but only after you provide me your thoughts on what I have written.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2010 10:21 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Reconciliation

...I very much desire to interact with you personally, but I am still not convinced that exchanging documents is wise or effective. In my experience this approach is counterproductive and results in further misunderstanding. I understand you have a different perspective and so obviously we are presently at a bit of an impasse. ...

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Friday, October 01, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Pursuing Reconciliation

Just wanted you to know I am setting up a conversation with Ken Sande and I am hoping to benefit from his counsel on how we might proceed to pursue reconciliation. Even though I am still not convinced trying to work this out through written documents is wise or helpful, I want to ask Ken for his perspective and counsel.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, October 01, 2010 3:36 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Pursuing Reconciliation

By next week, I'll send "Part 2: A Final Appeal" which includes conditions for a just reconciliation process...I desire reconciliation but it must be done in an honest, open and accountable manner. As I've said before the issues go far beyond anything limited to you and me.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, October 08, 2010 2:07 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: A Final Appeal

Hi C.J.,

Here are my final thoughts [in "A Final Appeal"]. Please provide me a response to the two questions on page 164¹ by the end of next week.

¹ "Two simple questions remain. First, are you willing to provide a thorough response to "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal." Second, do you see the need for a public

Thanks
Brent

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 2:45 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: FW: A Final Appeal

...Again, as I've said before, it is always my preference to interact with you personally, face to face and through conversation, not by e-mail or sending lengthy documents back and forth. Besides the fact that I want to be able to talk with you personally, I'm also convinced (and those I've consulted on this agree) that doing this through e-mail utilizing long documentation, is actually a detriment to reconciliation...

For ten months you refused to respond in writing. But all of a sudden you radically changed course and agreed to respond in writing. Three days after the email above you wrote the following.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Friday, October 15, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject:

...I am glad to respond further to your recent e-mail and document. I take your concerns very seriously and very much want to address them. Though it appears we are in disagreement about the wisdom and effectiveness of a written response, I will respond to your request² and attempt to provide you with a written response to the issues you have identified³...

acknowledgement to the blogosphere, a general confession to the movement, and a more detailed confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors and staff?" (AFA, p. 164)

² For a "thorough response."

³ There was no qualification. You promised to provide a written response to all of the issues identified in RRF&D and AFA. Not just some of them. You'd didn't make a "good faith" attempt.

Writing Is Detrimental & No Allowance for Potential Sins

When I received the October 15 email above I was concerned you were acting under compulsion and not voluntarily in light of what you said in your October 12 email. I was also concerned for your assessment that "it didn't appear" I allowed for any potential sin in RRF&D and AFA. I wrote you.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, October 23, 2010 11:25 AM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: RE: A Final Appeal

I've excerpted a recent email from you below. Two comments raised concerns for me.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 2:45 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: FW: A Final Appeal

Besides the fact that I want to be able to talk with you personally, I'm also convinced (and those I've consulted on this agree) that doing this through e-mail utilizing long documentation, is actually a detriment to reconciliation⁴...

Brent, in the almost 300 pages of documentation you sent me, it doesn't appear that you make any allowance for potential sins that may remain on your part or how your perceptions and approaches may have been flawed...

Here's my first concern, I don't want you responding under compulsion and without any support from Dave, Jeff, Bob, Gary, Pat, Tommy, Joshua, Kenneth, Grant or John who all agree this "is actually a detriment to reconciliation."

⁴ This appears to be an exaggeration (or misrepresentation) intended to put pressure on me to give up the request for a written response. Responding to me in writing now went from being "unwise" and "unhelpful" to downright "detrimental." I certainly felt pressured.

Three days later you reiterated this point but nevertheless changed your mind. You said, "Though it appears we are in disagreement about the wisdom and effectiveness of a written response, I will respond to your request and attempt to provide you with a written response."

Are you sure? It's clear you are writing under some kind of duress since you and all the men around you think it detrimental, unhelpful, and unwise.⁵ Who or what changed your mind?

Here's my second concern. Your comments above also indicate you've sinfully judged me for not inviting correction when that charge is clearly unfounded. Consider a few statements from AFA.

- "In responding to the larger document, please be perfectly honest and share your thoughts in a comprehensive manner. For instance, what aspects of my presentation troubled you, helped you, or convicted you? What points do you agree with or disagree with? Do you believe there is a need for "a restoration of integrity, truth telling and justice in Sovereign Grace so there is no lying, spin, manipulation, lording, cover-up, or partiality?" Do you think others have sinned against me? Or do you believe I've sinned against them?" (AFA, p. 5)
- "I've been open and honest with you. I've put my thoughts and concerns in print. They are open to examination and scrutiny. I've been candid and I welcome the accountability such a format secures. I've also asked for your critique and invited your correction. To these I will gladly respond in print in advance of any meeting. In addition, you are welcome to show my response to others in preparation for any such meeting." (AFA, p. 75)
- "I've also written in detail knowing your propensity to dismiss, distort, and forget past events and conversations. I've endeavored to only make assertions I can support with facts and evidence. I have no interest in libel. That is one of the reasons I've asked you to respond in writing over the last 10 months - a request you have adamantly refused. I am happy to be corrected. This is my final appeal. You are welcome to provide me an objective response of a similar nature to these documents. But I must hear from you." (AFA, p. 164)

This example of judging illustrates why it is so important to interact with you in writing. If these things were simply said in conversation, I'd have little hope

⁵ This was how you presented the men. It doesn't seem to be an accurate portrayal of their perspective on providing a written response. If that is true, I trust they will follow up with you regarding your deceit.

you'd recall them accurately or responsibly. In my experience, you'd likely dismiss this entire illustration as valid and feel no need to ask forgiveness.

I'd also point out that RRF&D was in response to your request that I share ways in which you sinned against me. That's what I did.⁶ In any case, my comments regarding input and correction above included what I wrote you in RRF&D. The invitation stands.

Dave emailed to assure me you were "not being coerced or forced."

From: Dave Harvey
Sent: Saturday, October 23, 2010 1:07 PM
To: Brent Detwiler; Nora Earles
Cc: Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: RE: A Final Appeal

...It is also his desire to provide you with a written response, although I think that may take a little time. But he is not being coerced or forced to respond in writing, it is his desire to do so.

Joshua wrote me on Facebook expressing gladness for your willingness to write and my willingness to produce RRF&D and AFA. I appreciated his note.

"I'm glad he's agreed to write a response to you"⁷... I want you to know I understand why you wrote them. And more than that I'm glad you wrote them because we need to deal with all this." (October 19, 2010)

You wrote back regarding my two concerns.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject:

⁶ But I also asked for correction regarding RRF&D on June 21. I wrote, "In responding to the larger document [RRF&D], please be perfectly honest and share your thoughts in a comprehensive manner. For instance, what aspects of my presentation troubled you, helped you, or convicted you? What points do you agree with or disagree with? Do you believe there is a need for "a restoration of integrity, truth telling and justice in Sovereign Grace so there is no lying, spin, manipulation, lording, cover-up, or partiality?" Do you think others have sinned against me? Or do you believe I've sinned against them?..."

⁷ It sure didn't sound as if Joshua was "convinced" writing me was "unwise," "unhelpful," and "detrimental." I'll leave it to him to follow up with you. Did you misrepresent him in any way?

Brent,

I understand your first concern and let me attempt to address it and I hope this helps. I still think that written correspondence is less beneficial⁸ than face-to-face conversation and has the potential to aggravate misunderstanding. But since you have refused to talk in person until I provided you a response in written form I thought it was wise to risk those misunderstandings than to have no communication whatsoever and prolong the estrangement. So this was entirely my decision and I do this in hope of one day meeting with you and pursuing reconciliation. My only regret is that I wish I had done this sooner. Given my concerns about communication of this nature in written form I was hoping to persuade you⁹ to meet with me. When I was convinced this wouldn't happen¹⁰ I wanted to do all I can to cultivate trust with you so that hopefully one day we can meet in person.

And as to your second point I think you are accurate in pointing out that I have overlooked statements you have made where you invited correction and disagreement. Please forgive me for doing so. I did not intend to judge you, but I can see why you could feel I was. My statement, "...it doesn't appear that you make any allowance for potential sins that may remain on your part..." was intended to communicate that I hadn't come to a conclusion on this, but my wording is not clear enough and left the door open for you to feel judged. I'm sorry to have inflicted another wound¹¹ on you. Of course, it's entirely possible that I'm deceiving myself and was sinfully judging as I wrote those words. I promise to continue praying for God to take off any blinders on this and similar issues, and I also commit to inviting others to help me examine my heart.¹² If God does show me I have sinfully judged you in this regard, I will get back to you¹³ and ask your forgiveness. Thank you for this correction and thank you for inviting my correction and your openness to discuss all sides of our past interactions. I appreciate this evidence of humility in your life.

⁸ "Less beneficial" – wow, that was quite a downgrade.

⁹ It didn't feel like gentle persuasion. More like pressure starting with "I won't be putting together a written response to your document on March 20 and ending with "I'm also convinced...that doing this through e-mail utilizing long documentation, is actually a detriment to reconciliation" on Oct. 12.

¹⁰ It seems you were leveraging me.

¹¹ This was a minor cut. I am accustomed to more serious lacerations. I don't mean to be harsh but you are well known for this kind of recklessness. You've left a lot of people bleeding because of your carelessness and hasty judgments. Please learn to do your homework before you pull a knife. Then use a scalpel not a splitting wedge.

¹² Did you follow up with the Sovereign Grace Board of Directors? Did the Board follow up with you? It doesn't appear that either happened. More later.

¹³ I've not heard anything. I assume Heaven is quiet.

Brent, let me conclude by thanking you for sending me these documents. I am deriving much benefit from reading them¹⁴ and reviewing them with others.¹⁵ As I read them by God's grace I am perceiving more of my sin, more clearly. I deeply regret not perceiving more of my sin years ago when you and Dave first brought this to my attention. And even though I thought I had addressed these issues sufficiently years ago and that we had resolved our differences, it's obvious to me now that I was mistaken. So I am grateful for your care expressed in and through these documents and the opportunity to attempt to address these issues again and hopefully do so more humbly and effectively. There are a number of ways I have been dull to perceive my sin due to the pride in my heart. And though I am greatly saddened by my sin and eager to acknowledge where I've sinned against you, I am hopeful that I can be forgiven by God for my many sins, one day ask your forgiveness (which I know you will graciously extend to me) and hopefully avoid duplicating these sins in the future. This morning the words of John Newton served my soul:

"The purpose of God in showing believers the evil of their own hearts is to make them prize more highly the grace and all-sufficiency of Jesus."

So thanks for sending these documents and thanks for your patience with me. I look forward to meeting with you when you are convinced I am sufficiently trustworthy to interact with in person.

Because of the Cross,
CJ

You asked my forgiveness for overlooking my requests for correction regarding personal sin. I wrote you back.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 8:09 AM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Overlooking Statements

Thanks for your note C.J. and willingness to review my documents with others. I'm not sure forgiveness is necessary for overlooking my statements but it is certainly granted. I'm glad to hear you're finding the documents of some benefit. Grace to you as you continue to seek the Lord.

¹⁴ I genuinely appreciate your gratitude so pardon the polite sarcasm. It is good to know you're experienced the "detrimental" affects of corresponding in print.

¹⁵ Another reason I put them in writing.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 5:59 PM
To: Nora Earles; Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: Overlooking Statements

As I thought about it there is no need to forgive you for simply overlooking statements. That's morally free. I think there are other questions to ask but I'll leave additional counsel in the hands of those around you.¹⁶

The Need for Discerning and Courageous Friends

It is very difficult to hold you accountable. The men around you tend to applaud you but not correct you when it is needed. They know the high value you place on affirmation and provide you constant encouragement. They also know your tendency to distance yourself from those who speak into your life with discernment and courage. As a result, they hold back their honest thoughts.¹⁷ Your friends realize you are easily condemned on the one hand and easily angered on the other hand. It is a lot more fun to commend you than confront you. No one wants to fall out of your favor so few are willing to provide the input you need. I'd also say you tend to gather social friends who laugh with you, create fun times for you, continuously affirm you, and avoid the correction of you.

Holding you to a high standard is an undesirable task. It can result in despair and anguish of soul including the loss of friendship and the accompanying alienation and isolation. It is a difficult task. It requires courage in the face of fear. It is a costly task. One's livelihood (e.g., salary increases, bonuses and promotions) often depends upon your assessment. Men don't want to give you any reason not to like them or find fault with them. Individuals are tempted to accommodate you, seek to impress you, and flatter you. Rather than "greater strictness" (James 3:1 - ESV), they show you greater leniency. They may excuse character deficiencies in light of your extensive gifting (which can be confused with godliness), enjoyable personality, or generous treatment. A few of these men are more concerned about their self-interest and self-perseveration than the glory of God and your eternal good.

As a result you've been allowed to play by a different set of rules for a long time. I am partly to blame. I am guilty of all the things mentioned above. C.J., you need people

¹⁶ I hoped the SGM Board of Directors would "take the hint" and follow up with you.

¹⁷ Which everyone has freely admitted.

around you who are fearless. Men who are willing to lose their jobs, risk their reputations, and experience your rejection if necessary. Man pleasing is a temptation for many who surround you. They crave your approval. Some of them have told me so. This does not serve you. You must have men who will relate to you with courage and impartiality. This is hard since your response to correction is often intimidating and frightening. As a result, people don't usually come back to provide more of it. They are happy to stay on the sidelines and watch (or assume) others play the game.

On those occasions when correction is supplied and you respond positively, there can be an inordinate amount of praise and a paucity of on-going accountability. As a result, little or no lasting fruit is produced. That's what happen in 2004. Men can feel relieved after correcting you but growth is not been secured by the grace of God. In fact, friends may be exhausted from their pursuit or engagement of you. They happily rejoice at any evidence of grace but do not provide the necessary follow-up.

I have a high regard for Joshua and Kenneth. I "implicated" Kenneth several times in RRF&D and AFA and I believe justly so. Nevertheless, I believe him to be one of your finest and bravest men. He can help you. So can others like Gary Ricucci and Grant Layman if inserted into your life. I believe Grant is the most discerning of your heart but I can imagine his hesitancy to speak up as your brother in law. Joshua is humble. He fights timidity in relation to you but I think his integrity and love for you is sufficient to overcome it. He has what it takes but he must make time to interact with you and address you. Here is some meaningful correspondence between us.

Joshua Harris

October 19, 2010 at 10:55 pm

Facebook

Dear Brent,

I'm spending my evening reading your document "A Final Appeal." In an odd way I feel like I've been getting a lot of time with you! So I thought I would write and say hello. And also to tell you that I am praying for you and CJ and all Sovereign Grace.

I'm learning things in reading these documents that I didn't know 6 years ago. Six years ago I dropped out of that process in an effort to keep the peace.¹⁸ This time, I want you to know that I'm not going to drop out. Out of love for all parties involved, most importantly out of a love for God's glory, I'm asking God to give me the courage to share honestly and humbly and truthfully all I've

¹⁸ I love his honesty. And it was somewhat understandable. You just turned Covenant Life Church over to him as the new sr. pastor. He was 29 years old. Joshua wasn't the only one who "dropped out of the process." That's what people do with you in general.

seen.¹⁹ I've been seeking to do this with CJ already. I'm glad he's agreed to write a response to you. And I'm hopeful that a mediator can be chosen. I've told him I think a mediator is needed and that I'll fully answer²⁰ all the questions this mediator has. Obviously I can't speak to all the matters you raise in your documents. But I want you to know I understand why you wrote them. And more than that I'm glad you wrote them²¹ because we need to deal with all this.²²

Please say hello to Jenny for me. Hope you're well.

Joshua

Brent Detwiler

October 28, 2010 at 7:49 am

Facebook

Dear Joshua,

I genuinely appreciate your willingness to be an integral part of the process working out in C.J.'s life. He needs you. I hope the men around C.J. will also take the opportunity to share courageously, honestly, humbly and truthfully. I assume you are encouraging them to do this very thing. C.J. needs to hear from many voices²³ - not just mine. My voice is shrill in his ears. Others more pleasant. I am praying for his hearing and for your collective speaking. This could prove a turning point in our friend's life. Thanks for writing me Joshua.

Brent

I also appreciated this note from Kenneth.

Kenneth Maresco

October 31, 2010 at 12:55 pm

Facebook

¹⁹ I love his integrity. People have seen a lot but they have not been willing to address it. The greatest need is for courage. The prospect of correcting you is "scary" even for the likes of Joshua and Kenneth.

²⁰ When men provide you input they hold back. It is typically partial, not complete.

²¹ I was shocked. I had just the opposite impression from all you had written me. That is, I assumed Joshua thought the use of email was detrimental. His encouragement was the first from anyone in a long time. It was meaningful to me.

²² I agree. Not just some of it but all of it. Unfortunately, you and the Board only addressed part of it in your responses to RRF&D and AFA.

²³ Three weeks later on Nov 17, twelve men convened and "shared their perspective and experience" with you. There is strength (i.e., courage) in numbers.

I too have been reading your documents. And I hope and pray as we move forward we will have the opportunity to talk further. Please pray for humility, wisdom and courage in my life.

So much of what you include [in RRF&D and AFA] related to the process we were involved in, I was unaware of (the stuff before Aug 20), or simply not catching²⁴ (the [Nov 19, 2004] notes from your conversation in Charlotte with CJ). I would like to be more specific with you, and look forward to a conversation at a future date as the Lord allows.

Your brother,

Kenneth

Here is the update I received from Jeff regarding the meeting you had with the Sovereign Grace Board, the Covenant Life Board and others on November 17, 2010. It was the first time I heard from the Board regarding the events of the past year including RRF&D and AFA.

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Sunday, November 28, 2010 11:57 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Pat Ennis; Josh Harris
Subject: Information for You

Dear Brent,

I hope you are well. I think of and pray for you often.

On behalf of the Sovereign Grace Leadership Team, I wanted to inform you of a meeting which took place on Wednesday, Nov. 17. The Sovereign Grace board gathered with the Covenant Life governing board, (along with Bob Kauflin, Steve Shank and Tommy Hill), to explore with C.J. issues related to the two documents you sent to him. Over a period of seven-plus hours, the various men listened as C.J. shared where God was convicting him, asked questions about various issues and events, and shared their perspective and experience with him. The consensus of those participating was that C.J. was perceptive of many ways in which he sinned against you (and others), that he humbly confessed and was grieved over the effects of those sins, and that he welcomed, listened carefully to, and received the observations of others.

²⁴ Due in large measure to his bias which came from you. You were his "interpretive framework."

This meeting was the final one in a series of meetings initiated by C.J. over the past few months. The purpose of these meetings has been for C.J. to hear the perspectives, questions, and observations from various individuals who are either currently involved with caring for C.J., who are functionally involved with C.J., or who were participants in the main events referenced in your documents. It is also our intention that these meetings will serve C.J. in preparing his response and confession relative to your documents.

We thought you would be interested to hear of these meetings.

On behalf of the leadership team,

Jeff

C.J.'s First Response to RRF&D and AFA - Commentary Added

I assume you are perplexed as to why I find your two responses seriously deficient. Let me begin by making some introductory comments using footnotes with respect to your first response from December 16, 2010. Here you go.

From: C.J. Mahaney

Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2010 3:38 PM

To: Brent Detwiler

Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris; Pat Ennis; Bob Kauflin; Steve Shank; Tommy Hill; John Loftness; Gary Ricucci; Robin Boisvert; Grant Layman; Kenneth Maresco; Brian Chesemore; Corby Megorden; Carolyn Mahaney; Chad Mahaney; Ken Sande

Subject: My Response

Brent,

Attached is my written response to your documents. Thanks for your patience with this. I look forward to hearing from you and hopefully meeting with you at some point.

Because of His grace,

C.J.

Dear Brent,

Let me begin with what seems to me to be the only appropriate place to begin, by thanking you for your friendship and your desire to serve me by providing me with these two documents²⁵ that express your perspective, concerns, correction and care for me. I am deeply grateful for your friendship over the years²⁶ and this particular expression of your friendship has helped me to perceive my sin more clearly, experience conviction of sin more deeply and comprehend the effects of my sin more specifically. I deeply regret that I didn't respond humbly to your correction when you first gave it years ago. But the process of reading your documents and asking others to read them and provide me with their evaluation of my life and leadership has, I hope, made (and will continue to make) some discernable difference in my life and leadership by the grace of God. So thank you.

And I am certain I am only beginning to perceive the depth and the pervasiveness of my sin. So from the outset I want you to be aware that I have no doubt this written response is both limited and deficient. I have no doubt I do not perceive all I need to perceive, all the sin in my life that you and others no doubt do perceive. And I am deeply grateful for the patience that has been extended to me by you and all my friends in this process. It is so very kind of you men and I simply don't deserve your kindness and patience. And I regret that no doubt more patience with me will be needed as I pursue a clearer understanding of my sinfulness. My perception of my sin and progress in fighting my sin seems to be so very slow and I often wonder if I am growing at all. But I am resolved to pursue correction and fight my sin in its many forms and I am grateful for this evidence of grace in my heart for I know that apart from the grace of God this resolve would not exist. And I am grateful for your help in fighting my sin. So thank you.²⁷

One more preliminary point I'd like to make that I hope you find helpful. My written response will be brief²⁸ in comparison to your documents (e.g., I've not included e-mails, documentation, etc.) but I hope you find it sufficient to begin a dialogue.²⁹ And

²⁵ RRF&D and AFA are expressions of my love, not bitterness; of my affection, not resentment; of my concern, not sinful anger. I have written to you not others. I have appealed to you not others. During the last two years, hundreds (if not thousands) of people have wondered what happened to me and why I am not in ministry. I've told them I was found unfit for ministry due to pride and unacceptable to Sovereign Grace Ministries due to doctrine and practice. I've kept my answers general, offered little or no defense and remained respectful of Sovereign Grace. Simply put, I've not told them my side of the story or how serious my concerns are for you and others in the ministry. I've not even shared these documents with my family.

²⁶ I've only been aware of your profound displeasure since August 2004.

²⁷ You are welcome.

²⁸ Too brief to be helpful in many respects.

²⁹ I asked that our "dialogue" first occur in writing.

though there are a few different points where I don't agree³⁰ with your perspective at present, there are far more ways I agree³¹ with you and realize I have sinned. I am eager to acknowledge my sins in written form³² for you but even more important, I am eager to ask your forgiveness when we meet. And it is my desire to meet with you as soon as you are comfortable meeting with me in order to confess my sin to you, draw you out about the sin I do perceive, as well as find out what you think I may still be failing to perceive.³³

So this document is my response to your request for a written response. I hope it will begin the process of exploring my sin and the past with you and make it possible for us to meet as soon as possible. That face to face conversation and interaction will no doubt be a powerful means of my experiencing further and clearer conviction, deeper godly sorrow, and genuine repentance.³⁴ I am looking forward to going through your documents with you personally.³⁵ So in anticipation of these future helpful conversations exploring my sin and pursuing reconciliation I want to express my gratefulness in advance. So once again thank you.

I trust these introductory remarks are helpful. And now to the particulars of what I believe God is showing me of my own heart through the means of Scripture, prayer and the correction of friends.

As I consider your documents and have reviewed them with those I serve with and am accountable to, I think there are at least 3 primary issues I want to address.

The first, most important and most obvious issue is the sinful ways I engaged you in the past.

Second, not only did I not respond humbly to the correction you, Dave and Steve were voicing, I failed to address the correction and resolve these important matters after the August 20, 2004 meeting as I should have done. I thought we had resolved all this after the August 20th meeting.³⁶ I thought a plan and process was put in place after that

³⁰ A few points where you don't agree? Far more than that.

³¹ That is not true based on what you've written. Your denials and disagreements outnumber your affirmations and agreements. Cf. your March 11, 2011 response.

³² As it relates to some aspects of pride, which I genuinely appreciate, but you skipped over a wide array of material related to other aspects of pride.

³³ "Failing to perceive?" That would include all the issues and illustrations you failed to address.

³⁴ I think far more of this can result from what I've written. I'd only reiterate in person what I've written and probably with less clarity.

³⁵ I was too but only after you went through them with me in writing.

³⁶ This highlights your deception and/or deceit. Contrary to our many appeals you refused to talk with us about our relationships or your sins. There was no attempt by you to resolve anything after August 20, 2004. I don't know how you can conclude we resolved anything let alone everything. We repeatedly communicated this to you, Bob and Kenneth.

meeting that everyone was satisfied with.³⁷ And I thought I was sufficiently perceiving and confessing my sin.³⁸ Well, I was wrong.³⁹

And finally, I failed to lead us in deepening our relationships⁴⁰ with one another as a team through appropriate confession, correction and accountability overall. So from my perspective (and I am deeply grieved as I type this) the presence of pride and the absence of humility in my life were the primary reasons why this wasn't resolved and why we weren't closer and more effective as a team.

As for my sin it seems to me that PRIDE is THE sin and the primary category so much of my sin fits under (although other sins are most definitely present as well). So the following are simply headings that I hope capture what I perceive to date as my sin and as I have already stated, I am sure my perception of my sin remains limited and faulty. But I am grateful to God for the gift of sight in relation to the following sins:

- 1) I have been arrogantly confident in my perception of my own heart and my discernment in relation to others. As I look back this is a pronounced and persistent pattern of sin that I did not even begin to perceive until the end of this season of correction.⁴¹ I vividly remember the meeting with a few of the CLC pastors where I began to perceive what I know was obvious to you and others. I proudly trusted my own discernment and consistently disagreed with your correction, dismissed your correction, and, blinded by my pride, failed to inform the CLC guys about your correction in specific and appropriate ways even after assuring you men I would.⁴² And I failed to inform you of ways they were correcting me as well.⁴³ Brent, to the best of my recollection I was not

³⁷ We asked for "a plan and process" at the August 20, 2004 meeting and subsequently; but were always denied one by you or the CLC pastors. This was clearly noted in the minutes.

³⁸ You never confessed to Dave, Steve, Pat or me anything you acknowledged in writing.

³⁹ Yes but more importantly, I hope you see how deceived you've been about all three of these points. What you believed to be true was the exact opposite of what was true.

⁴⁰ It is true you did not "deepen" our relationships but you state this very positively. In reality you made no effort to maintain or rescue our relationships despite our many appeals. In fact, you continuously denied ever being "resentful, distrustful or withdrawing" when you felt "misunderstood, judged, or sinned against" by us.

⁴¹ You first confessed your pride of superior discernment to Dave, Steve and me on separate occasions during the month of July in 2003 - that was seven years earlier. You and I talked over lunch at Applebee's on July 4 at Celebration Mid South at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. It was a hopeful time. Unfortunately, your confession took no root and bore little to no fruit.

⁴² This is called lying. On numerous occasions, you deliberately withheld unfavorable information you were explicitly asked to share with others and you promised to share with others. Your promises were worthless and repeatedly broken. You never kept your word in this regard.

⁴³ Which they asked you to do. So why didn't you inform us? Did you also withhold their correction from us because you deemed it worthless? Or worse, did you promise to tell us and then deceitfully break your word to the CLC pastors also?

deliberately hiding information.⁴⁴ But because of my pride and confidence in my perception I dismissed these observations and didn't think it necessary to share them. I see now that was wrong and I should have shared them. I also now perceive that the sinful self-confidence with which I made these choices was destructive to trust, and makes your concerns of deceit and hypocrisy more than understandable.⁴⁵ Too often I have been the one to determine whether someone's correction of me was accurate or not, and therefore whether it's worthy of passing on to others. Too often I have been wise in my own eyes, and viewed others with haughty eyes. (Proverbs 12:15; 21:2; 26:12). So you and Dave were accurate in the following assessment of me:

"To correct CJ, or to challenge his own self-perception, was to experience a reaction⁴⁶ through e-mails, consistent disagreement (without seeking to sufficiently understand), a lack of sufficient follow up and occasionally, relational withdrawal. Along with this, CJ was poor in volunteering areas of sin, temptation or weakness in himself."

On page 23 of your first document you made the following comment at the August 20th meeting:

"Wonders if in his pride CJ didn't think that he needed others to figure things out."

There were too many times when this observation was true about me and my trust in my discernment.

- 2) I was not easy to entreat. The summation above references this but it deserves its own acknowledgement. When you and Dave corrected me I would often question your motives, or take exception to your wording or a particular illustration⁴⁷ you referenced. Instead I should have humbly listened and made it easy for you to express your perspective and correction, drawing you out in every way possible and learning what I could from your correction. I proudly presumed to address specks in your eyes with logs protruding from my own

⁴⁴ Would you accept this explanation from your son, Chad? I don't think you're being honest with yourself. Did you have any concern for the "incriminating" effects such information might have on others? If so, you withheld it deceitfully, not just pridefully.

⁴⁵ There remains no acknowledgment of lying, deceit or hypocrisy.

⁴⁶ This has been true over our 30 year history. How can this not be communicated to the movement? To the pastors? How can there be no discipline? Cf. 1 Tim 3:2, "An overseer, then, must be above reproach..." Cf. 1 Tim. 5:20, "Those [elders] who continue to sin, rebuke..."

⁴⁷ I must refresh your memory. You repudiated all our illustrations and never acknowledged the legitimacy of any with two exceptions. One related to Dave. The other related to Bo.

eyes.⁴⁸ This was quite obviously a serious evidence of pride. I wouldn't have perceived it then. To some degree I do now.

For example when you identified my not sharing the team's observations of me with the CLC pastors as involving an element of hypocrisy, I took exception to that label⁴⁹ instead of exploring the substance of your concern. In my pride I disputed the use of the word "hypocrisy" which prevented me from humbly listening to the correction of a friend. I can imagine the effect this would have on you⁵⁰ and Dave and it grieves me that I made correcting me such an unpleasant task.⁵¹

- 3) I often sinfully judged you.⁵² I would assume that you were offended with me or conclude that your correction was motivated by an offense⁵³ without humbly exploring this possibility with you. If my memory serves I did inform you of this on a few occasions but when you disagreed with me⁵⁴ I persisted in my sinful

⁴⁸ This was your only reference to hypocrisy, though indirectly, and it only pertained to the correction of Dave and me. This is the way you have related to many people over the years.

⁴⁹ I hope you mean "terminology" not "label." "An element of hypocrisy" with regard to one matter was hardly a label. That is the way; however, you tend to overreact to criticism.

⁵⁰ You should review the notes from our November 19, 2004 meeting in Charlotte. You took "exception" to practically everything I said on August 20, 2004. Not just my comment regarding "an element of hypocrisy." Your 21 points of correction had an adverse effect upon me but your correction in the years following was far more devastating.

⁵¹ It was unpleasant but it was also risky. Punishments could follow like relational withdrawal, harsh condemnations, and the downgrading of responsibilities.

⁵² That is true, you frequently judged me (and I appreciate the acknowledgement), but more. You conveyed those sinful judgments to others with serious consequences and ramifications. You deny this effect but how you assessed me and portrayed me to others had a broad impact. You also deny these uncharitable judgments were due to resentment, bitterness or anger. Furthermore, these judgments became hard and fast labels. For instance, "You indicated there were no evidences of grace in my life with regard to being open or transparent, identifying sin; inviting, receiving or considering correction; or asking for input for my personal, married and ministry life. These characteristics were non-existent in my life." (RRF&D, p. 68). This extreme judgment of me was passed onto others like Dave, Steve, Bob, Kenneth, Gene and Larry who treated me in like fashion. Yet you make no mention of anyone else sinfully judging, confronting or condemning me. Further, you address no issues or illustrations related to spiritual abuse or manipulation by you or others. Nor do you say anything about partiality or favoritism. That is, people favoring you and others while they judged me.

⁵³ This has been a life-long habit for you. You quickly "discern" a person is bitter and then dismiss their input. Our correction was judged as resentment born out of offense, not care. This approach to people has also been imbibed by men like Dave, Bob and Gene with terrible consequences. People are silenced as a result. Rather than listening to their concerns they are quickly corrected for being resentful and proud. They are viewed as the ones who are bitter and in need of your discernment. Not the other way around.

⁵⁴ On occasion I disagreed but not always. For instance, I asked your forgiveness for resentment regarding your comment about me not being committed to our larger mission the way other men were in the movement. You forgave me but then denied ever saying such a thing. The denial was not helpful but I was still grateful for your forgiveness.

judgment that you were offended for different reasons. And when you would make certain references in passing, rather than seeking to discover what you meant I sinfully judged you and assumed my perception was accurate. I should have explored my concerns with you and been humbly open to the possibility that you weren't offended and were not motivated by a previous offense when you were correcting me. By holding a high view of myself and failing to be adequately suspicious of my own heart, my response in the face of an evaluation I disagreed with was to be critical of the one bringing the evaluation.⁵⁵

For example when you referenced the possibility of my stepping down I sinfully judged you and assumed you were motivated by an offense against me. Clearly, you were stating that as a hypothetical and in no way were you advocating this. In fact you reiterated your support of me and expressed your desire for me to continue to the lead the team.⁵⁶ I can now better understand how my sinful judgment of you [was] so hurtful and offensive and I am grieved by the effects of my sinful judgment toward you.

- 4) My confession of sin to you men lacked specific illustrations⁵⁷ of my sin. In my pride I thought acknowledging my sins in general⁵⁸ to you and Dave was sufficient. The e-mail confessions⁵⁹ I provided on August 10 and October 13 2004 would be examples of this. Often I didn't agree with the illustrations⁶⁰ you and Dave provided because of my confidence in my own discernment. And here again I would sinfully judge you and Dave as it seemed to me you were insisting⁶¹ that if I didn't acknowledge a particular illustration of my sin that I

⁵⁵ This too is a major problem for Dave, Bob and Gene.

⁵⁶ In light of your acknowledgement now, why did you judge me then? What was going on in your heart besides pride? Why did you take such offense? Why did you distort my words? Why did you misrepresent me to others? You deny any of these things were due to bitterness, resentment or anger for the correction and accountability I was providing you but I believe Proverbs 9:7-8 provides a biblical diagnosis for what was happening. From the NASU, "He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, and he who reproves a wicked man gets insults for himself. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, reprove a wise man and he will love you." Dishonor, insults, and hate followed. Steve also judged me with regard to you being the team leader and passed on his sinful perspective to others (cf. RRF&D, p. 52). Like Bob, Steve enabled you in sin. This kind of judgment was not occasional but frequent as you pointed out. I was condemned for supposedly wanting you to step down as team leader when I was actually advocating for you as team leader. This type of judgment was characteristic of the last seven years.

⁵⁷ It didn't just lack illustrations, it was devoid of illustrations.

⁵⁸ Something you would never let others get away with – that is, confessing categories of sin to someone but without any specific examples.

⁵⁹ Which you would never allow as sufficient for anyone else. You told us it was wrong for any of us to limit a significant confession of sin to email. That it must be done in person or at least by phone.

⁶⁰ You mean almost never agreed with our illustrations? Not "often."

⁶¹ Not "insisting" just trying to hold you accountable.

wasn't truly confessing my sin.⁶² I should have explored your illustrations more humbly and carefully and if I didn't perceive or agree with a particular illustration I could have and should have provided you with a different one from my life that I was aware of and could acknowledge. I was proudly dismissing your illustrations and not providing you with specific illustrations of my sin. This reflected my high view of myself and my failure to adequately allow the gospel to expose my heart, and remind me of just how great a sinner I am.

- 5) I would at times sinfully withdraw from you and Dave when you corrected me. This would be yet another manifestation of pride in my life. Not only did I consistently and proudly dismiss your correction but then I would distance myself from you and withdraw my affection.⁶³ As I reflect on this I think it's an expression of self pity⁶⁴ and resentment.⁶⁵ I can see now that at times after you would correct me I would take less initiative, be less enthusiastic and less encouraging.⁶⁶ It was both proud and selfish of me to withdraw from you at any time but particularly after you had expressed your care for me through correction. So from the time you first voiced your concerns and correction I should have pursued you, drawn you out and pressed in to your correction and been grateful for this expression of friendship. I deeply regret the effect of this sin upon you and our relationship.⁶⁷

- Although I didn't perceive it at the time, my pride was particularly revealed when you would question my integrity.⁶⁸ I see that much more clearly now. So at different times (when dealing with topics like confession of sin, accountability; vacation time) I would sinfully react to your observations/concerns and sinfully judge you. Due to a high estimation of myself and my perceived integrity, I didn't carefully consider your correction/concern. This was my pride both in

⁶² We were trying to help you see the vast difference between a written confession comprised of general categories versus going to particular people to ask forgiveness for specific and actual sins.

⁶³ This is the first time you've ever acknowledged doing this to a person. Since December 2000 you have steadfastly and strenuously denied withdrawing your affection and distancing yourself from anyone. This is a great development because it goes to your treatment of people when resentful. You reject them. I hope you see this as a pattern and not an instance simply related to Dave and me in the past.

⁶⁴ Which required inordinate encouragement to keep you engaged and happy.

⁶⁵ Resentment is a major issue for you but what is it's root? I think it is due to your love of reputation and high opinion of yourself. When these are threatened or adjusted you tend to react angrily. I should also mention, this is the closest you come to acknowledging any specific resentment in your heart toward Dave or me. You always denied being bitter or angry at us. That denial continues.

⁶⁶ The three "lesses" are understatements. "Less encouraging" – sorry, you were not encouraging; but, you were critical.

⁶⁷ Thanks but what sinful effects do you have in mind? The sinful rejection of me continued long after August 20, 2004. For the next five years, I experienced the punishing effects of your purposeful withdrawal (if you consider your "separation of heart" letter from January 14, 2010 a new start). Your distancing was not passive. Functionally changes in our work relationship were also introduced.

⁶⁸ To date you have acknowledge no lack of integrity in your life and ministry.

having a high estimation of myself and in my desire that you share that estimation.⁶⁹ For example when you contacted me about how many vacation days it appeared I had taken that year, I should have been appreciative of your care for me and my schedule and thanked you for your concern about maintaining integrity in relation to vacation days. Instead I sinfully judged you and my follow up emails were motivated by a desire to demonstrate my integrity. As a result I made it difficult⁷⁰ rather than easy for you to interact with me on this topic. You were simply caring for me and trying to do your job. And I failed to acknowledge or appreciate your encouragement about my work ethic. Regretfully, my response revealed my arrogance and this was a pattern when my integrity was questioned.⁷¹ Sadly, it still can be.

- I failed to follow up on my confessions⁷² of August 10 and October 13, 2004 with you men. Although I think I was beginning to perceive certain sins within myself and that these confessions were sincere, my pride was still present in assuming these written confessions were sufficient.⁷³ I should have followed up on these confessions and elaborated on them, providing you with specific illustrations of my sin and drawing you out about my sin. Each time I submitted a written confession I should have both expressed my gratefulness for your care and correction, and invited your further observations and questions. Perhaps if I had done this, you would have been more confident of my conviction of sin and repentance, and you wouldn't have felt as if the tables were being turned on

⁶⁹ I appreciate this acknowledgement. You covet and crave agreement in keeping with your high self estimation. Unfortunately, your high opinion of your integrity has not been adjusted downward. Nevertheless I am glad you see the correlation between your love of reputation and sinfully reacting to the correction of others. This love of reputation is a prominent idol for you. It is behind much of your anger at others when corrected or judged, rightly or wrongly. It is also behind attempts at damage control and the withholding of information.

⁷⁰ It was a nightmare. You say nothing about the abusive way you involved Bob and had him confront me for my supposed sins against you. This kind of experience would deter most people from ever trying to raise ethical concern with you again. This kind of lording can easily result in a corrupt work environment due to the silencing of employees. As a result, no one speaks up until it is too late and then they have to blow the whistle because of pangs of conscience. This has been happening in Sovereign Grace Ministries at large for the past several years with increasing intensity and frequency. People are speaking up.

⁷¹ C.J., you must come to grips with the lack of honesty in your life. In both responses to me, you acknowledge no lack of integrity or love of reputation.

⁷² Not "failed." You intentionally chose not to follow up when requested. No one in the movement could get away with this.

⁷³ Assumed sufficient? When has that been the standard in Sovereign Grace Ministries? That is, writing general confessions with no personal interaction or the asking of forgiveness for sinful behavior. No, you willfully refused to interact when asked. Additionally, you previously denounced e-mail confessions as insufficient. This was a clear cut example of hypocrisy. One set of rules for others, another set of rules for you as determined by you.

you⁷⁴ when I met with you in November in Charlotte. I can understand how it seemed to you⁷⁵ like I was attempting to turn the attention away from myself during our time together in Charlotte. Brent, I did have concerns about your attitude and approach to correction (and I was encouraged by others to share those concerns), but I can see now that this was not the time for me to register those concerns. I was also concerned for what I perceived as a SovGrace approach to correcting pastors⁷⁶ that I thought it was necessary to address and adjust.⁷⁷ But again this was not the time⁷⁸ for me to explore any concern I had for you personally or SovGrace in general. To do so would be in effect to change the rules at the moment I was the object of the correction. It grieves me to recognize that my reaction to you men, in some ways, reflected the very attitude I wanted to address.⁷⁹ It is all so obvious to me now but it wasn't obvious to me then. It was not obvious to me then because of my pride.

All of the above categories of sin are described on page 10 of your first document:

1. "Can become resentful, distrustful or withdraw when he feels misunderstood, judged, or sinned against by others."
2. "Can judge or prematurely come to conclusions about others based on limited or incomplete information."
3. "When correcting or disagreeing can communicate his assessment or perspective too strongly or categorically."

⁷⁴ This was not a matter of feeling. It was a matter of fact. Your trip to Charlotte was a "table flipping" experience. It had a punishing effect. To correct you was to be corrected by you.

⁷⁵ This didn't "seem" to happen, it did happen. From August 20, 2004 until November 25, 2005, the tables were turned and the focus was entirely upon Dave and me. We gave up greatly exasperated.

⁷⁶ When errant, "The Sovereign Grace approach to correcting" was your approach to correcting. No doubt your example and counsel has had a serious impact on the movement (e.g., Steve Shank's handling of Larry Tomczak, Benny Phillips, Paul Palmer, Keith Jacob, Dave Bendinelli, etc.).

⁷⁷ That is the pot calling the kettle black. This prideful approach to people (I will elaborate later) has been principally model by you and communicated to others via the counsel you give them for pastoral or church situations. You have often been arrogant and severe in your handling of people (e.g. Larry Tomczak, Ken Roberts, etc.). I don't think you realize the extent of the problem.

⁷⁸ Expressing your concerns was not a matter of bad timing. It would have been perfectly fine to express any and all disagreements or concerns for me at the August 20, 2004 (something you were already doing before the meeting with Joshua and Steve but without Dave and my knowledge). Three months later made little difference. It was not the timing that primarily affected Dave and me. It was the substance of your correction that was of greatest concern. Most everything you shared with me was fallacious in fact and judgmental in attitude. You were anxious to address us because you were offended by the magnitude of our perceived sin. You refuted most every point and denied every illustration. You were correct about us and we were wrong about you or so you thought. We needed to be adjusted, not you.

⁷⁹ An understatement.

4. "Can lack gentleness and not perceive the unhelpful effect of his words, actions or decisions upon an individual."
5. "Can be difficult to correct and help because he often disagrees with or has a different perspective on illustrations."
6. "Infrequently makes us aware of specific sins or the correction others are bringing to him."

I agree with all of your observations.⁸⁰ This was often what you and Dave experienced when you corrected me. And if had been more humble years ago I would have perceived them at the time. I regret I wasn't and didn't.

Brent, on page 107-108 in your second document you list 4 questions that at that time remained unanswered. Well, they should have been answered⁸¹ and I have no excuse for postponing my answers and my pride is the only explanation⁸² for why they weren't answered at the time. So here at this very late date are my answers:

1. I did not initiate or inform you men of the sin I was perceiving and the correction I was receiving from the CLC guys after the Aug 20, 2004 meeting. I should have.
2. I should have talked with you about the e-mail confession of Oct 13⁸³ so you could understand how I came to perceive what I acknowledged and whether what I acknowledged had any personal bearing on you men. I should have been more explicit and biblically precise in my conviction and confession. I definitely should have asked each of you to men to describe the effect my sin had upon you. I never engaged in this exercise with you men and I deeply regret not doing this. I want to do this with you when we meet. Only a proud man wouldn't do this. Sadly that was why I didn't do this.

⁸⁰ I rejoice and this is encouraging.

⁸¹ Bob and Kenneth also resisted the answering of these vital questions in their protection of you and prosecution of us. Bob more so. We originally asked them for answers (and in so doing asked you) on March 9, 2005. Dave raised these four questions for the last time on Sept 12, 2005. Not only were we denied answers, we were told these critical questions were unhelpful and we were wrong for asking them (Bob even called my hope for answers "sinful expectations."). The tables were turned again. This was intentional. You were defying accountability and others were shielding you. Why didn't friends speak up? In the future, I have hope Joshua, Grant and Kenneth will conduct themselves differently. I am not as hopeful for Bob or Steve.

⁸² So too is deceit and manipulation of the situation.

⁸³ Once again, you say nothing about your blatant hypocrisy. And nothing about your deceit. Dave and I asked that you and the CLC pastors dialogue over the October 13 confession and then get back to us. No one ever did. In fact, according to Kenneth you told him you talked to us about the confession when you never did. I've not looked further into this example of possible lying.

3. Your concern about the pattern of withdrawal and resentment⁸⁴ was legitimate and often accurate. And I should have provided you with specific illustrations.⁸⁵
4. I should have led us in a discussion and decision⁸⁶ about the appropriate men outside of the team each of us could involve in matters related to each of us. I did not do this.

This was simply more of my arrogant and presumptuous self confidence leading to poor leadership on my part. If I had been more humble⁸⁷ in receiving correction from you and Dave and led humbly after the August 20 meeting, I am confident the issues of my sin and their effect on you men would have been resolved. I believe that if I had been more humble, easy to entreat and more specific in my confession you men would have been gracious and forgiving. You men certainly deserved better leadership than I provided and I will always regret not walking humbly.

So that would be a brief overview of what I am perceiving from your documents and in my interactions with guys in Sovereign Grace and CLC who have reviewed your documents and met with me to give me their perspective. Brent, as I stated at the outset, the only thing I am certain of is that this would be just a portion of my sin. I am eager to meet with you to acknowledge my sin and ask your forgiveness for these sins and the effect of these sins upon you. I am eager to meet with you and hopefully this time ask you questions, draw you out, humbly listen and be easy to entreat as I should have been years ago in hope that I can still benefit from your correction and insight into my sin.

Now, you have invited me to inform you where I have a different perspective than you. Thank you for inviting this. It is humble of you to do so. But it is awkward for me to transition to any specific and detailed communication of where at present I might differ from you because of the sins I have just acknowledged to you. One thing I don't want is to in any way minimize my sin or distract from my sin. So I am reluctant to discuss in this letter where I disagree with you at present. So I'm thinking that I should

⁸⁴ You've always denied resenting me. Is this an admission? If so, what specific things did you resent and why?

⁸⁵ You still can.

⁸⁶ True. I made many suggestions regarding accountability and confession at the August 20, 2004 meeting (cf. RRF&D, pp. 27-28). Joshua said "we will definitely consider those things" but no one followed up with me. I also called for specific action. For example, "For the next year, [Brent] would like one of the guys on the CLC team to fill the team in quarterly on how things are going, as part of the monthly team phone call. Would probably take an hour. If something significant occurs, positive or negative, Brent would want someone to call him. Also, as things come up with the pastoral team, they will point CJ back to the pastoral team." None of this happened. I also followed up after the August 20th meeting looking for answers and action but to no avail. The wagons had circled around you.

⁸⁷ A "little" humble would have gone a long way. "More" implies you were humble but just not enough.

postpone responding to your kind and humble invitation to voice my disagreement to another time. It would be my preference to explore my disagreements with you on a few points only after I have communicated my sins, asked forgiveness for my sins and the effect of my sins, drawn you out about these sins and anything else you think I'm not perceiving. Perhaps our first meeting (or two, or as many as it takes) could be all about my sins and then we could set up a subsequent meeting where we can explore the areas we see differently. And as you know I think it would be wise to involve a mediator (someone we both agree upon) if necessary. I would be eager to invite a mediator to dig as deeply as they want into my life in order to fully address your concerns. I trust you would be willing to allow them to help you conduct a similar kind of self-examination. So perhaps these options are worth considering. Please let me know what you think.

One of the issues you brought up was the need for me to confess my sins to a wider audience.⁸⁸ I am eager to make a specific confession⁸⁹ of my sin where necessary and appropriate.⁹⁰ That's why I am eager to meet with you, and that's why I've already met with a number of leaders I work with—these meetings have included specific confession of my sin along the lines given above. And I thank God that these men have been gracious and forgiving. I don't assume this is the end of the process and as I meet with you and understand your perspective more fully, I'm trusting that will guide me and those I am accountable to concerning what further confession might be appropriate.⁹¹ And let me assure you that any decision about where my confession is necessary and appropriate isn't my decision, but will fall to the board of Sovereign Grace. I am fully submitted to them and will do whatever they ask and confess as widely as they ask.⁹² In fact, I welcome this direction since I do not trust my own

⁸⁸ I've asked you to do this on your own initiative but to date you've seen no need and expressed no interest in doing so.

⁸⁹ I understand "specific confession" to mean "narrow confession." That is, to a limited number of individuals.

⁹⁰ I don't have confidence in the SGM Board of Directors to righteously determine what is "necessary" and "appropriate" in this regard. For example, by now you should already have confessed with specificity to all the CLC pastors, to the senior management (past and present) at SGM and to the regional men working with the churches. To the best of my knowledge none of these have transpired.

⁹¹ I say this humbly, it should be obvious to you and the Board. Actually, I believe it is evident to you. It comes down to doing what you already know is right and necessary.

⁹² The Board of Directors studied RRF&D for 12 months and AFA for 5 months. Plus, they have their own observations of you and the observations of many others (e.g. from the Nov 17, 2010 meeting with you). Yet in their March 11, 2011 response to me, they claim to "need much more information" before they can decide whether you should confess to the movement or the SGM pastors. At present, they see no need for it. Therefore, the sins you have acknowledged do not rise to the level of seriousness where public confession is required in their opinion. I believe this determination reflects their bias against the truth and their favoritism towards you though I don't assume unanimity in this regard. They do not need more information to make a decision regarding the necessity for a widespread confession. Most importantly, they should not need to ask you for a confession. Why would you even put them in that position?

evaluation about what is appropriate or necessary. It is my understanding that the Sovereign Grace board (apart from me) will be sending you their perspective on your documents and my response to your documents.

I also want to acknowledge that confessing my sin does not end the process God is calling me to pursue in response to your letters. I want my confessions to be accompanied by appropriate repentance and ongoing and specific heart and life changes. And even though I did not fully hear your observations and concerns until now, I believe I did hear at least some of what you (and others) brought to my attention six years ago, and I hope that the men I'm accountable to would observe at least a degree of change in my life since then. I believe that change has only intensified over the past nine months.⁹³ And I think a commitment to ongoing change also involves the SGM board and others who work closely with me holding me accountable⁹⁴ when I stumble or lag in this sanctification process.

Brent, I hope you will find my response an honest evaluation of my heart prompted by your concerns and informed by the correction of those I serve with. I am sure in many ways it is inadequate and insufficient and I appeal for your patience and ask for your help. And it seems to me that there is much material in your documents that will require extended conversations.⁹⁵ Many of the e-mails you reference need to be filled out by conversations⁹⁶ and can only effectively be explored when we are together.⁹⁷ And I hope we can get together soon.

One more thing. The separation between you and Sovereign Grace was for me one of the saddest days in my ministry experience. I understand this could be difficult for you

⁹³ The past nine months - basically March 17 (RRF&D) to Dec 16 (C.J.'s First Response to RRF&D and AFA)

⁹⁴ You need a clearly defined plan. Those holding you accountable must be held accountable for providing you the accountability you need.

⁹⁵ In accord with your promise, there is much more material you could easily have responded to in writing in advance of conversations.

⁹⁶ Most of my e-mails are passed over without comment. They may need to be "filled out by conversations" but they first need to be "filled in" with correspondence.

⁹⁷ A lot more progress could have been made if you were completely open, honest, candid, and forthcoming in your written responses. I've added endnotes to RRF&D and AFA to illustrate what I mean. Please review them. They are very important. Moreover, personal conversations and meetings have frequently not involved dialogue where disagreement is welcomed. They've often been punishing, judgmental, silencing, manipulative or even abusive. As a result, I've been unwilling to meet with people until I get straight answers to important questions in advance. In most cases, people have refused to answer questions and be transparent and accountable in print.

to believe.⁹⁸ It is my sincere hope that you will one day be a part of Sovereign Grace again.⁹⁹ And when you and I are together I hope I can convince you of this.¹⁰⁰

Because of the cross,

CJ

Correspondence with C.J.'s Regarding His First Response

I hoped to wait on getting back to you regarding your December 16, 2010 response until after I heard from the Board of Directors. Their response was slow in coming, so I decided to write.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2011 12:47 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: My Response

Dear C.J.,

I've written the Board of Directors on several occasions over the last five weeks but have not heard whether they plan to provide me their perspective which you referenced as forthcoming; so, I think it best to move ahead and not wait any longer in sharing my perspective on your December 16th response.

First, I am grateful to God for your acknowledgements. They represent a work of grace in your soul over the last 12 months. At the beginning of 2010, you were unaware of any ways in which you sinned against me over the past decade. When you wrote last January 10, it was in order to discover if I thought you had sinned against me, not because you were convicted of sin. In fact, the impetus for contacting me came from someone else who informed you that I "might have some offenses" with you. Therefore, after a long and hard year, I

⁹⁸ True. There was no such indication from you or anyone on the Board of Directors. In fact, all indications were just the opposite. That is, I needed to go.

⁹⁹ Recently an old friend wrote asking, "What do present and future opportunities look like for you" in Sovereign Grace Ministries. Here was my reply. "I remain unfit for ministry in SGM and outside the acceptable bounds of doctrine and practice. Being of ill repute, I've not returned to ministry. I don't know what the future holds but our heavenly Father does and I am confident it will be good - as He defines good."

¹⁰⁰ I find this humorous and ironic. I am not the one who needs convincing. You resolved I was unfit for ministry and communicated this to all the SGM pastors in July 2009. You also declared me unfit for ministry in SGM due to unacceptable doctrines and practices in January 2010. You are the one that needs to be convinced.

am grateful for the evidences of grace reflected in your recent comments. They are meaningful and helpful. I thank the Lord for your progress in grace.¹⁰¹ I look forward to a time in the future when we can meet together.

Second, I must also admit to disappointment. As I've said before, such a meeting is not possible until you provide a much fuller response and personally embrace the need for public confession. Your "brief overview" is a good start but it doesn't address my most serious concerns for you and the movement. The majority of issues and illustrations I raised with you remain unaddressed. In addition, you still see no need to inform the movement and its leaders of your longstanding patterns of sin and their impact on others. Here is what I wrote at the end of "A Final Appeal."

"Two simple questions remain. First, are you willing to provide a thorough response to "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal." Second, do you see the need for a public acknowledgement to the blogosphere, a general confession to the movement, and a more detailed confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors and staff?" (AFA, p. 164)

To date, you've not provided the former and see no need for the later. I've attached "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal" as Word documents. If you change your mind and choose to provide a thorough response, you can easily make balloon comments (if necessary Nora can show you how to use this function under the Review tab) as you progress through the documents. That should simplify your task.

C.J., I appreciate the contents of your December 16th response but there remain a host of vital topics unaddressed. Please interact with me in writing. Please include your disagreements and correction. They are equally important to me.

Responding in writing will serve both of us. Before we meet, I must understand far more clearly how you view my assessment. For instance, in what you've written you acknowledge no lack of integrity, no deceit or hypocrisy, no concealment or cover-up, no damage control, spin or manipulation, no partiality or favoritism, no abuse of authority or lording, no need for a confession to the movement or the leaders, no wrong doing by others, no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others, etc. As such, I assume you continue to believe these are non-issues and have not changed your position since July 2 when you wrote, "Brent, I don't

¹⁰¹ After ten years of gracious appeals.

think Sovereign Grace in general or anyone I know in particular is 'lying, covering up, manipulating, lording, etc.'"

I know you are willing to engage these matters in conversation; but first, I need you to engage these matters in print. This is not an unreasonable request. Nor is it an unhelpful one. Just the opposite. It will require you to honestly face and transparently respond to the charges I've brought to your attention. They are serious. I welcome your disagreement. I welcome your correction. I am simply looking for candid, frank, open, and accountable interaction on the multiplicity of issues and examples you did not address.

In closing, would you please provide me a prompt response whatever you decide? If you care not to write a thorough going response, let me know. If you decide to write, could you please clear your schedule as much as possible and make its completion a top priority? The long waits from last year, now into this year, have been exceedingly difficult for many reasons and on many fronts.

I thank God for you C.J. I am confident in the Lord Jesus that he is working all things for the good in both our lives. I am grateful for the humble steps you have taken and hope for a continued outworking of his grace in the decisions now before you.

Prayerfully and affectionately,
Brent

Here is your response to this letter. You were "sorry to disappoint me" but there was no indication you understood why I was disappointed.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 10:30 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject:

Brent,

Thanks for getting back to me. I appreciate your encouragement and I am sorry to disappoint you. I trust you know that was not my intention. Please pray for me as I desire to perceive any and all sin I have committed and I pray daily for this gift of sight.

It is my understanding that the board is going to respond to you at some point soon.¹⁰² I am not familiar with their plans or the content of their response as they have not included me in their discussions. So I am waiting for their response as well. Thanks for your patience.

Let me assure you that I am submitted to these men and accountable to them and will comply with whatever they recommend including some kind of public confession.¹⁰³ It remains my hope that you and I can meet and pursue reconciliation with each other.

In His grace,
C.J.

In this email, you did not answer my request for a “much fuller response” since your response to RRF&D and AFA didn’t “address my most serious concerns for you and the movement” or “the majority of issues and illustrations I raised.”

I pointed out “there remain a host of vital topics unaddressed” and asked you to “please interact with me” and “honestly face and transparently respond to the charges I’ve brought to your attention.”

I concluded my appeal with this summation.

“Before we meet, I must understand far more clearly how you view my assessment. For instance, in what you’ve written you acknowledge no lack of integrity, no deceit or hypocrisy, no concealment or cover-up, no damage control, spin or manipulation, no partiality or favoritism, no abuse of authority or lording, no need for a confession to the movement or the leaders, no wrong doing by others, no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others, etc.”

I was “simply looking for candid, frank, open, and accountable interaction on the multiplicity of issues and examples you did not address.”

Secondly, you expressed no need for, or interest in, a public confession unless the Sovereign Grace Board of Directors so determined.

I wrote again regarding your unwillingness to provide a “much fuller response” unless told to do so by the Sovereign Grace Board of Directors. Your “non-response” proved to be a dramatic response.

¹⁰² Which was 7 weeks later.

¹⁰³ Which they have not required.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 1:54 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Non-Response

Dear C.J.,

I take your non-response¹⁰⁴ as a “no” to my appeals unless the Board of Directors directs you otherwise. In that case, I know you’ll do what they recommend. Realistically, that’s your only option. I just wish you didn’t need to be told what to do if indeed the Board affirms my requests.¹⁰⁵ I suspect they will ask you for a public acknowledgement of limited scope but release you from any further response to me in writing. Obviously, I could be wrong.

I care deeply about you and our relationship. If you had been willing to answer my most serious charges¹⁰⁶ and saw the need for public confession and accountability,¹⁰⁷ we would have met a long time ago with reconciliation well under way, if not complete.¹⁰⁸ That is the source of my disappointment.

It is good to know we’ll be hearing from the Board in the near future. It remains my hope that things will be dealt with forthrightly.¹⁰⁹

Sincerely,
Brent

¹⁰⁴ This frequently occurs when dealing with you, the Board of Directors, and others like Gene. Accountability is avoided by giving no answer or providing an answer that doesn’t answer anything or much of anything. Hard questions are passed over or ignored. Worse, sometimes accountability type questions are followed by intimidation.

¹⁰⁵ In effect hiding behind the Board instead of doing the right thing by providing a full response and publically confessing your sins.

¹⁰⁶ I didn’t expect complete agreement but I did expect honesty and transparency. On Oct 26, 2010 you wrote, “I still think that written correspondence...has the potential to aggravate misunderstanding.” Of course, any kind of interaction has this potential including face to face meetings. But I don’t find your disagreements “aggravating” when thoughtful answers are provided. Rather, I find your evasiveness “aggravating” (i.e. troubling on many counts).

¹⁰⁷ Public confession has been one of my conditions. You see no need for it thus indicating your sins are less serious than all the men who have gone before you and made public confessions.

¹⁰⁸ You and the Board have addressed none of my most serious concerns. If you had done so, and saw the need for a public confession, reconciliation would likely be complete.

¹⁰⁹ This is the crux of the matter. You’ve been coy, not forthright.

Correspondence with the SGM Board Regarding C.J.'s First Response

I received your first response to RRF&D and AFA on December 16, 2010. That same day I wrote the Sovereign Grace Board of Directors. I wanted to hear the Board's perspective before I got back to you.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2010 5:29 PM
To: Joshua Harris; Jeff Purswell; Pat Ennis; Dave Harvey
Subject: Your Perspective

Hello Gentlemen,

I received C.J.'s response today. In it he said, "It is my understanding that the Sovereign Grace board (apart from me) will be sending you their perspective on your documents and my response to your documents." Thanks for doing so. I look forward to hearing them. By the way, when do you plan on sending me your perspective? I hope in the immediate future. I'll hold on attempting a response to C.J. until I hear from you. It is certain to have a bearing on what I say.

Love in Christ,
Brent

Here was Jeff's initial response. He shared the Board's perspective on you but he did not share the Board's perspective on what I'd written. He expressed the Board's unqualified joy and enthusiasm over your response. But he was uncommittal on providing me their perspective; something you said me was forthcoming.

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Saturday, December 18, 2010 10:29 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris; Pat Ennis
Subject: RE: Your Perspective

Dear Brent,

Thanks for your note and your question. As you mention, C.J. communicated his understanding¹¹⁰ that the board was going to be sending you its perspective

¹¹⁰ Not your understanding? Did he misrepresent the Board in his zeal to make certain you shared your hearty commendation of him with me?

on your documents and C.J.'s response. We are indeed considering this idea¹¹¹ but, given all that such a response would require,¹¹² we are not prepared to move forward with it at this time. Therefore, we aren't able to supply you with details on a delivery date. Moreover, we do not think it wise or redemptive to postpone the process of reconciliation between you and C.J.¹¹³ We are very desirous that the issues you laid out (and to which C.J. responded)¹¹⁴ be resolved, and that the long relationship between you two men be restored. That would bring us tremendous joy, and we know it would bring God much glory.

At this point we can say that we all read C.J.'s response and were greatly encouraged by it.¹¹⁵ We appreciated the thorough and deliberate process he went through prior to writing and the humility displayed in the response itself. As noted above, we will be reviewing his response together as a board sometime in the future and considering what would be the most appropriate and fruitful manner in which to follow-up.

We will be happy to inform you once the board determines how we plan on moving forward on C.J.'s letter. At this point, we are rejoicing over the work that God has done and is doing in C.J.'s heart, and we will be praying for the two of you as you pursue the process of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Yours in Christ,

Sovereign Grace Ministries Board of Directors (Dave, Jeff, Josh, and Pat)

I wrote Jeff back in order to underscore the importance of hearing the Board's "complete thoughts." By this I meant I needed to hear their thoughts completely or fully on RRF&D, AFA and C.J.'s first response. No partial answers or perspectives.

¹¹¹ This was his understanding. C.J. did not share it with me as an idea under consideration. More misrepresentation?

¹¹² This left me hopeful. Jeff seemed to indicate the Board would provide their perspective in a thorough going fashion. That proved not to be the case.

¹¹³ I knew that unless the Board substantially agreed with me on the issues and illustrations, reconciliation with you was not possible. I waited three months for their 2½ page response.

¹¹⁴ This phrase "the issues you laid out (and to which C.J. responded)" is important and revealing. The Board affirmed the sufficiency of your first response. In fact, they claimed by implication, that you responded to all the issues I laid out in RRF&D and AFA. This was far from true.

¹¹⁵ The Board was "rejoicing" and "greatly encouraged" by your confession of sins against me. That was great. I was also glad and encouraged. But the Board was one sided in its care and encouragement. Some minor acknowledgement of concern for the effect of your sins upon me would have been appropriate. I don't think that was on their radar screen.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, December 18, 2010 10:59 AM
To: Jeff Purswell
Cc: Dave Harvey; Joshua Harris; Pat Ennis
Subject: RE: Your Perspective
Importance: High

Hi Jeff,

Thanks for getting back to me on behalf of the Board. Your collective perspective on "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal" is important to me. So too are your complete thoughts on C.J.'s response to these documents. After you provide them, I'll be able to respond to C.J. in the most helpful manner. So until then, I'll withhold attempting a response. Once decided, please let me know when you plan to furnish me with your perspective.

Sincerely,
Brent

I didn't hear from Jeff so I wrote him again.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, December 23, 2010 2:38 PM
To: Jeff Purswell; Dave Harvey; Pat Ennis; Joshua Harris
Subject: Perspective
Importance: High

Have you had time to determine when you will provide me the Board's perspective? Can you do it by Jan 15 or earlier? I want to get back to C.J. as soon as possible but not until after I hear from you. I'd be most appreciative if you'd made this a top priority.

Thanks gentlemen,
Brent

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Sunday, January 02, 2011 12:29 PM
To: Brent Detwiler; Dave Harvey; Pat Ennis; Joshua Harris
Subject: RE: Perspective

Dear Brent,

I hope you and your family enjoyed a wonderful Christmas celebration. I wanted to get you a quick response on your question. Your note came when I had already left for Christmas, and I am just now getting settled back in from the holidays (and I assume the other guys are as well). Unfortunately, I'm having to leave town again tomorrow morning because of a family death, which is going to put me out for most of this week. Moreover, I don't believe our next meeting as a board has been scheduled yet, and so I simply can't tell you when we'll be able to pick this up. I doubt we'll be able to get everyone together by Jan 15. However, we certainly will be discussing this as a board and, as we mentioned in our last note, we'll be happy to inform you once the board decides how it will move forward with regard to C.J.'s note to you.

Thanks so much,

Jeff

It had been a long year. I encouraged the Board to get on with preparing their perspective for me.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Sunday, January 02, 2011 6:30 PM
To: Jeff Purswell; Dave Harvey; Pat Ennis; Joshua Harris
Subject: RE: Perspective

Jeff, I am sorry to hear about the death in your family. I hope your trip goes well this week as your feet are shod with the gospel of peace. God comfort you and give you grace, wisdom and favor with others.

Gentlemen could the four of you set up a time to talk among yourselves as soon as possible and not wait for a yet unscheduled board meeting? Second, could you also begin exchanging your thoughts via e-mail and start writing up your perspective per C.J.?

You've had RRF&D since March 17 and AFA since Oct 8. I received C.J.'s response to these documents on Dec 16. It's been a long and difficult year. So now, I'd like to get back to C.J. and move things along toward closure. Your written perspective on C.J.'s response to me is indispensable to that end. I hope you will make it a top priority and provide it as soon as possible.

Thanks
Brent

I waited three weeks but didn't hear back from Jeff. I didn't even know if the Board was willing to provide me a response so I proceeded. Here was my perspective on your first response to RRF&D and AFA from December 16, 2010. This was the first of two "fruitless" responses to you by me according to the Board. The next one coming on January 25.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2011 12:47 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: My Response

Dear C.J.,

I've written the Board of Directors on several occasions over the last five weeks but have not heard whether they plan to provide me their perspective which you referenced as forthcoming; so, I think it best to move ahead and not wait any longer in sharing my perspective on your December 16th response.

First, I am grateful to God for your acknowledgements. They represent a work of grace in your soul over the last 12 months. At the beginning of 2010, you were unaware of any ways in which you sinned against me over the past decade. When you wrote last January 10, it was in order to discover if I thought you had sinned against me, not because you were convicted of sin. In fact, the impetus for contacting me came from someone else who informed you that I "might have some offenses" with you. Therefore, after a long and hard year, I am grateful for the evidences of grace reflected in your recent comments. They are meaningful and helpful. I thank the Lord for your progress in grace.¹¹⁶ I look forward to a time in the future when we can meet together.

Second, I must also admit to disappointment. As I've said before, such a meeting is not possible until you provide a much fuller response and personally embrace the need for public confession. Your "brief overview" is a good start but it doesn't address my most serious concerns for you and the movement. The majority of issues and illustrations I raised with you remain unaddressed. In addition, you still see no need to inform the movement and its leaders of your longstanding patterns of sin and their impact on others. Here is what I wrote at the end of "A Final Appeal."

"Two simple questions remain. First, are you willing to provide a thorough response to "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal." Second, do you see the need for a public

¹¹⁶ I sincerely meant this but I could not give you unqualified approbation like the Board of Directors.

acknowledgement to the blogosphere, a general confession to the movement, and a more detailed confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors and staff?" (AFA, p. 164)

To date, you've not provided the former and see no need for the later. I've attached "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal" as Word documents. If you change your mind and choose to provide a thorough response, you can easily make balloon comments (if necessary Nora can show you how to use this function under the Review tab) as you progress through the documents. That should simplify your task.

C.J., I appreciate the contents of your December 16th response but there remain a host of vital topics unaddressed.¹¹⁷ Please interact with me in writing. Please include your disagreements and correction. They are equally important to me.

Responding in writing will serve both of us. Before we meet, I must understand far more clearly¹¹⁸ how you view my assessment. For instance, in what you've written you acknowledge no lack of integrity, no deceit or hypocrisy, no concealment or cover-up, no damage control, spin or manipulation, no partiality or favoritism, no abuse of authority or lording, no need for a confession to the movement or the leaders, no wrong doing by others, no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others, etc. As such, I assume you continue to believe these are non-issues and have not changed your position since July 2 when you wrote, "Brent, I don't think Sovereign Grace in general or anyone I know in particular is 'lying, covering up, manipulating, lording, etc.'"

I know you are willing to engage these matters in conversation; but first, I need you to engage these matters in print. This is not an unreasonable request. Nor is it an unhelpful one. Just the opposite. It will require you to honestly face and transparently respond¹¹⁹ to the charges I've brought to your attention. They are serious. I welcome your disagreement. I welcome your correction. I am simply looking for candid, frank, open, and accountable interaction on the multiplicity of issues and examples you did not address.

In closing, would you please provide me a prompt response whatever you decide? If you care not to write a thorough going response, let me know. If you decide to write, could you please clear your schedule as much as possible and make its completion a top priority? The long waits from last year, now into this year, have been exceedingly difficult for many reasons and on many fronts.

¹¹⁷ This was intentional. Not a mere oversight.

¹¹⁸ For the most part your limited responses left me in a fog regarding your views on RRF&D and AFA.

¹¹⁹ This goes to the heart of the matter.

I thank God for you C.J. I am confident in the Lord Jesus that he is working all things for the good in both our lives. I am grateful for the humble steps you have taken and hope for a continued outworking of his grace in the decisions now before you.

Prayerfully and affectionately,
Brent

You wrote me back several days later but expressed no willingness to interact with me and address “a host of vital subjects.”

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 10:30 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject:

Brent,

Thanks for getting back to me. I appreciate your encouragement and I am sorry to disappoint you. I trust you know that was not my intention. Please pray for me as I desire to perceive any and all sin I have committed and I pray daily for this gift of sight.

It is my understanding that the board is going to respond to you at some point soon. I am not familiar with their plans or the content of their response as they have not included me in their discussions. So I am waiting for their response as well. Thanks for your patience.

Let me assure you that I am submitted to these men and accountable to them and will comply with whatever they recommend including some kind of public confession. It remains my hope that you and I can meet and pursue reconciliation with each other.

In His grace,
C.J.

I wrote you back regarding your unwillingness “to honestly face and transparently respond to the charges I’ve brought to your attention.” You continued to avoid the most serious issues and illustrations. Nevertheless, I was blamed by the Board for not meeting with you due to my “dissatisfaction” with your answers. This was a distortion of the truth.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 1:54 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Non-Response

Dear C.J.,

I take your non-response as a “no” to my appeals unless the Board of Directors directs you otherwise. In that case, I know you’ll do what they recommend. Realistically, that’s your only option. I just wish you didn’t need to be told what to do if indeed the Board affirms my requests. I suspect they will ask you for a public acknowledgement of limited scope but release you from any further response to me in writing. Obviously, I could be wrong.

I care deeply about you and our relationship. If you had been willing to answer my most serious charges and saw the need for public confession and accountability,¹²⁰ we would have met a long time ago with reconciliation well under way, if not complete. That is the source of my disappointment.

It is good to know we’ll be hearing from the Board in the near future. It remains my hope that things will be dealt with forthrightly.¹²¹

Sincerely,
Brent

Later I found out the Board didn’t like this second response to you either and labeled our interaction “fruitless.” As a result, they instructed you to break off all email exchanges with me. More later. I last wrote the Board of Directors on January 2. I followed up with them on January 31. I still had no answer on whether they would provide me their perspective.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2011 1:20 PM
To: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris; Pat Ennis
Subject: Moving Forward on C.J.’s Letter

Hello Gentlemen,

¹²⁰ I’ve not desired a public confession in order to shame you. I’ve required it for the sake of accountability. People need to be made aware of your sinful tendencies and their effect upon the leaders and the movement. This protects all concerned.

¹²¹ This was my plea and the heart of the problem. If present, I would have met immediately. If you were not honest in writing, I could not trust you in person.

On December 18 you wrote, “We will be reviewing his [C.J.’s] response together as a board sometime in the future and considering what would be the most appropriate and fruitful manner in which to follow-up. We will be happy to inform you once the board determines how we plan on moving forward on C.J.’s letter.”

I’ve not heard an answer from you and it’s been over 7 weeks. Can you tell me, are you close to making a decision on how you plan to move forward?

Thanks
Brent

I finally heard from Jeff on February 3. I found the Board’s response manipulative. Guilt was projected on to me for my “lack of satisfaction” with your response and my “continued unwillingness” to meet. More on this later.

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Thursday, February 03, 2011 5:51 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris; Patrick Ennis
Subject: Your Jan 21 Note

Dear Brent,

We hope you are doing well and experiencing God’s wonderful grace.

We wanted to inform you¹²² of the next step in our evaluation of your documents and C.J. We were encouraged by C.J.’s responsiveness to your documents and with the response that he sent you. However, he forwarded to us your response of Jan. 21 that expressed your lack of satisfaction¹²³ with his document, and therefore your continued unwillingness¹²⁴ to meet with him at this point. Brent, we remain convinced that a process of mediation between the two of you would be the most helpful, illuminating, and redemptive next step. We also believe that the document C.J. sent you was substantive¹²⁵ and laid a promising foundation for such a mediation process. Nevertheless, we want to

¹²² This was the second response from the Board since your response to me on Dec. 16, 2010. The first was on December 18. Like the first, it was informational, not personal. It too was full of encouragement for you.

¹²³ The Board of Directors should have understood my disappointment.

¹²⁴ My “continued unwillingness” was due to your unwillingness to supply a thorough response as promised and to agree there was a need for a public confession.

¹²⁵ It was substantial in what it addressed. But it was far from complete. It avoided more than it addressed.

do all we can to facilitate a God-glorifying resolution to this situation. Therefore, we as a board have agreed to accommodate your request¹²⁶ and have asked C.J. to provide a further response to your documents in an attempt to answer more¹²⁷ of your questions. He has willingly agreed¹²⁸ to do this and remains eager to pursue a full reconciliation between the two of you. We are encouraged by his continued responsiveness and his desire to follow the guidance of the board in this matter. Therefore, C.J. will work on a further response to your documents. Both he and the board desire that this be done expeditiously. However, since he must fit this into a number of existing commitments, it is not realistic for us immediately to set a firm deadline for this. We will contact you by Feb 12th with a specific date for when CJ will deliver you his additional thoughts on your documents.

We fully believe that God continues to be at work in all of our lives in this process, and we sincerely hope this next step will contribute to a full and meaningful reconciliation.

Yours in Christ,

Sovereign Grace Board of Directors

While not addressing the Board's projection of guilt in a direct manner, I restated the facts. You promised to address all the issues I raised with you. I was simply holding you to your word which the Board was unwilling to do.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, February 05, 2011 4:04 PM
To: Joshua Harris; Jeff Purswell; Pat Ennis; Dave Harvey
Subject: RE: Your Jan 21 Note

Thanks for the information.¹²⁹ It's good to hear C.J. will follow through on his promise to address all the issues and concerns I identified in RRF&D and AFA. You and he seem to have lost sight of that fact.

¹²⁶ This is an example of spin. The Board wasn't accommodating my request as though they were going the extra mile or taking heroic measures to appease unreasonable requests. I simply wanted them to hold you accountable to your commitment to address the issues identified in RRF&D and AFA.

¹²⁷ I wasn't just looking for "more" answers, I was looking for complete answers. You said you'd provide "a written response to the issues you have identified," not selective answers to questions you found easier to address.

¹²⁸ When asked you agreed. It wasn't something you felt was necessary to do on your own.

¹²⁹ That's about all I could say. The Board's response was merely informational. There were no expressions of care.

There are a couple questions I'd like to ask. First, do you have anything additional to say regarding your perspective on C.J.'s response to my documents? Second, do you plan on sending me your perspective on RRF&D and AFA? I'd certainly appreciate the later.

I trust C.J. will continue to benefit from further review of the documents. Providing a thorough response to my greatest concerns and illustrations could have a good result for all of us.

Grace to each of you!
Brent

In Jeff's response, he says nothing about my concern for losing "sight of the fact" that you were simply following through on your promise. There is no acknowledgment that my disappointment was understandable.

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2011 5:31 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris; Patrick Ennis
Subject: RE: Your Jan 21 Note

Dear Brent,

Thank you for the note. We wanted to get back to you in answer to your questions below (thanks for your patience with this; since the board has taken over leadership of this process on our end, it can sometimes be cumbersome for all of us to be able to communicate):

1. With regard to C.J.'s response to your documents, at this point we don't have anything further to add to what we've already communicated. We are encouraged about C.J.'s willingness to reply to your documents in greater detail, and therefore we wouldn't have any additional perspective until he finishes his next response. As we mentioned in our last note, our plan is to let you know by Feb 12 when you can expect to get C.J.'s next response. We do know he's out of town until this weekend, so it's possible that it might be early next week before we can provide you with a realistic time frame, but please be assured that we want to do so as soon as we can.
2. As for the documents you sent, our plan is to provide you our thoughts on them when C.J. finishes his second response.

We hope this is helpful. Again, we are confident that God is at work in all of this, and we continue to pray for a God-glorifying reconciliation as a result of this entire process.

Yours in Christ,

Sovereign Grace Board of Directors (Dave, Jeff, Josh, and Pat)

After two months, I received an answer from the Board. They would share their perspective on RRF&D and AFA by March 11. You would also send me second response with “greater detail.” I was grateful.

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2011 9:52 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Josh Harris; Patrick Ennis
Subject: C.J.’s Next Response

Dear Brent,

We wanted to get back to you concerning the timing of C.J.’s second response to your documents. Thanks so much for your patience with this. We have all – including C.J. – wanted this to be done in as timely a way as possible, and while C.J. is putting off certain things in order to write this, there is some travel and a new sermon that simply can’t be put off. In any event, we will get you C.J.’s next response by Friday, March 11.

Brent, we realize that this process inevitably entails time delays, and that such delays can be tempting, so we very much appreciate your patience with this process.

Yours in Christ,

Dave, Jeff, Josh and Pat

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2011 10:04 AM
To: Jeff Purswell
Subject: RE: C.J.’s Next Response

Will you also provide me the Board’s perspective on my documents by March 11?

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2011 5:21 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Josh Harris; Patrick Ennis
Subject: RE: C.J.'s Next Response

Hi Brent,

Yes, our intention is to provide you our perspective on your documents along with C.J.'s response.

Thanks so much,

Jeff

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2011 2:33 PM
To: Jeff Purswell; C. J. Mahaney
Cc: Dave Harvey; Josh Harris; Patrick Ennis
Subject: RE: C.J.'s Next Response

I know each of you have very full schedules. Thanks C.J. for taking the time to provide a fuller response and thanks brothers for supplying your perspective on my documents. I look forward to hearing from you.

The Sovereign Grace Board Weighs in on Brent's "Dissatisfaction"

The Board was supposed to share their perspective with me on RRF&D and AFA as well as on your December 16, 2010 response. The former was not provided me. I've included my response to the Board in the footnotes.

March 11, 2011

Dear Brent,

We hope this finds you well and experiencing the joy and peace that accompanies the gospel.

As we have noted in prior communications, we as a board are happy to inform you of our perspective¹³⁰ of C.J.'s response to your documents. We appreciate your patience with this, as a number of factors have delayed our being in a position to respond. Most recently, of course, your response on January 21 communicating your dissatisfaction¹³¹ with C.J.'s initial response to your documents, along with his willingness to provide a second response,¹³² pushed this out even further. Now that he has finished a second response, we are in a position to communicate where we are at present.

First of all, we want to stress that we take very seriously the allegations¹³³ you made in your documents. By his own admission, C.J.'s sins were serious¹³⁴ expressions of pride. Given the holiness of our God, the high moral standards required of pastors in Scripture, and the effects of these sins on others,¹³⁵ we have been both sobered and grieved as these sins have been revisited in detail over the past number of months. We have wanted to walk carefully and circumspectly as we consider them. Due to the nature of your contentions¹³⁶ and the many people they involve, this has necessitated a lengthy process, numerous discussions, and much prayer. We would also add that, along with C.J., we have all been compelled to search our own hearts for unaddressed

¹³⁰ I appreciate the perspective you've supplied but I am surprised by its brevity. You've had three months to work on a response. I wrote 300 pages and you have provided me a couple paragraphs. As a result, I do not know your thoughts on scores of important issues and illustrations. They are ignored and that is not helpful.

¹³¹ I did not express "dissatisfaction." Dissatisfaction was the word you used to characterize my response. I expressed "disappointment." My disappointment was primarily in C.J., and secondarily in the Board, since C.J. broke his word and the Board did not hold him accountable for his pledge. The Board should have expressed "dissatisfaction" with C.J. not me.

¹³² C.J. was unwilling to provide a second response of his own initiative. He only did so when requested by the Board. You give him too much credit.

¹³³ I don't know what you consider unproven allegations versus well established illustrations/points based upon firm evidence. You express some agreement with me later in this email but here characterize my writings as unproven assertions. "An allegation (also called adduction) is a claim of a fact by a party in a pleading, which the party claims to be able to prove. Allegations remain assertions without proof, until they can be proved." (Wikipedia)

¹³⁴ Something that was continuously denied by C.J. and others for the last ten years and for which I was condemned and confronted by C.J. and others like Steve.

¹³⁵ I don't know what effects you have in mind. I don't know who you have in mind. For his part, C.J. has acknowledged no ill effect of his sins against me upon anyone else. I pointed out to C.J. on January 21 that there was "no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others" in his first response. Now again in his second response, he remains entirely mute on the subject. I must conclude he believes his words, actions, attitudes, counsel and judgments have had no negative impact on Carolyn Mahaney, the Sovereign Grace Board, the Covenant Life pastors, the CrossWay Community Church pastors, Gene Emerson, the Assessment Team and a host of others. This is an irresponsible denial of reality. Further, C.J. goes to some lengths in distancing himself from acknowledging the adverse effects of his sin on others in his second response which is lamentable.

¹³⁶ This harkens back to footnote 133 and the use of the word "allegations." Now my concerns and illustrations are characterized as mere "contentions."

remaining sin.¹³⁷ In addition, we have been freshly reminded of the power of the gospel and the hope it gives to all of us, including C.J. How grateful we are that Christ came to atone for sins like the ones we've been scrutinizing in C.J., and sins we've found in our own hearts.¹³⁸

Secondly, we would affirm a number of things in your documents. When the SGM board, the CLC governing board, and other involved parties met with CJ in November, he asked the 12 of us who know him best to identify in our own experience the things that you communicated in your documents.¹³⁹ All of us could see his tendencies¹⁴⁰ to withdraw when disagreed with, to make correction difficult, to be unduly confident in his own judgments (including his judgments of the motives of others), and to give insufficient attention to process¹⁴¹ in his leadership. We, too, recognized and regretted his failure to follow up¹⁴² on the August 2004 meeting and its ill effects.¹⁴³ We agreed that during the period you describe from 2003-2004, he resisted yours and Dave's¹⁴⁴ correction and failed to lead the team to work through disagreement and conflict with you and Dave. We regret his failure¹⁴⁵ to reach out to you personally after you stepped down from ministry.¹⁴⁶ Brent, this is not an

¹³⁷ What have you discovered? You give no indication. "Remaining" sins also implies initial sins. Your response leaves me clueless. For example, it would be helpful to know what you discovered in relation to C.J. (e.g., man pleasing, cowardice, compromise, etc.). And what has Dave discovered in his search for "unaddressed remaining sin" (e.g. sinful judgments, pride, lording, etc.).

¹³⁸ What you've discovered must have no bearing on me. I've heard from no one.

¹³⁹ I have prayed for many years that friends would come forward and address these issues in C.J.'s life in a firm and sustained manner. I am glad the documents served the twelve of you so you were able to share your own experiences with him. This must become a regular part of C.J.'s experience. Safeguards were not put into place subsequent to August 2004.

¹⁴⁰ You mean long standing patterns of sinful behavior?

¹⁴¹ I'm afraid this phrase "to give insufficient attention to process" is a quaint euphemism. You must help C.J. see and renounce his independence and the lack of accountability in his life and leadership of the movement. Too many senior pastors in SGM have also followed in his steps. As a result, there is little to no authentic plurality. Like C.J., the senior pastor has too much autonomy and too little accountability. It might be good to do away with "senior." Changes need to be made.

¹⁴² This was allowed by the CLC pastors (Bob, Kenneth, Joshua, Grant) despite Dave and my many appeals. They did not require accountability to the team and supported/permitted C.J.'s prosecution of Dave and me. Particularly, Bob and Kenneth.

¹⁴³ What ill effects do you have in mind? Should there be restitution? If so, what? C.J. acknowledged no ill effects on anyone except me. And in my case, he doesn't go into any detail or share anything specific.

¹⁴⁴ Steve's also.

¹⁴⁵ Why do you regret this? May I point something out for your consideration? This is the only time the Board of Directors has acknowledged any kind of impact upon me and Jenny in your correspondence. It is limited to this one little comment which is almost immaterial. You've been far more concerned for the sinner than the one sinned against. For the perpetrator than the victim.

¹⁴⁶ I was totally unsurprised that C.J. did not reach out to me after the events of June 3, 2009 (i.e., the day my resignation was deceitfully demanded) or after leaving Sovereign Grace Ministries a few months later on August 30, 2009. In fact, he and Carolyn had not reached out to us to in any manner after I stepped down from the apostolic team on November 20, 2007. This harsh reality is addressed in RRF&D on pages

exhaustive accounting of our areas of agreement¹⁴⁷ with your documents, but we hope it is sufficient¹⁴⁸ to communicate general areas of agreement and our sorrow over these sins and failures.

Thirdly, we as a board have appreciated the way in which C.J. has conducted himself in this process. We appreciated that he contacted you concerning reconciliation in the first place.¹⁴⁹ Then, after receiving your documents, we have observed him take this very seriously, and several men whom we have consulted who are experienced in mediation have agreed with our assessment. He has exercised initiative (with no prompting from us¹⁵⁰) to consider seriously your documents, to invite the observations and correction of the significant parties involved in these events, and to pursue reconciliation eagerly with you.

From our perspective, C.J. has humbly embraced the correction he has received from all those he has spoken to in numerous meetings, and we believe the first document he sent to you reflects that and the genuine work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. We believe that the second document also reflects an honest

90-92. Neither C.J. nor the Board have acknowledged or addressed this treatment. It's been ignored. By the time we left SGM we were accustomed to being shunned. There were even occasions when C.J. intentionally avoided my physical presence.

¹⁴⁷ What else do you have in mind? It would be extremely helpful to know how you view particular illustrations and points.

¹⁴⁸ I find your generalities insufficient.

¹⁴⁹ This is not true. We begged for reconciliation. Our dire appeals to meet were flatly ignored and rebuffed. For example, the letter Eric Kircher sent to C.J., Dave, Jeff, Joshua, Pat and Gene on March 24, 2009. "We request a meeting as soon as possible to discuss further what has been presented here. Both Brent and I will be at the Leadership Conference in April if you have any time left. If not we fully understand. Our goal is not to simply appease SGM but to respond by grace and in light of Scripture to any details you wish to address. We seek cooperation and unity. We love the Lord and cherish our relationship with SGM and its leaders too much to do otherwise. We are a bit fatigued by this past year but are full of faith for the future. We are also full of faith that these issues can be resolved in a manner that allows all to serve in unity but without distractions." Dave said the leadership team was too busy to meet but might respond in 6-12 months if you thought any of our concerns were worthy of comment. Another example, I asked Bob to share my perspective with the entire Board (including C.J.) in July 2009 hoping it would result in some reconciliation. In particular, C.J.'s "sin focused approach" to me "with little gospel and grace" and his "change in...disposition toward me." Here was Bob's response, "I have talked to CJ about [no] contact with you since you stepped down from the apostolic team [Nov 20, 2007] and his disposition towards you. There was nothing in his response that caused me concern." All of this is covered in detail in RRF&D and AFA.

¹⁵⁰ I am grateful for his actions but these were in response to 300 pages of documentation including his deceitfulness and lack of accountability. C.J. has no track record of initiating such actions apart from external pressures or demands. He had a lot of incentives! This may be analogous to his lack of willingness to confess his sins to the movement and churches. As it stands, he may end up doing so but it will occur because he has been asked. Unless of course, he has a change of heart by the grace of God which is my hope.

engagement with your documents¹⁵¹ and a continued pursuit of humility. On issues where his perspective differs from yours, we are encouraged that he has expressed a desire to dialogue with you and openness to having his perspective adjusted by you and other parties involved in the situations described in your documents. Finally, we are grateful for his desire for integrity and accountability by having the Sovereign Grace board oversee this process and for his submission to the board's direction and decisions in this process.

Finally, you have asked us specifically for our collective perspective on the documents you sent to C.J. and our (to use your words) complete thoughts¹⁵² on C.J.'s response. Unfortunately, we are not in a place to do that.¹⁵³ In order to arrive at a thorough perspective on these issues, there is simply much more information¹⁵⁴ we would need to have. For example, we would want to see how C.J. follows through on these matters, and particularly how he would respond in his interactions with you in a mediation process. We would also be interested in how you respond to him in such a process. Furthermore, the situations you describe in your documents are not simply personal interactions between the two of you. They involve many circumstances and many people whose perspective would be crucial in coming to a well-informed understanding.¹⁵⁵ Objectivity would require us to examine more than just your documents, which by definition represent only one perspective.¹⁵⁶ In short, we simply cannot hold C.J. accountable for something that we don't fully understand, and which is impossible to understand fully given the information

¹⁵¹ I disagree with your perspective. An "honest" engagement with my documents would be a thorough and transparent engagement. That was not the case.

¹⁵² That is, providing your thoughts completely or fully. Not partially.

¹⁵³ If willing you could provide far more feedback on numerous points and illustrations without any additional information. In many cases, you have all the information you need. For instance, Dave's conduct at Kingsway Community Church. There is no reason you cannot righteously assess his actions. Yet you give no opinion and make no comment. I don't think your primary problem is a lack of information. I think it is a lack of willingness to make righteous judgments.

¹⁵⁴ I'll provide "the much more information" you need to "fully understand" my perspective in order to help you "arrive at a final conclusion." You can get the rest of the information you need from others.

¹⁵⁵ Please tell me what information you are missing "in coming to a well-informed understanding." Seriously! If you do, I'll tell you how to get it or who to talk to about it. I am baffled! All of these people have been readily available to you. Do you mean to imply you have not talked to them (e.g., Dave, Bob, Gene) over the past 12 months?

¹⁵⁶ Only "one perspective?" Wow, I needed a good laugh. For many years, "many people" like C.J., Dave, Steve, Bob, Kenneth, Gene, Mickey, Larry, etc. have shared their perspective on me and "many circumstances." Only now are you hearing my perspective. I'd say you're adequately, if not thoroughly, informed of everyone else's perspective regarding me beginning with C.J. He's been sharing it with you for the last seven years. Do you really mean to say you're only acquainted with one (my) perspective? That's staggering. If so, I'd submit the statement is untrue and badly misleading.

we have now.¹⁵⁷ We believe C.J.'s sins were serious, especially for a man in his position. We also believe that, by the grace of God, he has responded humbly to correction and we have observed the fruit of repentance in his life. However, we are not able to arrive at a final conclusion until the above processes unfold.

We believe a significant step in that direction would be for the two of you to get together and work through these issues personally, and we think this could best be done with the help of a mediator¹⁵⁸ upon whom the two of you could agree. A mediator would facilitate healthy communication between the two of you, and he could also orchestrate the involvement of others whose perspective is vital¹⁵⁹ for us to have a well-rounded perspective¹⁶⁰ on the various issues. Moreover, the inclusion of an objective third party would be the best way for us as a board to fulfill our role of evaluating C.J. and keeping him accountable, as well as determining what would be the appropriate contexts for any confession.¹⁶¹ Of course, this process would also help us see more clearly your role in the various circumstances, along with that of others who were intimately involved. We also believe that this step would be the most biblical, transparent, and redemptive way to proceed.

Brent, we appreciate your patience as we have considered these lengthy documents and complex circumstances. We believe that C.J. has acted in good

¹⁵⁷ Here are the email addresses of the principal players. They can provide most all the information you need. I believe you know them. cjmahaney@sovgracemin.org; dharvey@sovgracemin.org; bkaufflin@sovgracemin.org; gene@kingsway.cc

¹⁵⁸ What is needed is decisive leadership from you not mediators. You must do the work and make the decisions. This task should not be passed onto others (cf. 1 Cor 6:5).

¹⁵⁹ For the past 7 years a long list of people supplied their perspective regarding me and the events described in my documents. I don't think the Board is ignorant but please pursue any addition information you need. That is your job, not the job of mediators. You must discern right and wrong and take action starting with one another (e.g. C.J., Dave) and then in Sovereign Grace Ministries (e.g. Bob, Gene) and also with outsiders like me.

¹⁶⁰ Yes, by all means let's be fair! Guys, this makes me smile. For many years, there has been little interest in a "well-rounded perspective" pertaining to me. Hence the need for these documents. This was true of the work done by the Assessment Team led by Bob. They entertained, believed, and acted upon many sinful judgments against me without talking to me or giving me the opportunity to respond.

¹⁶¹ We've never used mediators in the past to determine if a public confession was warranted. That is your responsibility as the Board of Directors. The need for a confession is obvious. It is not a hard decision to make in terms of right and wrong. But I realize it is a hard decision knowing the negative impact it could have upon Sovereign Grace Ministries. Please don't withhold making a decision based on pragmatism or concerns for public relations. Come clean, start over, and do what's right in God's sight. Don't treat C.J. in a preferential manner. Confessing his sins may set Sovereign Grace Ministries back two or three years but it will be worth it. You may need to cut salaries, sell off some PC townhouses, etc. It's a big ship but you can turn it around with honesty and transparency. Otherwise, I fear it will continue to sink and that is not my desire.

faith¹⁶² by responding to your specific request in the form of two written documents. It would help us to know whether you are now willing to meet with C.J.¹⁶³ along with a mediator so that together you can explore unresolved issues, discuss points of disagreement, and consider the observations of others involved in the process. We earnestly hope you are, believing as we do that such a process would be both illuminating and pleasing to our Lord. After such a process of mediation, we would be in a much better position to form a conclusion as a board regarding these matters.

If you are still not willing¹⁶⁴ to meet with C.J., then we would like to offer you the opportunity to meet, apart from C.J., with other parties involved in this process, along with an impartial mediator agreeable to both you and us. This could comprise the former board of which you were a part (Dave Harvey, Steve Shank, and Pat Ennis), or, if you prefer, it could comprise the present board, along with Steve Shank. We would welcome your suggestions for a mediator, as well as the participants in such a meeting.

Brent, our sincere desire is to work with you and involve you in this process, as we hope the above options demonstrate. We long to see this entire situation be resolved for God's glory and the good of all involved. We believe that the above steps represent a positive way forward, and a way marked by objectivity and integrity. Please let us know if you are willing to participate with us in any or all of the above.¹⁶⁵ We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this.

Yours in Christ,

Dave, Jeff, Josh, and Pat

Note: As of the end of the year, Pat resigned from his position of Executive Director at Sovereign Grace Ministries to return to the marketplace. However, he agreed to remain on the board until February 28, and so he has remained engaged with this process. Although he is not currently a board member, he has reviewed this letter and is fully supportive of its contents.

¹⁶² I'd have to disagree. A "good faith" response would have been far more comprehensive and transparent. C.J. avoids countless issues and examples. He did not make a "good faith" effort to address the issues I identified.

¹⁶³ My conditions for a meeting with C.J. remain unmet and I believe them to be reasonable and necessary. The ball remains in his court.

¹⁶⁴ I've repeatedly expressed my willingness to meet with C.J. provided my conditions were fulfilled. It is not up to me.

¹⁶⁵ I am willing to consider different options but only after I receive an honest, frank, open, transparent, and thorough response to the issues and illustrations raised in RRF&D, AFA and now CR; along with a tentative outline for C.J.'s confession to the movement and pastors.

C.J.'s Second Response to RRF&D and AFA - Commentary Added

Here is your second response to RRF&D and AFA. I've added my commentary in the footnotes.

Page 1 of 10

March 11, 2011

Dear Brent,

I sincerely hope that you and your family are doing well. Carolyn sends her love to Jenny.¹⁶⁶ We have so many fond memories of our times together in the past, and I hope that we will one day soon be able to resume our friendship as couples.

I'm writing at your request for greater detail¹⁶⁷ in responding to your two documents. I write with the hope that this will lead to our getting together to dialogue about these things personally. I continue to hold out the hope that meeting together with an objective third party¹⁶⁸ will enable us to resolve the various issues that separate us and be reconciled.

I know this process has taken a long time and I appreciate your patience. Initially I was hoping that we would be able to work out our differences face-to-face rather than through the exchange of documents. The process has also been lengthy because I have involved other men¹⁶⁹ (eventually numbering twelve),

¹⁶⁶ I must be honest, this rings hollow. There has been no demonstration of love by Carolyn for over 3 years. 1 John 3:18 "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." See pages 87-90 in AFA. I don't share this out of spite. Only to help both of you think biblically (cf. James 2:15-16) about the nature of love. Jenny has handled the rejection well. She'd prefer I make no comment.

¹⁶⁷ My second request for more detail was made necessary because you failed to honor your word and provide me a thorough response to RRF&D and AFA in your first response. Here is what you promised on October 15, 2010, "I take your concerns very seriously and very much want to address them...I will respond to your request and attempt to provide you with a written response to the issues you have identified." You did not address any of my most serious concerns in your first response which you said you "very much want" to do. Now again you fail to address the vast majority of my concerns in your second response. Your commitment remains unfulfilled.

¹⁶⁸ Leadership is needed by the Board of Directors not outside mediation. I hope they will act courageously, righteously, transparently and without favoritism in dealing with you, themselves and others. They need to require confession and restitution from you, Dave, Bob, Gene, etc. It is imperative they demonstrate a "readiness to see justice done" (2 Cor. 7: 11, NIV). They must put their own house (SGM) in order.

¹⁶⁹ I'm glad you did but it cannot not be assumed this was an expression of godly sorrow since it was done as a result RRF&D and AFA. Having illustrated your abject lack of accountability and your

along with my family, in helping me consider your documents as carefully as possible, in evaluating me and helping me examine my heart and behavior, and in counseling me about how to appropriately respond – first to the Lord, then to others. I have also reviewed your documents with Ken Sande (who has consulted with Gary Friesen) and asked for his counsel in how we can pursue reconciliation. As you can imagine, involving all these people has taken a lot of time. Again, I appreciate your patience.

Brent, I am seeking to honor your request for another written response,¹⁷⁰ but I want to make sure that you understand I don't believe that what I write here can replace the importance of a conversation where I confess my sins to you face-to-face and hear more about their effects on you. This would also allow us to explore together the events of the past and dialogue¹⁷¹ about our recollections and how we interpret the details and understand the contexts of the events you describe. All of this necessitates conversation and, I think, given where we stand today in our relationship, the assistance of an objective perspective to help us see more clearly. I do not presume that my memory is flawless or that my perspective is accurate. In addition, many if not most of the events you describe involve other people, and so I believe their perspective would be required as well for us to gain clarity and resolve these issues.¹⁷² I sincerely pray that we can enter into such a process soon in order to be reconciled in a way that pleases God and restores the relationships of all involved.

As I hope my first written response to you demonstrated, I have sought first to examine my own heart and I have benefited from this process in seeing my sin more clearly and appreciating the gospel more thoroughly. I anticipate that in meeting with you personally I will perceive yet more of my sin. I regret that

deceitful pattern of not informing others of the correction you received, it would have been catastrophic to withhold this information from the governing boards. You have demonstrated worldly sorrow in the past and unwisely been commended for it by others only to continue in your sinful patterns. This was notably the case in August 2004 and the years following (cf. 2 Cor. 7:8-13; see also *Repentance -The First Word of the Gospel* by Richard Own Roberts, especially chapter 6 entitled, "Seven Marks of Repentance and chapter 8 entitled, "Repentance and Its Accompanying Graces").

¹⁷⁰ This comment reveals a twisted view of reality. You put yourself in a good light. My request for another written response should have been unnecessary. You are simply following up on an unfulfilled promise. You should not commend yourself for writing me a second time. Instead you should be asking my forgiveness for violating your word.

¹⁷¹ Something I've been willing to do from the beginning but only after you provide me the same in writing as I have done for you.

¹⁷² This is a surprising statement. All of these people (Dave, Steve, Jeff, Joshua, Pat, Bob, Kenneth, Grant, Gene, Mickey and Larry) have been readily available to provide you their perspective on the events I described in RRF&D and AFA. These men have already provided me their perspective on these events or else they have refused my requests to do so. I welcome any additional clarification they want to provide me.

perceiving my sin seems to be a slow process and I very much need the help of others; most importantly I need God to give me the gift of sight that I might perceive my sins and their effect on others.

Page 2 of 10

As I think you are aware, in order to insure accountability for myself and integrity in this process, the Sovereign Grace board has taken responsibility for giving me direction in how I participate; I am submitted to them both in regard to my pursuit of reconciliation with you and any appropriate public confession.¹⁷³ I have already sought to confess my sins to all those involved in these circumstances and I'm very grateful for their gracious forgiveness. I am also eager to share sinful patterns¹⁷⁴ I have become much more aware of and lessons I've learned over the past few years in the appropriate public contexts. I hope that our future discussions will help inform any public communication I

¹⁷³ In this context the word "appropriate" means "suitable or fitting for a particular purpose, person, occasion." You acknowledge no need or desire to confess your sins to the movement or the pastors. By default, you have deemed it "inappropriate." May I suggest that if it is inappropriate for you to confess; then it has been inappropriate for scores of other men to have confessed under your leadership. Over the last 20 years, your sin has exceeded theirs in magnitude, duration and extremity (e.g. Keith Breault and Mark Mullery at the 2009 Pastors Conference). You've disciplined and/or removed many men from ministry for lesser transgressions. Yet you consider it inappropriate to follow their example. For this you will need to ask their forgiveness. There has never been a more appropriate occasion for confession. To date, the Board has expressed no need for you to give a public accounting. This is a biased and partial judgment. I hope they quickly change their minds.

¹⁷⁴ You share "sinful patterns" but in a fashion that can promote false humility because you don't share "sinful examples." This is something the apostolic team pointed out to you about your preaching from December 2000 to August 2004. Your recent blogs are a good example. In the ten part series, "The Pastor and Personal Criticism," you don't share any examples of actual sin with one minor exception. On the other hand, here are the sinful patterns you reference. "I regret the many times I haven't responded humbly to correction.... Often for me, when criticism arrives, my response reveals the presence of pride in my heart.... Criticism can uniquely reveal my heart, and often what I see isn't pretty.... And through dwelling on what seems to be the critic's ignorance of the pastor's service and his withholding of encouragement, the pastor's heart quickly moves towards self pity. This is pride, and I've seen it in my own heart.... I did this just yesterday [the only specific example] when someone kindly corrected me. This is pride, and I've seen it in my own heart.... And if a pastor isn't prepared for criticisms, if he doesn't prize growth in godliness, he will despise criticism rather than embrace it. Sadly I have many times...I *should be* eager to receive correction, but usually I'm not. And it's no mystery why I'm not eager to receive criticism—I'm a proud man...A wise, older pastor once said to me: 'C.J., what hurts isn't dead yet.' And that is often what criticism wounds—my still-living, still-breathing pride.... And even though I don't desire her help in confirming criticism, by doing this Carolyn has shown herself to be the suitable helper I so desperately need.... When this happens I am tempted to be offended by that attitude, and prematurely relieved, concluding that any criticism brought in such an attitude must certainly be inaccurate.... Criticism contradicts my high view of myself—so I am tempted to respond sinfully." You are eager to share sinful patterns but not sinful examples. Is it no longer appropriate, wise or necessary to share specific examples of sin? Without personal examples, I think this kind of self-effacing language can project and promote false humility.

make. I know that the board also wants us to engage in a mediation process, not only so that we can be reconciled but also so that appropriate accountability can be brought to me. Hopefully, these various steps will give you confidence in moving ahead towards a redemptive process.

Brent, you have also asked on a few occasions that I state where I disagree with your perspective in your documents. As you know, I have been hesitant to do that, and I left out such disagreements entirely from the first response and confession I provided. I did so because I wanted to examine my own heart and sins as carefully as possible, and with the help of others. I also thought it best to convey to you in my response my sins and failures and avoid giving you any impression that my differences with you somehow excuse my sins. This remains my sincere desire. However, in providing greater detail in this document, it is necessary at least to signal some places where my perspective differs from yours. Nonetheless, I remain reluctant to, and have refrained from, communicating where I think your sins¹⁷⁵ might have contributed to issues and events explored in your documents. I believe those are most wisely communicated in conversation, not in written form.¹⁷⁶ Again, I do not assume that my perspective is accurate, which is why I think it's so important for us to discuss these things and involve an objective mediator so that hopefully we can be reconciled.

So on to the specifics.

In pages 5-28 of RRF&D you raise your concerns about my behavior in response to your and Dave's correction¹⁷⁷ beginning December 2000 and culminating in our August 20 meeting in 2004. You pointed out that I was often difficult to correct and easily offended when I felt I had been judged. Once again let me state clearly that I agree with that. You said I was often stubborn when I believed that my perspective or perception was accurate. I agree with you. You note that I made decisions without appreciation for their effect on others. I need to explore this further with you; you may be right, but I cannot recall specifics¹⁷⁸ so I cannot fully examine myself in this area. You also say that I led

¹⁷⁵ I don't think I am unmindful of the ways you think my sin has "contributed to the issues and events." You've provided repeated and substantial correction and input in the past. For example, your 21 points of correction on November 19, 2004. Nevertheless, I welcome additional input or a restatement.

¹⁷⁶ I provided this information for you in written form knowing it would help you to understand my perspective in advance of meeting together. That is one of the reasons, I made it a prerequisite. I didn't want to meet unless I knew your perspective of me and the issues I identified. You agreed to provide this information but have not followed through.

¹⁷⁷ Steve agreed with our principal correction and was an integral part of the process beginning in December 2000.

¹⁷⁸ I easily could but just ask all the men around you for examples. This was a commonly agreed upon point of concern for you.

the apostolic team more by expedience than by process. I think that was often true. I would be eager to explore with you specific examples so that I could examine my heart and acknowledge any sin that affected my leadership. I would love to regather the team for this evaluation so that I could also benefit from the observations of Dave, Steve, and Pat. You also note that I could be exacting and take offense if I was not corrected with the right attitude, words, or illustrations. As I said in my first response, I believe that has been true in many instances: I have taken exception to particular illustrations¹⁷⁹ that I disagreed with, and I have challenged both the wording and the motives of those

Page 3 of 10

bringing correction, while overlooking the legitimacy of the broader points being made. I remain grieved as I type this again and reflect back upon this.

You and Dave expressed a concern that I wasn't passing on your correction of me to the CLC pastors¹⁸⁰ or my primary context for fellowship. You identified that as "hypocrisy" and "managing information."¹⁸¹ As I said in my first response, my trust in my own discernment and my disagreement with your correction—in short, my pride—contributed to me not informing the CLC guys about your correction in specific and appropriate ways. I have no doubt I was being proud and was blinded by my pride. Was I being hypocritical?¹⁸² In one sense I was, given that my actions did not live up to what I believe and teach. I certainly do not want to minimize my sin, but I would add that, as far as I

¹⁷⁹ You took exception to all our illustrations (Steve's included) with only two exceptions. In one case, it took seven years of regular input before you saw the extent of your wrongdoing. I am referring to your mistreatment of a Sovereign Grace manager. The other had to do with your handling of a pastor and his son. An entire pastoral team had to weigh in with their concerns for you in order to gain your attention. The three of us shared a multitude of illustrations. Those were the only two you ever acknowledged.

¹⁸⁰ You were not passing on information to anyone. It was not simply a matter of neglecting to fill the CLC pastors in on Dave and my concerns. For instance, you never told us about any of the correction and input you received from the CLC pastors on numerous occasions (which was also true in relation to input you received from the Covenant Fellowship pastors and CrossWay pastors). You withheld all information from everyone.

¹⁸¹ This is not a phrase we used to describe your activity. Rather, this was a judgmental statement you used to describe Dave and my supposed activity. See AFA, p. 45. "You told Steve behind our backs that we were acting deceitfully and controlling and/or managing information."

¹⁸² Why is it so hard to acknowledge your hypocrisy? You did not tell the CLC pastors about our correction and you did not tell the apostolic team about their correction. This went on for many years and was not confined to events in 2004. In reality, you were accountable to no one but led us to believe you were accountable to everyone. Please review Bob's minutes from the August 20, 2004 meeting for verification. The lack of accountability was a long-standing issue. It is one of the things you must confess to the movement and the pastors. For three decades you taught on the importance of accountability but it was largely absent in your life. That is hypocrisy.

know, I was not intentionally seeking to deceive¹⁸³ you men, although I realize that factors such as my pride, my sinful judgment of you, and my disagreement with you influenced my not passing on these observations. There are other factors that contributed to what I was and was not sharing with the CLC guys, and I would love to discuss those with you when we meet.

Brent, if I might step back from the specifics of your document for a moment and look back over this difficult season for us as a team, I think there were, at least for me, four primary factors (I don't assume this is exhaustive) that contributed to how I was relating to and leading the team. First and foremost would be my pride in its various forms, which I didn't fully perceive then and I'm sure I don't fully perceive now. This was the focus of my first response to your documents. Second was my assumption that the correction I was receiving from you and Dave was in some way influenced by offenses I perceived in you men toward me because of certain decisions I made that affected your respective roles and service in Sovereign Grace. Again, as I noted in my first response, this involved sinful judgment on my part. I should have humbly explored my perspective and concerns with you both and not allowed it to continue to inform our conversations. Thirdly, prior to the August 2004 meeting – actually, soon after you began correcting me – Steve privately raised concerns¹⁸⁴ to me about your manner of correction,¹⁸⁵ your expectations of what an appropriate response¹⁸⁶ looked like, and what appeared to him to be undue

¹⁸³ C.J., you must come to grips with your deceit. It too is something that must be confessed to the movement and the pastors. On several occasions you knowingly mislead us. It does not matter you thought the input was unprofitable and errant due to your pride. That is a separate issue. You were often asked by the apostolic team (or individuals on the team) to inform the CLC pastors (or someone else) of input. The CLC pastors asked the same. You'd promise to pass on the input but never follow through all the while allowing us to believe you had. You lied, broke your word, and kept this deceitful practice from us until discovered and exposed.

¹⁸⁴ Yes, Steve acted deceitfully and behind our backs not "privately." This was a disservice to you, Dave and me. Dave and I brought this to his attention. He also slandered me to you and others (e.g., see RRF&D, p. 52). He promised to get back to Dave and I regarding his sin but never did so. Unfortunately, Steve fed your judgments of Dave and me. I have ample evidence I have not presented to substantiate this claim. You took advantage of the situation in a way that angered Steve. He confronted you but you never acknowledged any wrong doing.

¹⁸⁵ Here is what Dave said about my manner of correction at the August 20, 2004 meeting. "Brent has excelled in his care and affection for CJ. Brent is intent on making sure there is care, protection, deliberation, and caution in this whole process. He is engaging God in the process." (from Bob's official minutes)

¹⁸⁶ It is clear now that Steve's "expectations of what an appropriate response looked like" were woefully inadequate. Here is what Dave said at the time. "I would also want to make the point that I would see this as part of a historical pattern where he [Steve] has not discerned sufficiently, nor served CJ with what he does discern and also tends to grant wide latitude to CJ's sins in a way that does not serve CJ." (RRF&D, p. 61). A good example of this occurred at the August 20, 2004 meeting. If you review the minutes, you'll notice Steve barely participated and contributed next to nothing.

weight given to your concerns.¹⁸⁷ It's clear to me now that I should have quickly gathered the team together so that Steve could share his concern¹⁸⁸ and you and Dave could respond to his concern. I regret that I did not. Finally, your and Dave's correction of me was preceded by a developing concern I had with the way correction was being practiced within Sovereign Grace, particularly when pastors corrected one another. In my view, yours and Dave's correction of me fit that pattern.¹⁸⁹ I carried this concern for you in particular¹⁹⁰ and should have explored this with you separately, which I attempted to do at our meeting in November 2004.¹⁹¹ But this concern should have been explored separate from any and all correction I was receiving from the team. Brent, I do not assume that these four factors fully explain all that took place over the past number of years. Nor do I believe that the last two factors excuse my sin. But I

¹⁸⁷ It is also clear now that my "expectations of what an appropriate response looked like" were very appropriate and that I did not "assign undue weight" to those concerns. Steve was wrong in his assessment. I also think the way in which Steve conducted himself (at times with deceit) shows he was preeminently concerned for your favor, not your well-being. For example in his summary of concerns for you from April 2004, he said at the end, "I desire that all who would read this would know, my unrivaled regard for CJ as a leader and example and servant and giver and friend, and, and, and..." Of course, it was fine for Steve to express his regard for you to "all who read this" provided his motive was right.

¹⁸⁸ There was no need to do so. Once discovered (actually once exposed) Dave and I immediately met with Steve on at least two occasions to hear all his concerns. In our second meeting, we also expressed our concerns for him. Later, Dave expressed his concerns for Steve a second time.

¹⁸⁹ This was to be expected. With rare exceptions, you almost never received our input and were regularly offended by it. You judged we were ill motivated by bitterness, resentment, and pride. You thought we were hard on you. You thought we were exacting in asking for a godly response. For example, using a phrase like "an element of hypocrisy" provoked your indignation and criticism. It was extreme to you. You reacted and justified yourself. I hope you now see how long-suffering, kind, loyal, patient and forbearing we were with your sins. Your focus was always on how we did you wrong. Never on how you wronged us or others. We endured a lot. Rather than struggling with that time period, I hope you have come to appreciate our efforts and graciousness.

¹⁹⁰ From the beginning of Sovereign Grace Ministries in 1982, I was the one primarily willing to lovingly bring issues to your attention. I also served you, honored you and cared for you with great passion and joy. While others often avoided you, withheld input from you, or gave up in the process, I tried to be a faithful friend and the speak truth to you in love. I think this largely explains your particular concern for me.

¹⁹¹ You make a very important point here! You were concerned for my "manner of correction" but not for your own. Carefully compare Bob's minutes from Aug 20, 2004 with my notes from Nov 19, 2004. You provided me 4 hours of correction on Nov 19 but took great offense for my 1 hour 20 minute overview of ten years on Aug 20. There was no dialogue on Nov 19 but there was extensive dialogue on Aug 20. On Nov 19 you badly distorted the actual contents of what was said and done on Aug 20. This is apparent from the written records. On Nov 19 you repeatedly judged my (our) motives, distorted my words, corrected my perspectives, and downplayed your sins. I felt great compassion for you. It was clear...we were the bad guys and our loving correction was like water off a duck's back. Though you agreed with some observations in theory (i.e., on paper) it was difficult to see what you agreed with in reality. On Nov 19 it was apparent you agreed with very little and did not see your sins as serious. Our input offended your pride and you resorted to self justification. I was roundly condemned by you and later by Bob and Kenneth. Dave and I were relationally separated from you thereafter. For all intent and purposes, friendship and fellowship ceased as an apostolic team.

do think that they all played a significant role, at least for me, and I thought it might be helpful to lay them out. I would love to explore these issues with you and the rest of the men who were on the team during these years.

Page 4 of 10

Back to the documents, and specifically pp. 5-28. Much of the material on these pages leads up to the Aug 20, 2004 meeting. As I said in my last letter, I agree with the observations¹⁹² about my character failings that were brought to me in that meeting. I believe that I perceived some of them that day, although I perceive far more about my sin now. And let me stress again what I sought to detail in my first response to your documents: my confession of sin was sadly inadequate.¹⁹³ It lacked specific illustrations, I failed to humbly explore the illustrations you provided, and I failed to follow up my confession with specific illustrations and questions for you men about my sin and its effects on you.

Following the August meeting, you wrote, “When you disagreed with our concerns for you, you unilaterally removed me, took over the process, and stopped the evaluation.”¹⁹⁴ My understanding was that I agreed with many of your concerns¹⁹⁵ and that we as a team had decided that our respective local teams should be the primary context for accountability. As a result, I would be interacting with Bob, Kenneth, Josh, and Grant about these things. I did not think of myself as leading this process, nor was I taking steps to remove you from the process. I simply thought we had agreed that this would be primarily turned over to the local guys. Based on the documents that you copied in RRF&D, these men were giving me encouraging reports following our meeting.

¹⁹² If you now agree with the observations from August 20, how do you view the 21 points of correction that followed on November 19, 2004? Was your unfounded reproof abusive? It was certainly harmful.

¹⁹³ Inadequate? As you seem to indicate there was no confession of sin to us in person despite many appeals that you please talk to us.

¹⁹⁴ This is bizarre. You take this quote out of context and misapply it. It appears on pages 56-57 in RRF&D. Here is its meaning in context, “When you disagreed with our concerns for you [in your treatment of Bo], you unilaterally removed me [though I was asked to head up the evaluation of you and Bo], took over the process [with no forewarning or discussion], and stopped the evaluation [of you]. I used it as an analogy for when “you turned the process of evaluation to us [Dave and me] immediately after the August 20 meeting without ever having a discussion about doing so.”

¹⁹⁵ On paper in your e-mail confessions from August 10, 2004 and October 13, 2004 you expressed agreement with our concerns but you never talked to us about them, or illustrations related to them, or the effect of them upon us. You and the CLC pastors were suppose to get back to us with a plan for accountability. That never happened even though Dave and I made numerous appeals for this after August 20. We agreed your accountability should primarily be to the CLC pastors but we also said you needed to be accountable to the team in a secondary way and the team should periodically get updates from the CLC pastors on your growth in grace. None of this ever happened.

I don't recall intentionally cutting you and Dave out of any process.¹⁹⁶ But let me be clear: I should have followed up with you, Dave, and Steve after the Aug. 20 meeting. You were the ones who brought these concerns, and I should have insured that you heard not only from the local guys,¹⁹⁷ but from me as well. There is simply no excuse for my not doing so. I can understand how this tempted you, how this brought into question the previous confessions I made, and how this undermined your trust in me.

On pp. 37-51 of RRF&D you discuss our meeting in Charlotte in November 2004. I don't recall that meeting's intent,¹⁹⁸ tone,¹⁹⁹ or content²⁰⁰ the way that you do. In fact, I recall limiting my observations²⁰¹ because you appeared to disagree with them, and I was concerned that you were offended by them. You conclude this section by saying I was "resentful, bitter, and angry about many things."²⁰² I do not remember that being my attitude or the posture of my

¹⁹⁶ We repeatedly ask you to talk to us about your confessions and the input you were receiving from the CLC pastors. You refused to engage us. You also demanded to be present at any discussion concerning you. You felt it was unnecessary for the CLC pastors to join us on retreats or in conversations. Further, you began to make a case against Dave and me to Steve and Joshua even before the August 20 meeting. This occurred without our knowledge until discovered when you sent me an e-mail by mistake regarding the same. After August 20, Bob and Kenneth began to bring your perspective and correction to us.

¹⁹⁷ Which we did not except for general reports on your progress with them. Otherwise, they were afraid to interact with us and divulge the contents of their dealings with you. Quickly, Bob and Kenneth took a contrary approach to us.

¹⁹⁸ The intent was clearly communicated in advance by you and Joshua. It was to share your correction with me and your perspective on the August 20 meeting. "Kenneth, Grant and I [Joshua] met with CJ to discuss the timing of him sharing his thoughts with you men...CJ's desire is to have a whole day with each of you. The things he wants to share he wants to be able to explain in detail...He views this as an 8-10 hour process." (see RRF&D, p. 33)

¹⁹⁹ It was a cordial meeting. I made it easy for you to provide your critique. I asked questions and listened carefully. I didn't quarrel or debate or sinfully react to you.

²⁰⁰ The content was recorded in the notes I sent to you on Jan 19, 2005. You expressed no disagreement with their contents.

²⁰¹ I'm glad you did...I think I caught the gist of your concerns after 4 hours and 21 points of correction.

²⁰² Here was your critique of me (and Dave) on Nov 19. You said I used email as a "primary means of correction," we "didn't impart hope" to you, I made "repeated statements about the seriousness" of your sin, I made a "careless comparison [of you] to RB," I made a reference to "having [you] step down" as the team leader, "my explanation regarding [your] hypocrisy" was unhelpful, I wrongly compared you to BP and BC because you "were not getting the extreme nature of things," you didn't understand "why so many interactions" thereby making it [your sins] "more serious" rather than viewing them as "normal sanctification," my request for a written "confession [unnecessarily] escalated things," you felt the August 20 meeting was a "tribunal" with no statement of encouragement, there was an "alliance" between me and Dave against you, you felt Dave took up offenses for me and me for Dave against you, you felt Dave was verbally unkind to you, you didn't think it was wise to for me to make "a few hours of corrective statements" without dialogue on August 20, I seemed "irritated" at you at the August 20 meeting, you weren't sure "why a wider confession of sin was necessary" especially since you have "historically confessed your sins to others," you would walk more carefully than me in having men make public confessions, you were more restrained than me, you wondered why DH didn't make a public confession given the way TH lived during a 3 year period of time, Dave and I had gone back to Bo and

heart. If I remember correctly, I began that meeting by expressing gratefulness for the correction from you and Dave, which I think was sincere because I was perceiving at least some of it at that time. I thought our meeting ended well²⁰³ and, if my memory serves, you expressed appreciation for my coming.²⁰⁴ I'm sorry that you have such a different recollection of this meeting. I would love to discuss this.

On p. 57 you note that I sinfully judged you and Dave, saying that you were "bitter and vengeful."²⁰⁵ While I don't recall using those words and I certainly don't recall thinking you two were being vengeful, I do believe that during this period I was judging your motives, as I hope my first response to your documents made clear. I look forward to asking your forgiveness when we meet.

On pp. 62-85 you describe a process in which the tables were turned from me to you. You say I was removing myself from evaluation and placing you under evaluation. You say that this was motivated by bitterness. Brent, I'm looking forward to discussing this

Page 5 of 10

with you. I have a very different perspective on what was happening at that time and do not believe I was motivated by bitterness.²⁰⁶ If I remember

"transferred our offense" with you to him, you didn't think we were perceptive and discerning of Bo's sins, I did not make "inquiry into what took place during the 18 months" when you didn't have a Care Group, I used this illustration as part of a "damning body of evidence," you and Carolyn felt the August 20 meeting should have been postponed until after the Milestone Weekend in September [17-19], Joshua inaccurately "misrepresented [you] on having 2 services" at CLC at August 20 meeting, and I judged you at the August 20 meeting by saying you were resentful regarding our discussions about *The Cross Centered Life*. It was quite a critique! Yet arguably you were wrong on every assertion (cf. the official minutes from the August 20 meeting (RRF&D, pp. 16-28). These comments and your actions the following six years are testimony to the presence of anger, bitterness and resentment in your heart which you deny.

²⁰³ It did end well for the reasons mentioned above.

²⁰⁴ You are correct, I did express my appreciation for coming to provide me your correction.

²⁰⁵ You ascribe a quote to me on page 57 that does not appear there or anywhere else in the document. At no time did I use the word "vengeful" in RRF&D. You must exercise more care. I suspect you had in mind my comments on page 58, "In other words, you felt free to dismiss our discernment, input, and observations because you believed we were motivated out of resentment and bitterness...You believed our observations were inaccurate and motivated by a desire to get back at you." Please go back and read that section in context.

²⁰⁶ Dave, Steve and I began raising concerns for you in December 2000. For the next four years, you repudiated our input and often judged us to be sinfully motivated. This only intensified toward Dave and especially me after August 2004. And yet, you have never acknowledged being bitter, angry or resentment toward me (or Dave to my knowledge). In this regard, you have steadfastly denied the presence of these sins in your heart toward me when brought to your attention. In contrast, you've

correctly, we determined that I was to have a single meeting with you and Dave to share my perspective and concerns. I wasn't now leading an extended evaluation of you²⁰⁷ and Dave. However, in looking back I now realize that I didn't bring appropriate resolution with you and Dave regarding the issues you had been bringing to my attention. I wrongly assumed that my written confessions – which I now know were deficient – were sufficient. As I noted in my first response, I should have followed up on these confessions, elaborating on their content, supplying specific illustrations, and drawing you men out about my sin. Again, I'm deeply sorry that I did not do that, and I regret the effects of not doing so. Perhaps if I had done this, it would have placed my observations of you men in a different light.

On p. 86, you note that I withdrew from you relationally and related to you “with little gospel and grace” from 2005-2008,²⁰⁸ and that I primarily spoke to you harshly.²⁰⁹ It saddens me to read this. My recollection of that time would be different.²¹⁰ Brent, I don't remember that timeframe as a period of

confidently asserted on numerous occasions that I/we were bitter and offended at you. It is remarkable you see no relationship between your sinful actions and attitudes in 2004 and bitterness in your heart. That denial has continued to present and covers an additional 6 years. This is a longstanding area of deception for you. Not just in relation to Dave and me. Time and time again, you've rejected input on the premise that people are bitter at you. At the same time, you deny any bitterness toward them. “I...do not believe I was motivated by bitterness” is a familiar refrain.

²⁰⁷ Your correction of me was on-going from August 20, 2004 until the day I resigned as sr. pastor of Grace Community Church on July 29, 2009. Dave, Bob and Gene often served as conduits for this correction.

²⁰⁸ Your “little gospel and grace” treatment actually predates 2005. I'll provide an example later from 2002. And I've not gone into detail regarding your treatment since 2005. I may do so later. This is for the benefit of your soul. Like I said in RRF&D and AFA, there are many examples I've left unaddressed. When I wrote RRF&D, I hoped AFA would be unnecessary. When I wrote AFA, I hoped CR would be unnecessary. I've going into increasing detail only as circumstances required.

²⁰⁹ Once again you misquote me. I never said you “primarily spoke to [me] harshly.” Here is what I said on page 88 (not 86). “The next three plus years were not pleasant. You related to me with little gospel and grace. During that period you made several harsh comments to me and about me.” That is a true statement. There is a big difference between “you made several harsh comments” over three years and you “primarily spoke...harshly” over three years. Such distortions are common even when relating to you in writing.

²¹⁰ Your recollection is both favorable and erroneous. As history has shown, this is a pattern for you in matters like these. Let me refresh your memory a little. Here is just one example. You filled out a “Job Review Form” for me on January 11, 2005 (just 4½ months after the August 20, 2004 meeting) which was the first day of a three day apostolic team retreat in Herndon, VA. We were hoping to talk at the retreat about your e-mail confessions, the input you were receiving from the CLC pastors, and our relationships. Instead, you were focused on correcting us. It was during this retreat that you told me in no uncertain terms that you did not trust me (see RRF&D, pp. 58-59). You did not give me the harsh “Job Review Form” at the retreat but held onto it until the beginning of April when you sent it to me. There were five possible answers to each statement on the form. The five answers were: 1) Weak (i.e., not present); 2) Present but needs work (i.e., deficient); 3) Sufficient (i.e., good); 4) Excellent; 5) Uncertain. You gave me a rating of 1 in response to all of the following statements. In other words, all of the following were absent

unremitting conflict, resentment, and criticism. I remember you encouraging and affirming me²¹¹, and I remember doing the same with you²¹² during that time. It's hard for me to imagine that this entire three-year period was as you describe, but obviously my memory could be flawed and I am eager to hear your specific recollections.²¹³ You also say that during this time I was critical of your preaching.²¹⁴ I do not believe I had a unique and singular concern about your preaching.²¹⁵ Yes, I had a concern about aspects of your preaching, but I had concerns about the preaching of many Sovereign Grace pastors, including myself. So I sincerely don't believe my concerns were rooted in any unresolved offense with or bitterness toward you. However, I want to sit and listen to you describe your experience, as I could be mistaken or blind to something in my heart.

During this period, you also state that I said, "I never want anyone else to go through what I went through."²¹⁶ I did indeed say this, and this is an

in my life. "Is revealing and transparent. Values fellowship and pursues accountability. Regularly invites correction and asks for evaluation. Receives correction humbly and is easy to confront. Is willing to seriously consider all correction. Does not minimize, dismiss, or reject it. When correcting or evaluating an individual he does not communicate his assessment or perspective too strongly or categorically. Sets an example in identifying and confessing sin specifically and consistently. Invites and seeks input for personal, married and family life. Invites and seeks input for ministry effectiveness." These characteristics were not simply lacking in my life and in need of work. They were entirely missing. You send me the evaluation just after Bob and Kenneth came to correct me on March 30, in essence, for all of the above. You still have not told me whether they were sent by you. I disagreed with their assertions (see RRF&D, pp. 67-68) This became Exhibit A for my unteachableness as you so indicated to Larry Malament on April 7, 2005 (see RRF&D, pp. 68-69.). Now, six years later, all the concerns and observations I communicated to Bob and Kenneth have been acknowledged by you as true. That day in March, however, they attempted to lord it over me and arrogantly rebuked me. You in turned used this as a major example of my pride and unteachableness.

²¹¹ True, I always looked for ways to encourage and affirm you even when mistreated by you.

²¹² That would not be true but please send me any documentation or examples supporting your claim.

²¹³ I may supply them in additional writings.

²¹⁴ In the same "Job Review" mentioned above you found nothing good (i.e., sufficient) or excellent about my preaching. You indicated the following three items were entirely absence from my preaching. "1) Messages contain effective illustrations; 2) Personal humility is evident in messages; 3) Messages are the appropriate length of time." Lastly, to the statement, "Messages are characterized by biblical content and accuracy" you gave me a rating of 2. That is, my teaching was characterized by deficient biblical content and accuracy. Given this overall assessment, I understand why you removed me from the Pastors College in entirety and speaking at Sovereign Grace events for the most part.

²¹⁵ This is another example of remembering things favorably and inaccurately. Your concern for my preaching was "unique and singular" in nature. That is what hurt. Not that I didn't have plenty of room to grow or didn't need input. You said I was the only pastor in Sovereign Grace who had "not grown in preaching in the last 6-8 years." Larry Malament can confirm this for you.

²¹⁶ I hope you now see how patient and kind we were to you and how oblivious you were to what we went through. You saw us as adversaries not friends. This judgment was passed on to others who imbibed your attitude and perspective. I believe this perspective was an expression of resentment and bitterness. Not just self-pity and pride. You were focused on our perceived sins before August 20, 2004 but this focus intensified after August 20.

expression of self-pity and an evidence of pride in my life. I wouldn't have perceived that then. But by the grace of God, I do now. I should have been more concerned about my own sin and its effects upon others than I was about how I perceived I was being treated.

You also note that numerous individuals expressed concerns that I was resentful and bitter toward you.²¹⁷ Brent, I am sorry but I am unaware²¹⁸ of who these people might be. If you are comfortable, please let me know who they are – perhaps their perspective could be helpful to me. I would be eager to talk to them.

Beginning on p. 89 you make the case that a breakdown in relationship with me had significant bearing on the process that led to your stepping down from pastoral ministry.²¹⁹ As you chronicle this period – your reduction in courses at the Pastors College, your transition from the leadership team, your reduced teaching role – you seem to tie them all to a loss of relationship with me. Brent, I am grieved you are no longer in Sovereign Grace Ministries. I wish you were still in Sovereign Grace.²²⁰ I hope one day it is possible for you to return to Sovereign Grace. And if the loss of relationship with me contributed to you no longer being in Sovereign Grace, I would want to rectify this. Unfortunately,

Page 6 of 10

²¹⁷ For example, Dave Harvey, Bob Kauflin, Kenneth Maresco, Larry Malament and me. Without exception you always denied being resentful, bitter or angry at me. That continues to the present.

²¹⁸ A shocking admission!

²¹⁹ Here is my exact statement. You don't get it quite right. "In my opinion, this breakdown in relationship has had a significant bearing on the process that began in June 06" (p. 91). I resigned three years later in July 09. Your personal "correction" of me intensified at the June 06 team retreat. Then you made three visits to Charlotte and met with me on Jun 29, Aug 23, and Dec 6 in 2006. You continued your correction of me. On Dec 9, Larry Malament talked to you by phone. He pointed out your bias against me and preferential treatment of Mickey on each of the three trips. He noted how you were compassionate, merciful and patient with Mickey's sins but not with mine. He illustrated how you regularly encouraged Mickey in contrast to the absence of any encouragement of me. He shared with you his concern that you were bitter and offended at me. You disagreed with him on every point and justified yourself. For example, you felt you were in fact encouraging of me. After Larry's correction you withdrew from direct involvement with me and inserted Dave into the process of dealing with my perceived sins. Your assessment of me was harsh and largely based on sinful judgments or embellished illustrations. You concluded I was proud, independent and unteachable to an extraordinary degree. This was nothing new. As already noted, you concluded by January 2005 that I devoid of humility. Your assessment of me was later used by Dave, Gene, Bob, et al., in making a case against me. This had a major impact on my resignation in July 2009.

²²⁰ Do you realize how counter this is to everything Jenny and I have experienced and been told? For instance, I was banned from involvement in any Sovereign Grace church by Dave. Or last year, you told me doctrinal disagreements "now separate us from serving together."

however much I grieve that you are no longer a part of Sovereign Grace, I cannot agree with your perspective that our relationship was the cause of all that eventually took place,²²¹ nor that it is the reason that you are no longer with us.²²² Although I feel the need for a mediator in so many ways, I particularly feel the need of a mediator to address this and help resolve this. You also implicate numerous other individuals²²³ in the events leading up to and surrounding your departure. I think it would be unwise for me to try to respond in light of the nature of these matters and the number of people involved who should be a part of the process of resolving these matters. I'm afraid there is simply no way that just you and I can resolve something this complex that involved so many other people over so long a period of time. This is why I can only appeal to you again that we find an impartial mediator to help us see together what happened during this time. I can only imagine that this particular issue would weigh heavily on your soul.

From pp. 92-103, you give three examples of what you consider my hypocrisy. The first regards my developing a seven-year plan for my life independently from the team. You say this was a serious expression of independence and that I would have reproved others for doing far less. The plan I mentioned to Gene was not a formal proposal adjusting any of my fundamental responsibilities,²²⁴ nor did it involve any future decision affecting my leadership of Sovereign Grace, the composition of the team, etc. It was really a simple exercise.²²⁵ the

²²¹ I never said or implied that you were "the cause of all that eventually took place." I do believe you were a major contributor to a lot of what took place. But what breaks my heart is your unwillingness to acknowledge any culpability. You refuse to take any responsibility for an unjust assessment and my leaving Sovereign Grace Ministries.

²²² It was not "the" reason but it was "a" reason. Let's review. You were the one who broke off our relationship in November 2007. You (and Dave) were the ones who refused to meet with us in March 2009. You were the one who passed on many sinful judgments of me to others like Dave, Bob, Gene, and Mickey. You were the one who told me doctrinal disagreements "now separate us from serving together." And you were the one who told all the Sovereign Grace pastors that I was unfit for ministry. Have you forgotten these things so quickly? All of these had a bearing on my assessment, my resignation, and my leaving Sovereign Grace Ministries. Yet you see no such relationship between them.

²²³ By "implicate" you seem to mean I wrongly find fault with "numerous other individuals" rather than "to bring into intimate or incriminating connection" based upon sound evidence justly presented. As such, your focus is entirely on me. At no point in your December 16, 2010 or March 11, 2011 responses do you express the mildest of concerns for anyone else. This badly misses the mark. These individuals should be corrected by you, and in some cases disciplined by you. Instead you exonerate all of them and express no concerns for any of them.

²²⁴ The plan included how many books you wrote, what strategic initiatives you took, how you allotted your time, what speaking engagements you accepted, how much you traveled, who you related to - I disagree, those were fundamental responsibilities.

²²⁵ Here is what you told Gene. "We are walking through a lengthy process where they are kindly spending many hours evaluating what I am to do over the next 7 years Lord willing" with "a number of possible recommendations on the table." (RRF&D, p. 95) That doesn't sound like "a simple exercise" to me.

men I worked with on a daily basis had met with me to help me examine my calendar, the use of my time, the increasing number of invitations to speak outside of Sovereign Grace that I was receiving, the relationships I was being invited into beyond Sovereign Grace, and potential writing projects I might pursue in the future. Again, we were not making decisions that impinged upon the team's leadership of Sovereign Grace,²²⁶ and certainly not about any future transition. In retrospect I realize now that I should have informed the team that I was even discussing these things. But I truly don't think of this as hypocrisy because I didn't think I was functioning independently of the team.²²⁷ As I remember it, this was all about helping me manage my day-to-day responsibilities and opportunities.²²⁸ And in the end my initial enthusiasm came to nothing and this supposed "plan" had no enduring effect (other than me looking at speaking invitations more carefully with the help of others). Brent, when I mentioned to you in a subsequent e-mail about a future transition to Josh "when I was 60," this was just my musing about how I saw the future – it was little more than my best guess. It was not a plan discussed with these men, nor was it a settled matter in my own mind. Any significant discussion about my future or any transition would certainly have been made with the team and decided upon by the team. I could be wrong, and I welcome your perspective (and that of Dave and Steve), but I don't believe I would have begrudged you men going through a similar exercise with those you worked with on a day-to-day basis and who helped care for your soul and for your calendar. As for declining Gene's invitation, I believe they involved commitments seven months out²²⁹ and another over a year away, and as a result of my discussions about my calendar I was trying to exercise much greater caution²³⁰ in accepting speaking invitations. Again, I could be wrong here, but as I look over the e-mails you sent and reflect upon this time, I really don't think I was being hypocritical with the team or deceptive toward Gene.²³¹

²²⁶ Not true. All the things you mentioned had a bearing on the direction of Sovereign Grace Ministries and we were uninvolved.

²²⁷ You declined to speak at a regional Celebration Conference and a regional Marriage Conference based upon a seven year plan we knew nothing about. You made decisions about speaking engagements and the allocation of your time based upon this plan without including the apostolic team. So how was this not acting "independently?"

²²⁸ It was about the re-writing of your Sovereign Grace job description and your responsibilities as the team leader "including strategic initiatives" in the future. In other words, what you should do the next seven years. No small thing.

²²⁹ Yes, Gene asked you in December to take one day to speak at an important regional conference during July 6-8, 2007.

²³⁰ During July you did no traveling except for a family vacation on July 15-30 in Knoxville.

²³¹ Dave, Steve and I had been appealing to you for a long time to talk about these very matters. Instead you were talking to the CLC pastors. Recommendations were on the table. Do you think I could have talked to the CrossWay pastors about a new SGM job description for the next seven years that encompassed a "lengthy process for many hours" and then immediately began to make decisions based upon its revision and not be adjusted by the apostolic team? In addition, you don't think you were

although I do wish I had communicated these things with the team. If it would help resolve this, I welcome the perspective of Dave and Steve on this.

Page 7 of 10

Another example you cite relating to my hypocrisy is the team's approval of your statement on the sacraments in [October] 2004 and Jeff teaching something different in [April] 2007. My understanding when Jeff presented that material is that we were in agreement about the sacraments,²³² and that Jeff's teaching would not contradict our understanding. Obviously that was a wrong assumption²³³ and poor leadership on my part. I should have led us in a discussion about the specifics of Jeff's teaching and verified that we were indeed in agreement.²³⁴ I was unwise in not doing so. Perhaps I was presumptuous in not doing so. Given my pride, I don't doubt that I was. However, I am not perceiving how this would be hypocrisy on my part. It had been three years [2½ years] since we went over your outline as a team, and I frankly didn't carefully examine Jeff's outline²³⁵ to compare it with yours. I just knew we needed to strengthen our understanding of the sacraments, and my (wrong) assumption was that we were basically in agreement on this topic. As in all of the issues you raise, I welcome your perspective on this, as well as the perspective of all the guys who were on the team and a part of these discussions. I do regret my poor leadership here. As I look back over the years, I have become aware of a pattern in my leadership of assuming we've had sufficient discussion on a topic and that we're in agreement on a topic, rather than reviewing, discussing, and making sure that everyone on the team is in full agreement on the issue at hand.²³⁶ I regret that there have been many times I have not done this, and this would be one of those times. I think this would also be an example of something you mention early in your document

deceptive toward Gene but provide no explanation. The evidence seems to indicate otherwise. For example, "First, you tell Gene you can't come because of all the work being done on the seven year plan. Then, two weeks later, you tell me you have not thought about the seven year plan for a few months." See page 99 in RRF&D.

²³² This is one of those examples that is very hard to comprehend. Dave, Steve and I clearly registered our disagreement with you (and Jeff) on important points regarding the administration of the sacraments. You did not change your position but acknowledged you "wouldn't want to debate me using Scripture." As a result, we all agreed not to change our teaching or accommodate Jeff's positions on practice.

²³³ Not simply a wrong assumption. It was in violation of our agreement.

²³⁴ We already had this very discussion at the October 2004 team retreat. All the differences with Jeff were contained in my outlines. We agreed to continue teaching on water baptism as presented in that material.

²³⁵ He didn't have one. We orally compared his known positions to our positions.

²³⁶ In this case we actually discussed our differences. There was nothing nebulous about our differing positions.

concerning my leading by expedience rather than by process.²³⁷ No excuses – this was bad leadership, and as I look back on such examples I feel a genuine sorrow. However, I would need you to help me understand how this would be hypocrisy on my part. I do remember this being brought to my attention at a team meeting after the conference and learning that we were not in agreement as I had wrongly assumed. I fully agree that this was a leadership failure on my part, but I don't remember anyone at the time identifying this as hypocrisy.²³⁸ To the contrary, I remember you men being, yet again, kind, patient, and understanding. And so I'm eager to hear your perspective on this, as well as that of the other guys on the team, since obviously this was not an interaction between the two of us, but it involved all of us.

The third example you give of my hypocrisy has to do with my cautioning you about submitting a book proposal on pride during the season when you were working through issues with your local team in Charlotte. I can understand your thinking of this as hypocrisy given that I wrote a book on Humility in 2004. As I remember it, my main concern was simply that you give deference to the perspective of the local men as to the timing of your writing this book, not whether you were ultimately to write this book, and that was the substance of my counsel.²³⁹ I believe that the e-mails you cite demonstrate that this was

²³⁷ My main concern for your "leading by expedience rather than by process" was the repudiation in practice that others were necessary or desirable in making important decisions. It wasn't just "bad leadership." Our exclusion was usually due to your self-sufficiency, independence or disagreement with us. In the later case, you would bypass us. Functionally you saw no need for us when this kind of thing occurred. The phrase "leading by expedience" does not address root issues. You taught "team ministry" and "plurality of elders" since the beginning of Sovereign Grace Ministries. You were corrected for the lack of it on many occasions but it continued unabated.

²³⁸ Dave was not willing to bring this up as an example of independence. No one had the nerve to bring it up to you as an example of hypocrisy. During this same timeframe you were confronting me for being independent (more later) yet unmindful of your own independence which we had addressed for seven years. Furthermore, even if you forgot our doctrinal discussion at the Oct 04 retreat, you knew Jeff was introducing practices that differed with what had been taught for two decades throughout Sovereign Grace Ministries. Nevertheless, you unilaterally made the decision for him to teach those differences without talking to us. Later when I brought up your independence you told us you didn't need our support because you agreed with Jeff. That was hypocritical.

²³⁹ I believe the substance of your counsel concerned my qualifications for writing and not the timing of my writing. Here is what you said to me, "Do you think it's wise for you to send this in at this time with all that is transpiring at present with you and the pastoral team there?" Here is how Larry Malament understood your words. "Thanks C.J. I'll talk with Brent about this. I'm uncomfortable with him pursuing this at this time. I'd like to see him gain a more illuminated perspective on his pride... Would you like for me to keep you updated on my meetings with Brent?" You never corrected Larry's understanding of your comments. Regardless, your counsel was hypocritical. You wrote the book in 2004. Here is my question for you. "Do you think it was wise for you to write a book on humility in 2004 with all that was transpiring with you and the apostolic and pastoral teams?" What was unwise for me was wise for you. That's hypocritical. Furthermore, do you think it was right to write a book on humility without consulting the apostolic team who was addressing pride in your life for the last four years?

advice given in passing. As for my own book, it was my understanding that I had the support of the local guys²⁴⁰ here in writing the book. Josh was supportive and even wrote the foreword for it. And I think I would have been sensitive had they voiced any misgivings, since I did not want to write this book in the first place. And I tried to make clear in the book²⁴¹ that I was writing not as a humble man but as a proud man pursuing humility by the grace of God. In any event, I would be happy to revisit this to see if anyone had concerns that I was unaware of. If my

Page 8 of 10

perspective was flawed and I was inconsistent – or worse, hypocritical – then I would want to discover that and confess that.

On p. 113, you mention Gene’s comments about your teaching on pastoral authority as a primary influence on your separation from Sovereign Grace.²⁴² Brent, I don’t know if you are aware of this or not, but I was minimally involved²⁴³ in the process involving you/Mooresville – and intentionally so. I honestly don’t recall Gene’s comments playing a significant role in this, but I would encourage you to pursue mediation/reconciliation with Dave and Gene and anyone else you think misrepresented your doctrinal position.²⁴⁴ I know these men would desire to work through these issues with you and are eager to be reconciled. Given my minimal involvement, I can’t really speak to this, and given the involvement of a number of others, they would really need to speak to this.

My understanding from your second document, “A Final Appeal,” is that you believe that starting in Aug 2004 I was behind an intentional and concerted effort to have you removed from Sovereign Grace.²⁴⁵ Brent, if I’m

²⁴⁰ You probably did and that was part of the problem. They were not holding you accountable. Whether you were qualified to write a book on humility was never discussed with the apostolic team.

²⁴¹ If you wanted to make this point clear you should have referenced the long and largely unsuccessful process we walked through with you. This is no allusion to this disciplinary process in the book.

²⁴² I don’t know how you arrive at this based on what I wrote. Gene’s comments regarding my doctrine were not a “primary influence” for leaving Sovereign Grace Ministries. In fact, they had nothing to do with my leaving.

²⁴³ I address this later.

²⁴⁴ Dave and Gene are comparatively unimportant. You are the one who singularly said we could not work together in Sovereign Grace Ministries due to differences you had with me in doctrine and practice. I sought doctrinal “reconciliation” but you steadfastly refused to reveal your disagreements in writing. To this day I can only guess what you have in mind. I am clearly beyond the bounds of Sovereign Grace orthodoxy and orthopraxy. I just don’t know why.

²⁴⁵ This is bizarre. I never made such an assertion or implication. I do believe your many sinful judgments of me had a huge impact on how others viewed me and assessed me which in turn contributed to my resignation. People took on your perspectives and attitudes. This clearly happened on

understanding this correctly, then it grieves me that this is your perspective, and I hope to be able to persuade you otherwise. But while I don't agree with your conclusions, I am very open to considering all of your charges. Given the gravity of these charges and the differences in our perspectives, I think it is essential that we involve an impartial mediator to help us sort this out. Moreover, these events unfolded over a long period of time and involved many people, all of whom would need to participate in determining whether your charges are accurate or not. I can't speak for them, nor should I. But I am eager to do all I can to facilitate and participate in a process that would include all the people necessary to explore these events thoroughly and objectively.

Let me now attempt to address some specifics in AFA that I have not already spoken to in RRF&D and are not related to your stepping down from ministry. Regarding your concerns about vacation days, I've already sought to address them in my first letter. If this isn't satisfactory,²⁴⁶ please let me know and we could certainly talk about it further. I'd also encourage you to contact Tommy Hill, as I have reviewed your documents with him and to date he has no concerns about this matter.

On p. 44 [in AFA] you mention my rejecting correction because I felt I had superior discernment. Sadly, this has too often been true. I have often been arrogantly confident in my perception of my discernment in relation to others. I hope that I specifically and faithfully addressed this in my first response to you. On the next page, you assert that my example has had a direct influence on Gene and Bob. I would hope not.²⁴⁷ But in order to determine whether I have had such an influence, we would need to discuss that with Gene and Bob.²⁴⁸ I would be eager to do so, and I would want to take responsibility for this if it turns out they share your perspective.

On pp. 46-56 you talk about the decision to end New Attitude. On p. 55 you say that I lied and sought to deceive you regarding Pat's perspective. This is in reference to Pat's email to me on p. 51. He listed a number of questions he had

many occasions. You have yet to acknowledge this sinful dynamic in the least. But I don't believe you were "behind an intentional and concerted effort to have [me] removed from Sovereign Grace." On the other hand, you were behind an intentional and concerted effort to confront me beginning in August 2004 which was based upon many sinful judgments and erroneous information that you believed as true.

²⁴⁶ It is somewhat helpful but far from satisfactory. There are so many issues you pass over in this illustration. For example, the abusive way you and Bob exercised your authority.

²⁴⁷ I have already presented illustrations (like the one above) where Bob pressed your sinful judgments upon me. They don't bear repeating since you find them of no relevance.

²⁴⁸ You are welcome to ask them and let me know what they tell you.

from our meeting but concludes the email, "I had no concerns²⁴⁹ when I left and you may have simply been

Page 9 of 10

exercising wisdom and decisiveness throughout." It's certainly possible²⁵⁰ that I did not take Pat's questions as seriously as I should have. I just don't remember. I can only assume that my focus was on the last line²⁵¹ of his email where he said he had no concerns for me. Pat did have questions but said he wasn't concerned. It appears he represented his questions somewhat differently in his email to you. But I fail to see how it was a lie to say that Pat had no concerns²⁵²; I was simply trying to represent his general perspective as I understood it.²⁵³ I would, however, agree that in retrospect I should have led

²⁴⁹ Pat was hired in 2003 so he had only worked for you a year. In his April 24, 2004 clarification he said the following. "I had questions about C.J.'s heart in the situation due to some of his short responses, but not concerns, in that I have not observed any patterns of such behavior... I thought his responses were abrupt while disagreeable." (RRF&D, p. 55) Pat qualified what he meant by "no concerns." Given his short time of employment he had not yet "observed any patterns of such behavior." If your short, abrupt and disagreeable response was an observable pattern at the time he would have said he was concerned for you.

²⁵⁰ "Certainly possible?" If you had taken them at all seriously you would have forwarded them to us or told us about them. Then we would have discussed them. You kept his observations from us. Furthermore, Pat's questions were the same as Dave and my questions. The three of us were concerned for your heart. By the way, this was another occasion when Steve failed to speak up and help you. At our April 21 team meeting Pat made clear his concerns for you. This had no effect. Afterward you wrote, "Though I would have a different perspective of what took place and why [on March 18], I will consider what you guys said and pray about it and if I am convicted of sin I will definitely ask your forgiveness." You were never convicted of sin. You never asked forgiveness. Even now all you can acknowledge is, "Perhaps here is another example of how I sometimes led by expedience and not process." You see no independence, autocracy, resistance, or deceit.

²⁵¹ You are correct. You were focused on two words in one sentence rather than the body of his e-mail which asked probing questions addressed to your heart. You never shared his questions which served as his observations. No one would ask these kinds of questions, or this many questions, if they were not concerned in some significant sense. This should have been obvious to you.

²⁵² You did more than say Pat had no concerns for you. You said he disagreed with Dave and me and our concerns for your "leadership, heart and attitudes." Here is what I said in AFA, "You emphatically told me Pat had no concerns for your leadership, heart or attitudes at the March 18 meeting. You went further. You said he disagreed with Dave and me." (p. 55) In other words, Pat had absolutely no concerns for you but he did have concerns for Dave and me. In fact, he agreed with you but disagreed with us. How could you say this based upon the content of his e-mail to follow. These were self serving fabrications.

²⁵³ If that was true you would have told us about Pat's questions and observations. You wrote Pat after the March 18 meeting and asked, "Did you notice anything in attitude or approach that either concerned you or you would have an observation and recommendation concerning?" Pat responded by asking you a number of questions. Here is a summary. 1) Why weren't you [C.J.] clear with us [Dave and Brent] that you needed more time to make sure your heart was right toward us given your strong conviction that New Attitude (NA) should end? 2) Were you poised to seek further understanding of our position that NA should continue, we should be more involved, and we needed to function as a plurality in making

us to function more effectively as a team, drawing you men out fully to understand your concerns. I wish I had done so in this case. Perhaps here is another example of how I sometimes led by expedience and not process. Maybe there's something I'm not seeing here; I'd be happy to reconvene the team and review what took place. I'm sure I would benefit from the perspective of all the guys.

On pp. 76-81 [in AFA] you describe my sins against the North Coast Church pastoral team when they left Sovereign Grace. I think you're aware that I eventually perceived how poorly I handled this,²⁵⁴ and that I sought to be reconciled with Ken Roberts, met with the pastoral team, asked their forgiveness, and was graciously forgiven. If there is more you think I need to do,²⁵⁵ I would be eager to hear that. You mention others who you believe have been sinned against in similar ways. If you're aware of others who are offended with me, please have them contact me. I am eager to be reconciled with anyone²⁵⁶ I've personally offended. As you may be aware, I've spent a good part of the past two years engaging with people who have been offended with me or with Sovereign Grace pastors. Although this has been a grievous process, I'm encouraged that we have been able to reconcile with a number of people, and I have learned much in this process—especially the difference the gospel makes in effecting reconciliation.

As I said earlier, I don't think it would be wise or that it would contribute to reconciliation²⁵⁷ for me to seek to address all the issues you raise²⁵⁸ that you

significant decisions? 3) Did you assume you fully understood us on these matters without further discussion? 4) How was your heart when you made the statement that NA should end after we made some points for why it should continue? 5) Why would you unilaterally make "a big decision" to end NA "that quickly with so many passionate thoughts being communicated?" 6) Why didn't "you clearly articulate your reasons for being hesitant for the Team to have more of an imprint" on NA when we "were struggling to understand your perspective?" 7) Why didn't you explain your "differing perspectives" on plurality and decision making when we wanted to know?

²⁵⁴ I don't think you saw "how poorly" you did. Your understanding was superficial and did not address root issues of the heart.

²⁵⁵ Ken Roberts wrote Larry Tomczak a letter regarding you on May 31, 2002. Larry forwarded a copy to you. In that letter he expressed his grave concern for "a pattern of intimidation, manipulation, and attempts to control people and situations within the movement." In context, he had you specifically in mind.

²⁵⁶ You could follow Ken's advice to you back in 1999. "If you really want input and candid observations from others concerning the movement, I would recommend that you send a standardized letter to twenty to thirty leaders who have left the movement. Ask certain questions and request input on specific topics in this letter." Of course, many more men have left the movement since then. You could include them and also those who have remained in the movement but were removed from ministry.

²⁵⁷ This is the same argument you made throughout 2010 for not providing me a written response to RRF&D and AFA. Your position allows you to remain silent on many critical issues and not incriminate (or exonerate) yourself or others. It's like pleading the Fifth. You pass over them without comment because you claim it would be unwise and counterproductive to express your perspective. I strongly

believe led to your dismissal from Grace Community Church. Your questions and concerns deserve good answers. But because they involve a number of people who need to speak for themselves,²⁵⁹ I would again ask you to participate with me and these others in a process of mediation.²⁶⁰ I truly believe that this could produce much good fruit and lead to our reconciliation.

However, I do want to state something very clearly to you. I deeply regret not seeking to get with you following your transition from Sovereign Grace.²⁶¹ To my knowledge I had not withdrawn from our relationship due to anger, resentment, or bitterness toward you.²⁶² Indeed, I was deeply saddened over what took place in Mooresville and now wish I would have inserted myself into the process of what took place there. If I had, I think the outcome might have been different.²⁶³ Brent, I wasn't sure if you even wanted to meet with me afterwards, but the long history of our friendship should have overcome any hesitancy I had about getting together with you.²⁶⁴ It was a relational failure on

disagree. Have you found my openness, honesty, and transparency helpful or unhelpful, productive or unproductive? You know my thoughts. I still don't know your thoughts about many things. You have concealed them. You are welcome to defend the actions Dave, Bob, Gene, etc. al. You are welcome to express all manner of concerns for me. I am not looking for agreement. I am looking for truthful answers before we meet in person.

²⁵⁸ On Oct 15, 2010 you promised to address all the issues I raised in RRF&D and AFA including those related to my dismissal. You haven't addressed any of them except to deny you had a negative impact on the people and process.

²⁵⁹ They have already done so. You are familiar with their perspectives. Fundamentally, each has denied all wrong doing with a few minor exceptions.

²⁶⁰ I have waited for honest answers and humble responses. Within a narrow range you provided honest answers and humble responses. These are meaningful but limited in scope. Why? Because you did not acknowledge or address any of my most serious concerns. Therefore, I still don't know what you think in many important respects. From the beginning, I hoped to meet with you. That was our goal but it was predicated upon certain conditions. Those conditions remain unmet. You do not appreciate what we've experienced the last decade. If you did, you'd understand the need for frank, open, and candid responses on the wide range of topics I've raised.

²⁶¹ I resigned as sr. pastor on July 25, 2009 and left Sovereign Grace Ministries on August 30, 2009. It was totally unsurprising that you did not contact me after my "transition from Sovereign Grace." You must remember, I had not heard from you since November 20, 2007 at which time I stepped down from the apostolic team. There were more than two years of silence. By all external measures your relationship with me was purely utilitarian. How often I remember you teaching us as pastors to follow up the next day with people we correct. That was never my experience with you. Therefore, Jenny and I had no expectations of follow-up by you or Carolyn after we left.

²⁶² There has never been a time over the last ten years when you have acknowledged the slightest bitterness, resentment or anger in your heart toward me. That is not true of me. I've acknowledged such on different occasions. What is sadder, you have dismissed the presence of these sins on every occasion when brought to your attention as an observation or concern by others.

²⁶³ I would not share your confidence based upon my experiences with you. By the way, you agreed with the outcome and expressed no concerns for Bob Kauflin who led the process.

²⁶⁴ This was not the only time you did not overcome any hesitancy about getting together with me. For instance, you were greeting people as they arrived for the 2009 Pastors Conference when you saw me about to enter the CLC building and then quickly ducked away and headed the other direction. This was

my part not to reach out to you – really, a failure of love. And for that I want to sincerely ask your forgiveness²⁶⁵ when we meet. This failure is one of the deepest regrets I have as I reflect back over the past ten years. And I look forward to expressing my sorrow to you personally.

Page 10 of 10

Brent, I recognize there are places in this document where I've voiced my differences with you,²⁶⁶ which you have invited. I appreciate your invitation. It bears repeating: I intentionally didn't do that in my first letter because I wanted to examine my own heart as carefully as possible, and with the help of others. I also thought it best to convey to you in my first response my sins and failures and wanted to avoid giving any impression that my differences with you somehow excuse my sins. They do not. As for our differences, I'm open to being wrong about these things and I'm eager to get help from an impartial third party as soon as possible. I trust the same is true for you. Now that you've read my response, please let me know if you desire to pursue mediation for the purpose of reconciliation. I am hopeful that as we do, we can please God and by the grace of God resolve our differences and be reconciled.

Because of the cross,

C.J.

Brent's Return to Sovereign Grace Ministries & Pastoral Ministry

Five days later you sent this addendum about me returning to pastoral ministry. I could make no sense of it given your previous stances. You provided no explanation for your fundamental change of perspective. I went from "unfit" to "fit" and from "unacceptable" to "acceptable." Is this an admission of an unjust assessment and a sinful dismissal from ministry? Is this an acknowledgement that my doctrine and practice are okay? You give no such indication but this seems to be a legitimate inference. If true, you must openly own your erroneous judgments rather than brush them under the rug.

independently witnessed by Eric, Anna, and Jenny who described the scene in exactly the same terms. They had no doubt about your avoidance and brought it to my attention. I observed the same kind of thing on other occasions.

²⁶⁵ You are forgiven.

²⁶⁶ I am glad you voiced some differences.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 2:18 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Back in Pastoral Ministry

Brent,

I hope this e-mail finds you enjoying God's grace. There is one more point I would like to make in addition to the document I sent you. I didn't think this fell within the purpose of the document but I do think it's important for me to communicate – at least I want to communicate it. My heart and point is simply this, I want to see you back in pastoral ministry as soon as possible.²⁶⁷ And this would be a distinct desire apart from any possible return to SovGrace. As I have communicated different times I hope you do return to SovGrace at some point.²⁶⁸ But I realize there is much to resolve with a number of guys²⁶⁹ in order for that to be possible (although with mediation I don't think that would require a prolonged period of time). So this desire for you to return to pastoral ministry transcends my desire that you return to pastoral ministry in a SovGrace context. I believe you are called to pastoral ministry and I just wanted you to know I would want to do whatever I can to see you once again preaching the gospel and serving a church.

As I was praying for you this morning I thought about how I hadn't included this in my document so I wanted to send it so you will know my heart for you.

Because of the Cross,
C.J.

²⁶⁷ You must mean "as soon as possible" after my "lengthy rehabilitation" required by Bob in a Sovereign Grace church! ☺

²⁶⁸ How can you hope for something you expressly ruled out? You precluded the possibility of any ministry involvement with Sovereign Grace Ministries unless I changed my doctrine and practice. I guess a return to Sovereign Grace is possible but I still don't know what areas of doctrine and practice I must renounce in order to conform to your standards. Furthermore, you declared me unfit for ministry. If your desire is sincere, I need to understand how and why your heart has so radically changed. Here is what I wrote you last June, "I'd love to return to Sovereign Grace Ministries but change must occur in order to restore my trust and confidence in its integrity. Nor am I currently welcome by you or acceptable to you. Gene counseled people to force my resignation before any evaluation, Bob has pronounced me unfit for ministry and in need of a lengthy rehabilitation, Dave has forbidden me from visiting all Sovereign Grace churches until I change, and you have said we cannot serve together because of your disagreements with me over doctrine and practice. I am also reminded of Dave's words to Jenny and me that I 'have not represented the values, leadership or doctrine of Sovereign Grace Ministries' during my years of service. As a result, a sense of belonging in Sovereign Grace Ministries escapes me."

²⁶⁹ Which probably won't happen until you see the issues of lording, spiritual abuse, deceit, hypocrisy, injustice, bitterness, etc. These men have imitated and imbibed your sins against me. When you see them clearly, I am hopeful the men around you will come to repentance also.

I appreciate your sentiments but don't know how to interpret them. On July 31, 2009 you sent out a letter to all the pastors in Sovereign Grace Ministries. It was written by Dave but explicitly on your behalf. Dave was formally representing you. The purpose of the letter was to inform the pastors of my resignation and provide them an explanation for it. You wholeheartedly concurred with the conclusions of the Assessment Team led by Bob Kauflin. You appointed Bob to this post contrary to my wishes given his evident bias against me. This letter from you proved ruinous. It destroyed my reputation throughout Sovereign Grace Ministries and beyond. It destroyed my livelihood and brought great hardships upon us. Thousands of people no longer trust me. Hundreds of friendships have been destroyed. Overnight good friends stopped relating to us. Some even turned against me in hate based solely on slanderous reports without ever talking. In the letter to the pastors, you unreservedly agreed with the declaration that I was unfit for ministry. You concurred that the charges were true. Later I was forbidden from involvement in all Sovereign Grace Churches until I repented. I was effectively excommunicated. I allowed all this to transpire without publicly exposing Sovereign Grace Ministries in order to protect its reputation and the advance of the gospel. I hoped repentance and restitution would come later.

C.J., it is wrong for you to distance yourself from such realities. For example your recent statement, "Brent, I don't know if you are aware of this or not, but I was minimally involved in the process involving you/Mooresville—and intentionally so." You were plenty involved. You were regularly updated in conversation and in writing. The detailed letter to the Sovereign Grace pastors attests to this fact. You are the President of Sovereign Grace Ministries! Dave, Bob and Gene work for you! Yet you accept little to no responsibility for what has happened to us. Do you really want to do whatever you can to see me once again preaching the gospel and serving a church? Then publicly confess your sins, influence others for the good, and declare the assessment unjust. Require Dave, Bob, and Gene to do the same. Appeal to Ray and Eric in like fashion. There is little hope of a return to effective ministry without a widespread acknowledgment of wrong-doing which could then result in the restoration of my reputation. Many dear people who once trusted me are now afraid of me. They have only heard your side of the story. I've been silent.

In your July 2009 letter to the Sovereign Grace pastors you affirmed as true the following statement about me. "There is a degree of pride, especially in a pastor, that can seriously undermine his example, hinder his effectiveness, and call into question his fitness for ministry. One of the ways that is determined is when a pastor's relationships deteriorate, he is unwilling to see the sin in his own heart and is thereby unable to sustain a functioning plurality." That was your view of me. It wasn't your view of yourself? That was your pronouncement over me. It wasn't your pronouncement over yourself? Though I disagreed with this assessment, I quietly resigned and did not

defend myself. You opposed any form of discipline and defended yourself even though this statement was true of you. For 10 years we tried unsuccessfully to help you see the very things you said were true about me and necessitated my removal from ministry. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, none of your friends pointed out the brazen hypocrisy or protested the double standard in your letter to the SGM pastors. It was particularly egregious for Dave not to speak up. He even drafted the letter on your behalf. Here in the South they call that "the good old boy network." You affirmed this paragraph as true for me but failed to see any relevance for yourself. If you did you'd have immediately stepped down from ministry with me so as not to be a hypocrite. But this standard was never applied to you by you or those around you. The slightest suggestion of discipline resulted in your immediately offense and protestation. The rules simply didn't apply to you. They still don't. The application of biblical truth and discipline is selectively applied to you and others in your favor.

I appreciate your sentiment to see me back in ministry and Sovereign Grace Ministries but you make no comment regarding what has transpired or the judgment Sovereign Grace has rendered. You clearly don't understand what I've been through. For the most part, I've withheld autobiographical comments. In the past when I referenced our suffering or pain to individuals like Dave and Gene, I was corrected for viewing myself as a self-centered victim. This is the third sinful pattern (in addition to telling people they are bitter or proud) by which people are controlled, manipulated and silenced. Too often when a person tries to share what they have experienced or been through they are reproved for having a victim's mentality.

Summary of C.J.'s Responses to RRF&D and AFA

You provided two responses to my documents. The first on December 16, 2010. The second on March 11, 2011. I want to summate the issues you affirmed and those you denied. In other words, what wrongdoing you acknowledged and what wrong doing you disavowed. I've sought to use excerpts from your responses in a balanced and just fashion in order to present your affirmations and denials fairly.

1. Confident in Superior Discernment

December 16, 2010

- "I have been arrogantly confident in my perception of my own heart and my discernment in relation to others."
- "I proudly trusted my own discernment and consistently disagreed with your correction, dismissed your correction, and, blinded by my pride, failed to inform the CLC guys about your correction in specific and appropriate ways

even after assuring you men I would. And I failed to inform you of ways they were correcting me as well.... But because of my pride and confidence in my perception I dismissed these observations and didn't think it necessary to share them.... I did not initiate or inform you men of the sin I was perceiving and the correction I was receiving from the CLC guys after the Aug 20, 2004 meeting. I should have."

March 11, 2011

- "On p. 44 [in AFA] you mention my rejecting correction because I felt I had superior discernment. Sadly, this has too often been true. I have often been arrogantly confident in my perception of my discernment in relation to others. I hope that I specifically and faithfully addressed this in my first response to you."
- "You and Dave expressed a concern that I wasn't passing on your correction of me to the CLC pastors or my primary context for fellowship.... As I said in my first response, my trust in my own discernment and my disagreement with your correction – in short, my pride – contributed to me not informing the CLC guys about your correction in specific and appropriate ways. I have no doubt I was being proud and was blinded by my pride."

Summary

- No additional information, details, or examples were added under this heading in your second response.

2. Hard to Entreat & Easily Offended

December 16, 2010

- "I was not easy to entreat.... When you and Dave corrected me I would often question your motives, or take exception to your wording or a particular illustration you referenced."
- "So you and Dave were accurate in the following assessment of me: 'To correct CJ, or to challenge his own self-perception, was to experience a reaction through e-mails, consistent disagreement (without seeking to sufficiently understand), a lack of sufficient follow up and occasionally, relational withdrawal. Along with this, CJ was poor in volunteering areas of sin, temptation or weakness in himself.'"

- “For example when you identified my not sharing the team’s observations of me with the CLC pastors as involving an element of hypocrisy, I took exception to that label instead of exploring the substance of your concern. In my pride I disputed the use of the word “hypocrisy” which prevented me from humbly listening to the correction of a friend.”
- “Brent, on page 107-108 in your second document [A Final Appeal] you list 4 questions that at that time remained unanswered. Well, they should have been answered and I have no excuse for postponing my answers and my pride is the only explanation for why they weren’t answered at the time.”

March 11, 2011

- “In pages 5-28 of RRF&D you raise your concerns about my behavior in response to your and Dave’s correction beginning December 2000 and culminating in our August 20 meeting in 2004. You pointed out that I was often difficult to correct and easily offended when I felt I had been judged. Once again let me state clearly that I agree with that. You said I was often stubborn when I believed that my perspective or perception was accurate. I agree with you.”
- “You also note that I could be exacting and take offense if I was not corrected with the right attitude, words, or illustrations. As I said in my first response, I believe that has been true in many instances.”

Summary

- You gave no examples of when you were hard to correct or when you became offended. You provided no definition for “easily offended.” Did you mean easily bitter, resentful or angry? No additional information, details, or examples were added under this heading in your second response.

3. Sinfully Judged

December 16, 2010

- I often sinfully judged you.... By holding a high view of myself and failing to be adequately suspicious of my own heart, my response in the face of an evaluation I disagreed with was to be critical of the one bringing the evaluation.
- For example when you referenced the possibility of my stepping down I sinfully judged you and assumed you were motivated by an offense against me.

- “My pride was particularly revealed when you would question my integrity.... So at different times (when dealing with topics like confession of sin, accountability; vacation time) I would sinfully react to your observations/concerns and sinfully judge you. Due to a high estimation of myself and my perceived integrity, I didn’t carefully consider your correction/concern. This was my pride both in having a high estimation of myself and in my desire that you share that estimation.”
- “For example when you contacted me about how many vacation days it appeared I had taken that year, I should have been appreciative of your care for me and my schedule and thanked you for your concern about maintaining integrity in relation to vacation days. Instead I sinfully judged you and my follow up emails were motivated by a desire to demonstrate my integrity.

March 11, 2011

- “Second was my assumption that the correction I was receiving from you and Dave was in some way influenced by offenses I perceived in you men toward me because of certain decisions I made that affected your respective roles and service in Sovereign Grace. Again, as I noted in my first response, this involved sinful judgment on my part.”
- “Regarding your concerns about vacation days, I’ve already sought to address them in my first letter. If this isn’t satisfactory, please let me know and we could certainly talk about it further.”

Summary

- No additional information, details, or examples were added under this heading in your second response.
- You didn’t reveal why you believed Dave and I were sinfully motivated to correct you – that would be helpful to know.
- You also didn’t reveal the nature of your sinful judgment against me regarding my input on vacation time. That too would be helpful to know. I guess you thought I believed you were “seeking to take advantage of the rules” to use Bob’s words.

4. Confession of Sin Inadequate

December 16, 2010

- “My confession of sin to you men lacked specific illustrations of my sin. In my pride I thought acknowledging my sins in general to you and Dave was sufficient.”
- “The email confessions I provided on August 10 and October 13 2004 would be examples of this.... I should have followed up on these confessions and elaborated on them, providing you with specific illustrations of my sin and drawing you out about my sin.”
- “I should have talked with you about the e-mail confession of Oct 13 so you could understand how I came to perceive what I acknowledged and whether what I acknowledged had any personal bearing on you men. I should have been more explicit and biblically precise in my conviction and confession. I definitely should have asked each of you to men to describe the effect my sin had upon you. I never engaged in this exercise with you men and I deeply regret not doing this.”

March 11, 2011

- “And let me stress again what I sought to detail in my first response to your documents: my confession of sin was sadly inadequate. It lacked specific illustrations, I failed to humbly explore the illustrations you provided, and I failed to follow up my confession with specific illustrations and questions for you men about my sin and its effects on you.”
- “But let me be clear: I should have followed up with you, Dave, and Steve after the Aug. 20 meeting. You were the ones who brought these concerns, and I should have insured that you heard not only from the local guys, but from me as well. There is simply no excuse for my not doing so. I can understand how this tempted you, how this brought into question the previous confessions I made, and how this undermined your trust in me.”
- “However, in looking back I now realize that I didn’t bring appropriate resolution with you and Dave regarding the issues you had been bringing to my attention. I wrongly assumed that my written confessions—which I now know were deficient—were sufficient. As I noted in my first response, I should have followed up on these confessions, elaborating on their content, supplying specific illustrations, and drawing you men out about my sin.”

Summary

- No additional information, details, or examples were added under this heading in your second response.

5. Distancing Self & Withdrawal of Affection

December 16, 2010

- “I would at times sinfully withdraw from you and Dave when you corrected me.... I would distance myself from you and withdraw my affection.”
- “‘Can become resentful, distrustful or withdraw when he feels misunderstood, judged, or sinned against by others.’ I agree with...your observation.”
- “Your concern about the pattern of withdrawal and resentment was legitimate and often accurate. And I should have provided you with specific illustrations.”
- “And finally, I failed to lead us in deepening our relationships with one another as a team through appropriate confession, correction and accountability overall.”

March 11, 2011

- “However, I do want to state something very clearly to you. I deeply regret not seeking to get with you following your transition from Sovereign Grace. To my knowledge I had not withdrawn from our relationship due to anger, resentment, or bitterness toward you... It was a relational failure on my part not to reach out to you—really, a failure of love. And for that I want to sincerely ask your forgiveness when we meet.”

Summary

- Your “failure of love” acknowledgement was an additional detail under this heading in your second response.

6. Self Pity

December 16, 2011

- “Not only did I consistently and proudly dismiss your correction but then I would distance myself from you and withdraw my affection. As I reflect on this I think it’s an expression of self pity and resentment.”

March 11, 2011

- During this period, you also state that I said, “I never want anyone else to go through what I went through.” I did indeed say this, and this is an expression of self-pity and an evidence of pride in my life. I wouldn’t have perceived that then. But by the grace of God, I do now. I should have been more concerned about my own sin and its effects upon others than I was about how I perceived I was being treated.

Summary

- In the second response, you said more about self-pity and its relationship to how you felt wronged by Dave and me. You didn’t reveal whether you still feel we mistreated you. It would be helpful to know your current perception.

“Honoring” Brent’s Request for Greater Details

Your second response was suppose to “honor [my] request” for “greater detail” than that contained in the first response. Grievously almost nothing new was added pertaining to specific kinds of sins or occasions of sin by you or anyone else. In this regard, only two minor admissions were included. Otherwise, you simply restated the points from your first response. Here is what you wrote.

“I’m writing at your request for greater detail in responding to your two documents. I write with the hope that this will lead to our getting together to dialogue about these things personally.... Brent, I am seeking to honor your request for another written response.... Brent, you have also asked on a few occasions that I state where I disagree with your perspective in your documents. As you know, I have been hesitant to do that, and I left out such disagreements entirely from the first response and confession I provided.... However, in providing greater detail in this document, it is necessary at least to signal some places where my perspective differs from yours.” (March 11, 2011)

The “greater detail” amounted to next to nothing. In the second response, you said a little more about self-pity (e.g. when you felt wronged by Dave and me) and you briefly acknowledged one example of hypocrisy for not passing on our correction of you to the CLC pastors. Otherwise, you add nothing in terms of your sin.

You provided me your first response to RRF&D and AFA on December 16, 2010. I got back to you on January 21, 2011. Here are some excerpts from my email.

“I must also admit to disappointment. As I’ve said before, such a meeting is not possible until you provide a much fuller response and personally embrace the need for public confession. Your “brief overview” is a good start but it doesn’t address my most serious concerns for you and the movement. The majority of issues and illustrations I raised with you remain unaddressed.”

“Before we meet, I must understand far more clearly how you view my assessment. For instance, in what you’ve written you acknowledge no lack of integrity, no deceit or hypocrisy, no concealment or cover-up, no damage control, spin or manipulation, no partiality or favoritism, no abuse of authority or lording, no need for a confession to the movement or the leaders, no wrong doing by others, no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others, etc.”

In the paragraph above I mentioned 15 areas of concern for you and the movement. You denied any lack of integrity, deceit, or hypocrisy (with one exception) in your own life; expressed no need for a public confession, and failed to see how your sinful judgments negatively influenced anyone). You left the remaining 10 areas of concern (i.e., concealment, cover-up, damage control, spin, manipulation, partiality, favoritism, abuse of authority, lording, wrong-doing by others) entirely unaddressed.

I specifically and intentionally asked to address these 15 critical issues. Instead you ignored ten of them. You don’t even reference them. So much for the greater detail you promised to supply. In addition, you left unaddressed considerable portions of material in RRF&D and AFA. I’ve gone back to these documents and added endnotes to indicate the many critical points and illustrations you passed over without comment or insufficient comment. The moral of the story – you skipped over large amounts of material and added almost nothing as it pertained to areas or occasions of sin.

In your first response on December 16, 2010 you said the following.

“And I am certain I am only beginning to perceive the depth and the pervasiveness of my sin. So from the outset I want you to be aware that I have no doubt this written response is both limited and deficient. I have no doubt I do not perceive all I need to perceive, all the sin in my life that you and others no doubt do perceive.”

I hoped your second response on March 11, 2011 would be quantitatively different from the first. During that three month interval, I hoped you’d perceive “the depth and the pervasiveness of [your] sin” to a greater degree. That did not happen. There was no additional illumination. My request for greater detailed was not honored. So taking both responses into consideration, you remain largely silent and my desire for an open, honest and thorough response is rebuffed.

C.J.'s Numerous Denials and Rebuttals

That is not to say you didn't add a lot of material in your March 11, 2011 response. But that "greater detail" was in the form of numerous denials and rebuttals. You made this clear by saying, "However, in providing greater detail in this document, it is necessary at least to signal some places where my perspective differs from yours." I am glad you decided to share your opposing perspectives on different issues I raised. It is helpful to know your thoughts on these particular matters. It gives me a better idea of what you currently think and believe about some of my concerns for you and others. Here are the differing perspectives, denials and disagreements found in your second response.

1. No Public Confession Necessary

December 16, 2010

- "One of the issues you brought up was the need for me to confess my sins to a wider audience. I am eager to make a specific confession of my sin where necessary and appropriate."
- "I don't assume this is the end of the process and as I meet with you and understand your perspective more fully, I'm trusting that will guide me and those I am accountable to concerning what further confession might be appropriate. And let me assure you that any decision about where my confession is necessary and appropriate isn't my decision, but will fall to the board of Sovereign Grace. I am fully submitted to them and will do whatever they ask and confess as widely as they ask. In fact, I welcome this direction since I do not trust my own evaluation about what is appropriate or necessary."

March 11, 2011

- "As I think you are aware, in order to insure accountability for myself and integrity in this process, the Sovereign Grace board has taken responsibility for giving me direction in how I participate; I am submitted to them both in regard to my pursuit of reconciliation with you and any appropriate public confession. I have already sought to confess my sins to all those involved in these circumstances and I'm very grateful for their gracious forgiveness. I am also eager to share sinful patterns I have become much more aware of and lessons I've learned over the past few years in the appropriate public contexts. I hope that our future discussions will help inform any public communication I make.

Summary

- You are willing to “do whatever they [the Board] ask and confess as widely as they ask” but you have never expressed any personal interest or sense of need to inform the movement or pastors. You’ve taken no initiative with regard to a public confession and nothing I’ve written has convinced you it is necessary.

2. No Independence

March 11, 2011

- “You also say that I led the apostolic team more by expedience than by process. I think that was often true.”
- “The first regards my developing a seven-year plan for my life independently from the team. You say this was a serious expression of independence and that I would have reproved others for doing far less.... But I truly don’t think of this as hypocrisy because I didn’t think I was functioning independently of the team.”
- “I think this would also be an example [Jeff’s teaching on the sacraments] of something you mention early in your document concerning my leading by expedience rather than by process.”
- “Perhaps here is another example [canceling New Attitude] of how I sometimes led by expedience and not process. Maybe there’s something I’m not seeing here; I’d be happy to reconvene the team and review what took place. I’m sure I would benefit from the perspective of all the guys.”

Summary

- You denied acting independently of the apostolic team. For example in developing a seven year plan for your life, having Jeff teach on the sacraments, and deciding to cancel New Attitude. You viewed your actions as expedient, not independent. As morally neutral, not morally wrong.

3. Did Not Take Over or Redirect the Process

March 11, 2011

- “Following the August meeting, you wrote, ‘When you disagreed with our concerns for you, you unilaterally removed me, took over the process, and stopped the evaluation....’ I did not think of myself as leading this process, nor

was I taking steps to remove you from the process.... I don't recall intentionally cutting you and Dave out of any process."

Summary

- This is contradicted by all the facts and circumstances presented in RRF&D and AFA. For example this comment by Dave. "To what extent is it really wise for the process (and helpful to C.J. and the Apostolic Team) to allow C.J.'s concerns over us to postpone additional confessions or updates, re-direct the process and close off communication about where we are and where we are going?" (RRF&D, p. 36)

4. No Resentment, Bitterness or Anger

March 11, 2011

- "On pp. 37-51 of RRF&D you discuss our meeting in Charlotte in November 2004. I don't recall that meeting's intent, tone, or content the way that you do. In fact, I recall limiting my observations because you appeared to disagree with them, and I was concerned that you were offended by them. You conclude this section by saying I was 'resentful, bitter, and angry about many things.' I do not remember that being my attitude or the posture of my heart."
- "On pp. 62-85 you describe a process in which the tables were turned from me to you. You say I was removing myself from evaluation and placing you under evaluation. You say that this was motivated by bitterness. Brent, I'm looking forward to discussing this with you. I have a very different perspective on what was happening at that time and do not believe I was motivated by bitterness."
- "On p. 86, you note that I withdrew from you relationally and related to you 'with little gospel and grace' from 2005-2008, and that I primarily spoke to you harshly. It saddens me to read this. My recollection of that time would be different. Brent, I don't remember that timeframe as a period of unremitting conflict, resentment, and criticism."
- "You also say that during this time I was critical of your preaching. I do not believe I had a unique and singular concern about your preaching. Yes, I had a concern about aspects of your preaching, but I had concerns about the preaching of many Sovereign Grace pastors, including myself. So I sincerely don't believe my concerns were rooted in any unresolved offense with or bitterness toward you."

- “However, I do want to state something very clearly to you. I deeply regret not seeking to get with you following your transition from Sovereign Grace. To my knowledge I had not withdrawn from our relationship due to anger, resentment, or bitterness toward you.”

Summary

- These specific statements contradicted your general statements that “I was often difficult to correct and easily offended when I felt judged” and “I could be exacting and take offense if I was not corrected with the right attitude, words, or illustrations.” Or, “I would distance myself from you and withdraw my affection. As I reflect on this I think it’s an expression of self pity and resentment.... Your concern about the pattern of withdrawal and resentment was legitimate and often accurate.” You acknowledged these general patterns but saw no connection to any specific occasion of sin for which you asked forgiveness. This is reminiscent of the past ten years. You’d send us e-mail confessions regarding patterns of sin but then repudiate every example and ask our forgiveness for nothing.

5. No Hypocrisy

December 16, 2010

- “Brent, to the best of my recollection I was not deliberately hiding information [from you and the CLC pastors].... I also now perceive that the sinful self-confidence with which I made these choices was destructive to trust, and makes your concerns of deceit and hypocrisy more than understandable.”

March 11, 2011

- “The first [example of hypocrisy] regards my developing a seven-year plan for my life independently from the team. In retrospect I realize now that I should have informed the team that I was even discussing these things.... But I truly don’t think of this as hypocrisy because I didn’t think I was functioning independently of the team.... I really don’t think I was being hypocritical with the team.”
- “[A second] example you cite relating to my hypocrisy is the team’s approval of your statement on the sacraments in [October] 2004 and Jeff teaching something different in [April] 2007.... I should have led us in a discussion about the specifics of Jeff’s teaching and verified that we were indeed in agreement. I was unwise in not doing so. Perhaps I was presumptuous in not doing so. Given my pride, I don’t doubt that I was. However, I am not perceiving how this

would be hypocrisy on my part.... I think this would also be an example of something you mention early in your document concerning my leading by expedience rather than by process. No excuses – this was bad leadership, and as I look back on such examples I feel a genuine sorrow. However, I would need you to help me understand how this would be hypocrisy on my part.

- “The third example you give of my hypocrisy has to do with my cautioning you about submitting a book proposal on pride during the season when you were working through issues with your local team in Charlotte. I can understand your thinking of this as hypocrisy given that I wrote a book on Humility in 2004.... If my perspective was flawed and I was inconsistent – or worse, hypocritical – then I would want to discover that and confess that.”

Summary

- You acknowledged no hypocrisy in your first response except for the following allusion. “When you and Dave corrected me I would often question your motives, or take exception to your wording or a particular illustration you referenced.... I proudly presumed to address specks in your eyes with logs protruding from my own eyes. This was quite obviously a serious evidence of pride.”
- The same was true in your second response. You acknowledged one example in passing. “Was I being hypocritical [in not passing on your correction of me to the CLC pastors]? In one sense I was, given that my actions did not live up to what I believe and teach.” Otherwise, you denied any hypocrisy.

6. No Lying or Deceit

March 11, 2011

- “I certainly do not want to minimize my sin, but I would add that, as far as I know, I was not intentionally seeking to deceive you men [in not passing on your correction of me to the CLC pastors], although I realize that factors such as my pride, my sinful judgment of you, and my disagreement with you influenced my not passing on these observations.”
- “As for declining Gene’s invitation, I believe they involved commitments seven months out and another over a year away, and as a result of my discussions about my calendar I was trying to exercise much greater caution in accepting speaking invitations. Again, I could be wrong here, but as I look over the e-mails you sent and reflect upon this time, I really don’t think I was being

hypocritical with the team or deceptive toward Gene, although I do wish I had communicated these things with the team.”

- “On pp. 46-56 [in RRF&D] you talk about the decision to end New Attitude. On p. 55 you say that I lied and sought to deceive you regarding Pat’s perspective. This is in reference to Pat’s email to me on p. 51. He listed a number of questions he had from our meeting but concludes the email, “I had no concerns when I left and you may have simply been exercising wisdom and decisiveness throughout.” It’s certainly possible that I did not take Pat’s questions as seriously as I should have. I just don’t remember. I can only assume that my focus was on the last line of his email where he said he had no concerns for me. Pat did have questions but said he wasn’t concerned. It appears he represented his questions somewhat differently in his email to you. But I fail to see how it was a lie to say that Pat had no concerns; I was simply trying to represent his general perspective as I understood it. I would, however, agree that in retrospect I should have led us to function more effectively as a team, drawing you men out fully to understand your concerns.

Summary

- You acknowledged no lying or deceit of any kind.

7. No Harmful Impact on Others

March 11, 2011

- “Beginning on p. 89 [in RRF&D] you make the case that a breakdown in relationship with me had significant bearing on the process that led to your stepping down from pastoral ministry.... And if the loss of relationship with me contributed to you no longer being in Sovereign Grace, I would want to rectify this.”
- “Unfortunately, however much I grieve that you are no longer a part of Sovereign Grace, I cannot agree with your perspective that our relationship was the cause of all [which I never claimed] that eventually took place, nor that it is the reason [which I never claimed] that you are no longer with us.”
- “On the next page [p. 45 in AFA], you assert that my example has had a direct influence on Gene and Bob. I would hope not. But in order to determine whether I have had such an influence, we would need to discuss that with Gene and Bob. I would be eager to do so, and I would want to take responsibility for this if it turns out they share your perspective.”

- “Brent, I don’t know if you are aware of this or not, but I was minimally involved in the process involving you/Mooresville—and intentionally so.... Given my minimal involvement, I can’t really speak to this [i.e., the misrepresentation of my doctrine].”
- “You also implicate numerous other individuals in the events leading up to and surrounding your departure. I think it would be unwise for me to try to respond in light of the nature of these matters and the number of people involved who should be a part of the process of resolving these matters.”

Summary

- No where did you acknowledge being a bad influence or having a negative impact on anyone else in word, attitude, or action. Therefore, your many sinful judgments of me did not adversely affect anyone. Nor did your sinful perspectives influence or harm anyone else’s perspective of me. Furthermore, you expressed no concerns and found no fault with anyone I referenced in RRF&D and AFA. Your focus was solely on me for wrongly implicating Dave, Bob, Gene, et al.

Forgiveness Extended and a Succinct Summary

In your two responses totaling 19 pages, you acknowledged six areas of sin and asked forgiveness for nine occasions of sin. It is a great joy to sincerely and freely forgive you for each occasion! Here they are for your review.

1. Pride in your superior discernment (e.g. not passing on correction to us and CLC pastors).
2. Being hard to entreat (e.g. disputing my reference to an element of hypocrisy, not answering the four questions) and easily offended when you felt judged (no examples)
3. Sinfully judging Dave and me (e.g. I wanted you to step down; our correction was motivated by offense; my input regarding vacation days was ill motivated).
4. Providing an inadequate confession of specific sins (e.g., not talking about the e-mail confessions).
5. Distancing yourself and withdrawing affection from Dave and me (e.g., “a failure of love” in not contacting me after I left Sovereign Grace Ministries)
6. Self-pity (e.g., how you perceived being treated by Dave and me - “I never want anyone else to go through what I went through.”)

What was added were numerous denials. Here they are..

1. Saw no necessity for public confession (but will do if asked).
2. Denied acting independently (e.g., seven year plan, Jeff's teaching on the sacraments, canceling New Attitude).
3. Denied taking over or redirecting your disciplinary process.
4. Denied being resentful, bitter, or angry at me (e.g., on Nov. 19, 2004 in Charlotte; when placing me under evaluation, while relating to me with "little gospel and grace," the harsh critique of my preaching, withdrawing from me for two years).
5. Denied being hypocritical (e.g., working on the seven year plan without our knowledge, the unilateral decision for Jeff to teach divergent views on the sacraments, cautioning me against writing a book on humility)
6. Denied ever lying or deceiving. (e.g., didn't deceive or hide information from us or the CLC pastors, not deceptive in denying Gene's invitation, not deceptive in how you represented Pat regarding the New Attitude decision)
7. Acknowledged no detrimental impact or negative bearing on anyone (e.g., Gene and Bob) in relation to me.

C.J. Only Beginning to Perceive Sin?

In your responses you mention the need for gift of divine illumination in order to see your sins more clearly. No doubt this is true but I don't think it is your primary need. What is needed is obedience to God's Word. For years you've been a hearer and not a doer. A lack of illumination has not been the problem. The problem has been a lack of obedience.

For instance when you said the following.

"As I said in my first response, my trust in my own discernment and my disagreement with your correction—in short, my pride—contributed to me not informing the CLC guys about your correction in specific and appropriate ways. I have no doubt I was being proud and was blinded by my pride. (March 11, 2011)

You should not put the emphasis on spiritual blindness but on personal disobedience. You failed to humble yourself, follow counsel, and walk in the light as commanded in Scripture. You transgressed God's law knowingly and willfully.

Over the last decade you repeatedly suppressed the truth (cf. Rom 1:18) and resisted the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 7:51). You were stiff necked, not blind. That's why it took 10 years to acknowledge aspects of your pride. It was not due to a lack of illumination. The Holy Spirit was bringing illumination. That was not lacking. What was lacking was a

godly response to the conviction of heart he brought to bear upon you. Rebellion and stubbornness were the root issues.

I am concerned you use this approach as an excuse for continuing in known sin even when the Holy Spirit and your conscience have clearly convicted you. For example, I have no doubt you see the need for a public confession of sin. You know it is the right thing to do. It's a question of willingness. So too for a host of other issues like hypocrisy. I have no doubt you see the pervasiveness of this sin. You just don't want to acknowledge it. In the language of Scripture, you will "not come to the Light for fear that [your] deeds will be exposed" (John 3:19-21).

Here are two other statements by you regarding illumination. While I appreciate your prayers for "the gift of sight," I believe you've seen far more than you're willing to acknowledge.

"I appreciate your encouragement and I am sorry to disappoint you. I trust you know that was not my intention. Please pray for me as I desire to perceive any and all sin I have committed and I pray daily for this gift of sight." (January 25, 2011)

"I regret that perceiving my sin seems to be a slow process and I very much need the help of others; most importantly I need God to give me the gift of sight that I might perceive my sins and their effect on others." (March 11, 2011)

Let me illustrate another way. Back in 2004 you provided us two written confessions. You did great job making clear the patterns of sin that entangled you. They were well done and insightful. The "gift of sight" was evident. You had spent time looking in the mirror to see what kind of a man you were. You wrote it down for us at our request. It was encouraging. But then, tragically, you went away and immediately forgot what you saw in the mirror (Jam 1:23-24). As a result, nothing changed. No discussion. No asking for forgiveness. No humbling. No fruits of repentance. Things actually worsened. Illumination was not followed by obedience. Little fruit was born as a result. As I've said before, the seed fell on the rocky soil of your heart.

Here is my point. You tend to blame your disobedience on your blindness, when you should blame your blindness on your disobedience. This kind of thinking can be dangerous and an expression of license. That is, the rationale that you cannot grow or obey until God grants you "the gift of sight." I think it far better to assume our problem is a lack of doing, not a lack of seeing (Jam 1:22-25). We see clearly the man in the mirror but we are "forgetful hearers" rather than "effectual doers." Like Romans 1 teaches, the problem is not cognitive, it is volitional (1:18, 21, 23, 25, 28, 32). Your sin, like anyone's sin, is primarily due to a lack of willingness, not a lack of awareness. For us as Spirit indwelt Christians, we can't blame our disobedience on blindness. That is

not to say we don't need the help of other believers and the Holy Spirit to see our sin; but, commonly the Holy Spirit is enabling us to accept responsibility for the sin we already see (Tit 2:11-12). Deception (blindness) follows moral choices (Rom 1:24, 26, 28) contrary to the revealed will of God in nature (Psa 19:1-6), conscience (Rom 2:14-16) and Scripture (Psa 19:7-14; Heb 4:12).

For instance, you point out your need for "the gift of sight" in order to "perceive my sin and their effect on others." I do pray for an increase of conviction but I firmly believe you already "perceive" some adverse effects on other men. For instance your impact on Bob and Kenneth that led to the March 30, 2005 confrontation (RRF&D, pp. 67f.) or your impact upon Bob regarding vacation time (AFA, pp. 15ff.). These adverse effects are plain to you. I could list off many other examples.

No Follow-Up by the Board of Directors Re: Allowance for Potential Sins

I sent you AFA on October 8, 2010. Four days later you wrote me the following note.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 2:45 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: FW: A Final Appeal

Besides the fact that I want to be able to talk with you personally, I'm also convinced (and those I've consulted on this agree) that doing this through e-mail utilizing long documentation, is actually a detriment to reconciliation...

Brent, in the almost 300 pages of documentation you sent me, it doesn't appear that you make any allowance for potential sins that may remain on your part or how your perceptions and approaches may have been flawed...

This was so disheartening because I made a concerted effort over the summer and in AFA to ask for your feedback regarding "potential sins" and flaws in my "perceptions and approaches." How could you miss these repeated invitations? Questions needed to be asked of you. Moreover, the habit of sinfully judging or coming to reckless conclusions continued unabated immediately following your reading of "almost 300 pages of documentation" where this was a major point of concern.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, October 23, 2010 11:25 AM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: RE: A Final Appeal

...Here's my second concern. Your comments above also indicate you've sinfully judged me for not inviting correction when that charge is clearly unfounded. Consider a few statements from AFA.

- "In responding to the larger document, please be perfectly honest and share your thoughts in a comprehensive manner. For instance, what aspects of my presentation troubled you, helped you, or convicted you? What points do you agree with or disagree with? Do you believe there is a need for "a restoration of integrity, truth telling and justice in Sovereign Grace so there is no lying, spin, manipulation, lording, cover-up, or partiality?" Do you think others have sinned against me? Or do you believe I've sinned against them?" (AFA, p. 5)
- "I've been open and honest with you. I've put my thoughts and concerns in print. They are open to examination and scrutiny. I've been candid and I welcome the accountability such a format secures. I've also asked for your critique and invited your correction. To these I will gladly respond in print in advance of any meeting. In addition, you are welcome to show my response to others in preparation for any such meeting." (AFA, p. 75)
- "I've also written in detail knowing your propensity to dismiss, distort, and forget past events and conversations. I've endeavored to only make assertions I can support with facts and evidence. I have no interest in libel. That is one of the reasons I've asked you to respond in writing over the last 10 months - a request you have adamantly refused. I am happy to be corrected. This is my final appeal. You are welcome to provide me an objective response of a similar nature to these documents. But I must hear from you." (AFA, p. 164)

This example of judging illustrates why it is so important to interact with you in writing. If these things were simply said in conversation, I'd have little hope you'd recall them accurately or responsibly. In my experience, you'd likely dismiss this entire illustration as valid and feel no need to ask forgiveness.

I'd also point out that RRF&D was in response to your request that I share ways in which you sinned against me. That's what I did. In any case, my comments regarding input and correction above included what I wrote you in RRF&D. The invitation stands.

A few days later I received this reply from you.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject:

Brent,

...And as to your second point I think you are accurate in pointing out that I have overlooked statements you have made where you invited correction and disagreement. Please forgive me for doing so. I did not intend to judge you, but I can see why you could feel I was. My statement, "...it doesn't appear that you make any allowance for potential sins that may remain on your part..." was intended to communicate that I hadn't come to a conclusion on this, but my wording is not clear enough and left the door open for you to feel judged. I'm sorry to have inflicted another wound on you. Of course, it's entirely possible that I'm deceiving myself and was sinfully judging as I wrote those words. I promise to continue praying for God to take off any blinders on this and similar issues, and I also commit to inviting others to help me examine my heart. If God does show me I have sinfully judged you in this regard, I will get back to you and ask your forgiveness. Thank you for this correction and thank you for inviting my correction and your openness to discuss all sides of our past interactions. I appreciate this evidence of humility in your life...

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 8:09 AM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Overlooking Statements

Thanks for your note C.J. and willingness to review my documents with others. I'm not sure forgiveness is necessary for overlooking my statements but it is certainly granted. I'm glad to hear you're finding the documents of some benefit. Grace to you as you continue to seek the Lord.

“Overlooking my statements” was a morally neutral category. But you also said, “If God does show me I have sinfully judged you in this regard, I will get back to you and ask your forgiveness.” In light of this willingness, I hoped the SGM Board would follow up with you. I wrote the following to you and ten other men believing “there are other questions to ask.”

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 5:59 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney; Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: Overlooking Statements

As I thought about it there is no need to forgive you for simply overlooking statements. That’s morally free. I think there are other questions to ask but I’ll leave additional counsel in the hands of those [ten men] around you.

I did not hear from you or anyone else after writing this email. Six months later I followed up with the SGM Board. I wanted to see if they followed up with you indicating a new willingness to hold you accountable. I wrote Jeff.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2011 12:11 PM
To: Jeff Purswell
Subject: Invited Correction

Hi Jeff,

The lack of accountability for C.J. by the governing boards and friends has been an outstanding concern to me. I’d like to know if the SGM board ever followed up with C.J. on the illustration [above]. That is, did you ask him additional questions about his heart? Or, did you simply accept his explanation that he “overlooked” my invitations for correction without further inquiry into his soul? Here’s why I ask. I purposely did not ask questions of C.J. though warranted and needed. I wanted to see if the Board would follow up with him on this important illustration. I assume the Board did but I’d appreciate your confirmation. If so, what concerns did you raise with him?

Thanks
Brent

Jeff was on vacation so I forwarded my request to Dave and Joshua.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2011 12:29 PM
To: Joshua Harris; Dave Harvey
Subject: FW: Invited Correction

I received a bounce back message that Jeff is out of town until March 22. Could one of you answer this question?

Here was Dave's reply.

From: Dave Harvey
Sent: Saturday, March 19, 2011 3:11 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris
Subject: FW: Invited Correction

Hi Brent. Jeff is out of town until Tuesday and then the Plant pre-conference stuff starts on Wednesday and goes through the week. Then I think Jeff goes to Michigan next Saturday for the week. So it will be two to three weeks before we can consult our notes together and he can get back to you. Thanks for your anticipated patience.

Dave

My questions were easy to answer. Basically, "Did you follow up with C.J.?" And, "What additional questions did you ask him?" In my response to Dave, I simplified my request and dropped the second part.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Sunday, March 20, 2011 10:01 AM
To: Dave Harvey
Cc: Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris
Subject: RE: Invited Correction

I'm not following the waiting two or three weeks before you can consult your notes together. Maybe that will be necessary but do you, Dave, remember any follow up with C.J.? How about you Joshua?

Guess what happened next? Nothing. I never heard a peep from Dave, Jeff or Joshua. Add this to the already long list of questions purposely ignored and never answered. This is a form of cover-up. A promise is made, the promise is broken, and the information is withheld. No explanation is ever provided.

Brent's Implication of Numerous Individuals

Since we began corresponding in January, 2010, you have yet to express any concern whatsoever that anyone (e.g., Bob, Gene, Dave, Kenneth, Mickey, Larry, or Eric) has misunderstood, misrepresented or wrongly implicated me (let alone judged, lorded it over, or betrayed me). You have never noted the least concern that anyone was ill motivated or blinded by bitterness. In contrast you express all these concerns for me. That is perfectly fine. Seriously. I'm glad you did. It's far more helpful when you are open and honest. So, it's not what you say about me that is a concern; but what you don't say about all others.

Of course, I don't expect you to confess for them. Obviously, that is their business. But you should be willing to tell me where you think they erred or sinned against me. I asked you that very question on June 21, 2010 but you never answered it (sound familiar?). Instead, you responded by raising concerns for me (sound familiar?). I'm left to believe you don't think anyone has ever sinned against me since August 2004. If you do, you've never said so over the past 7 years. Here are some of the relevant emails on the subject.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2010 2:05 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Response to Your E-mail

...Thanks for your patience with the process. I don't know how to accelerate the process since a number of others are involved and implicated in your document and I'm seeking their observations, evaluation and recommendations as to how we can hopefully resolve this.

I wrote back asking for greater clarification on your meaning.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2010 4:18 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Reconciliation

...Do you think others have sinned against me? Or do you believe I've sinned against them? You recently wrote for example, "I don't know how to accelerate the process since a number of others are involved and implicated in your document." These are just a few questions to help you understand my appeal. I realize there will be disagreements but those disagreements are important to understand in order to pursue reconciliation.

Here is your response to my question, "Do you think others have sinned against me?"

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Friday, July 02, 2010 4:33 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Question

...From what I read in your [June 21] e-mail I think you have misunderstood and misrepresented Gene, Bob, Dave (and me) in some of these things. And I am concerned that your heart may have been blinded by bitterness.... Brent, I don't think Sovereign Grace in general or anyone I know in particular is "lying, covering up, manipulating, lording, etc."

Finally, you restated your perspective in your March 11, 2001 response that I have falsely implicated others. You said, "You also implicate numerous other individuals in the events leading up to and surrounding your departure." The moral of the story - you addressed no wrong doing by anyone in either of your responses or in any of your correspondence. You indicted me but no one else.

C.J. Referencing Himself as a Humble Example

Here is another example of hypocrisy.

In the letter Dave's wrote Steve on August 18, 2004, he highlighted many evidences of hypocrisy in your life. For instance, "All the while [C.J. is] teaching on humility, writing on it and referencing himself in regards to it when we were calling him to account."

At that very time, you were writing a chapter for the book, *Dear Timothy - Letters on Pastoral Ministry* (edited by Thomas Ascol). In it you referenced yourself as an older pastoral example of someone who pursued humility (see chapter 7 on "Pursue Humility"). Here is some of what you wrote to a young, fictitious pastor named Timothy. The "Milestone Weekend" or anniversary celebration took place on September 17-19, 2004 which was just four weeks after the August 20 meeting. I've added comments via footnotes.

"Even before your letter, Timothy, I found myself thinking about you. I suppose this is due to all the activities associated with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Covenant Life Church... (p. 115)

“Pride is an attitude of self-sufficiency and independence toward God and of self-righteousness and superiority toward others. It robs God of the honor and glory due Him. It takes many forms but has only one goal: self-glorification²⁷⁰... (p. 119)

“Many people, of course, believe the Bible. Many pastors know it extremely well. Many recognize that it is our only truly reliable guide for life and faith. But strong churches—that is, churches in which the members are growing in sanctification and increasingly glorifying God in their public and private lives—are churches in which the leaders do not merely teach sound doctrine. They also lead in and model the consistent application of biblical truth to all of life²⁷¹... (p. 120)

“So this I can say with full confidence. A decade from now, your ministry will have been fruitful only to the extent that you have both taught Scripture accurately *and* applied it consistently—to yourself, your family, your fellow elders and your church. It is not biblical truth alone that builds effective churches. It is, by God’s grace, the *application* of biblical truth... (p. 120)

“I’ve covered all this, Timothy, so that I can share with you some specific ways in which I have sought to tremble at God’s Word...I know of no better way to grow in humility than to observe some set of concrete, tangible practices. Here are the ones that, by God’s grace, have proven effective for me²⁷²... (p. 121)

“Apply the doctrine of sin. Noting that all men are sinners, Mike Renihan further observes, ‘Sinners fall into two more distinct classes: those who admit their sin and those who don’t. Those who admit themselves to be sinners fall into two more classes: those who do something about it and those who do not.’ Timothy, the humble pastor is the man who does something about it, especially through confession and the pursuit of correction²⁷³... (p. 125)

“It’s not difficult to acknowledge one’s pervasive depravity. What’s difficult is specifically to confess an area of personal depravity.²⁷⁴ Obviously, one must first confess sins to God. But we are also called to confess, as appropriate, to individuals. You know how strongly I feel that every pastor, even in the

²⁷⁰ I agree. I think “self-glorification” is at the heart of your pride. You never address this or his cousin – the love reputation.

²⁷¹ Like you were with us?

²⁷² You set forth your proven example of what it mean to tremble at God’s Word for all the young Timothy’s who read the book.

²⁷³ Which you were not doing and had not done for a long time.

²⁷⁴ This was the very point we were making to you at the very time. Yet, you refused to talk about, let alone confess, any “personal depravity.”

smallest church, must have a team of men to whom he is accountable.²⁷⁵ God will surely send you such men. Your job is to find them, enlist them to help you and be transparent before them, confessing freely and regularly²⁷⁶... (p. 125)

“Let these confessions be full and specific, not selective and partial.²⁷⁷ Confess overt acts of sin as well as present temptations, and let grace and forgiveness be yours in abundance. It’s a sad truth that whenever a pastor disqualifies himself from ministry through a failure of personal character, a long-standing lack of confession has invariable been present²⁷⁸... (pp. 125-126)

“Another vital means of applying the doctrine of sin to your own life is to invite and pursue correction in areas of character. In this regard, a pastor must be gently persistent, in public and in private. Eventually, the majority of the members in your church should feel truly welcome²⁷⁹ to point out to you any instance in which it appears you have behaved sinfully – or indeed, any area in which you could simply be doing a better job. Would your wife, your friends and those who serve with in your church say you are easy to entreat²⁸⁰...” (p. 126)

No Damage Control in Sovereign Grace Ministries!

At the April, 2009, Sovereign Grace Pastors Conference you taught a session on “Pastoral Failures” from James 3:1-2. During that session you had Mark Mullery and Keith Breault share their pastoral failures. In part this was done in order to show there was no cover up in Sovereign Grace Ministries or churches. I touched on this in AFA. Here’s what I said.

“I hope you will follow your own counsel and put an end to damage control by you and those related to you. Your strenuous assertion that damage control is not occurring, and will not occur in Sovereign Grace Ministries, is a form of damage control itself. You have knowingly lied, covered up, and concealed many times.” (AFA, pp. 163f.)

²⁷⁵ In large measure, you were accountable to no one let alone cooperating with a team of men.

²⁷⁶ On my, I cringe reading these statements. This was never our experience with you.

²⁷⁷ Ditto.

²⁷⁸ Given this standard, you were disqualified from ministry. The lack of confession by you is one of the reasons SGM is experiencing so many problems today.

²⁷⁹ No one felt that freedom.

²⁸⁰ You were extremely difficult to entreat and this was a major point we were making to you at the exact time you wrote these words by way of example to “Timothy.”

Here is a transcript of your relevant comments during the session on pastoral failures, damage control and humble confession. I've added comments via footnotes.

"I am referencing pastoral failures in relation to the appropriate exercise of authority and how we might more effectively care for those who are suffering and in particular those who have been sinned against. So it is my hope this afternoon that by drawing your attention to these two pastoral failures in particular it's my hope that we might avoid similar failures in the future.

And in just a few moments, two different senior pastors are going to really, humbly serve us, they are going to humbly serve us this afternoon, by describing two different pastoral failures, that have occurred in their midst and most importantly this afternoon, inform of what they have learned from these pastoral failures. So I thought it would serve us to hear from these men. I asked these men if they would share their stories with us.²⁸¹ I informed them that they were under no obligation whatsoever,²⁸² to do so. It was no surprise that both of these men were desirous, desirous of serving us with their story and for their humility, for their desire to serve us, these men have my deepest respect and I believe we all are going to benefit from their humility.²⁸³

But prior to hearing from these men, I think, I know, it would be wise, it would be very wise for all of us to acknowledge the harsh reality that each and every pastor present fails. Each and every pastor present fails in their service of the church and in their service of the people they love in some way each and every day. There is no one present here who flawlessly executes their pastoral responsibilities each day, each week. And in James chapter 3, just prior to addressing the main topic of the paragraph which will be the destructive potential of human speech, James addresses those who are aspiring to spiritual leadership.

It appears he is addressing and discouraging those who were sinfully desirous and ambitious for this role and responsibility and so he provides them with very specific, explicit reasons why they should be cautious about pursuing this role and responsibility. "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body." [James 3:1-2]

²⁸¹ Someday I hope the blogosphere, the churches and the pastors will hear you share your "pastoral failures in relation to the proper exercise of authority."

²⁸² True, because they are not accountable to the movement. You, on the other hand, are obligated to the movement.

²⁸³ I hope you imitate their example so we can all benefit.

So he addresses those who appear to be ambitious for this role and responsibility and he provides them with very explicit reasons why they should be cautious. His first caution would involve divine accountability and evaluation. "For you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." The second reason he recommends caution about becoming teachers is in verse 2, because we are sinners. Because we all stumble in many ways. And then, finally he proceeds to draw their attention to his immediate concern, the tongue and makes specific application to the tongue. So for our purpose this afternoon, I just want to draw you attention to the opening words of verse 2 and their relevance to each of us as pastors for we all stumble in many ways. Yes we do. We all sin. We sin many times and we sin in many ways. The passage is clear and it is confirmed in our experience. We not only sin frequently, we sin with variety. And we all sin frequently and we all sin with variety and it's so helpful to know that James did as well and it should give us all hope. This passage applies to each and every pastor in Sovereign Grace. We are not flawless pastors. Quite the opposite. We are flawed pastors. We do not flawlessly pastor in Sovereign Grace. I wish we did. I wish I did. But I don't. You don't. We don't. Don't misunderstand, this doesn't provide us with any convenient excuse for our failures, for our sins. We are accountable to our respective pastoral teams, to our churches and most importantly to God himself for our failures. For our sins, be they sins of commission or omission or a simply lack of wisdom in caring for the flock of God. So in Sovereign Grace there is no such thing as a flawless pastor, no such thing, but in Sovereign Grace we must acknowledge our flaws! We must acknowledge our flaws and we must learn from our flaws. We must acknowledge when we have stumbled, where we have stumbled, how we have stumbled and we must learn from each and every stumble.²⁸⁴

Recently I came across an article by a well know columnist, Peggy Noonan, she was, well she wrote the following.

[On] December 8, 2008, 11:11 a.m., and a young Marine pilot takes off from an aircraft carrier, the USS Abraham Lincoln, on a routine training flight. The carrier is maybe 90 miles southwest of San Diego. [She identifies the individual] is flying an F/A-18 Hornet. Minutes into the flight, he notices low oil pressure in one of the two engines. He shuts it down. Then the light shows low fuel for the other engine. He's talking to air traffic control and given options and suggestions on where to make an emergency landing. He can go to the naval air station at North Island, the route to which takes him over San Diego Bay, or he can go to

²⁸⁴ Will you ever tell the movement you have led since 1991 how you have stumbled? Or will those stumbles remain concealed and covered up. I was amazed you asked Mark and Keith to share their stumbles when you were unwilling to share your own stumbles which we so much greater.

the Marine air station at Miramar, with which he is more familiar, but which takes him over heavily populated land. He goes for Miramar. The second engine flames out. About three miles from the runway, the electrical system dies. [He] tries to aim the jet toward a canyon, and ejects at what all seem to agree is the last possible moment.

'The jet crashed nose down in the University City neighborhood of San Diego, hitting two homes and damaging three. Four people, all members of a Korean immigrant family, were killed – [a wife Lee, two daughters, and her mother].

'Lee's husband, a grocer...was at work. The day after he'd lost his family, he humbled and awed San Diego by publicly forgiving the pilot – "I know he did everything he could" – and speaking of his faith – "I know God is taking care of my family."

'His grace and generosity were staggering, but there was growing local anger at the military. Why was the disabled plane over land? The Marines launched an investigation – of themselves. This past Wednesday the results were announced [two Wednesdays ago].

'They could not have been tougher, or more damning. The crash, said [a particular Maj. Gen.], the assistant wing commander for the Third Marine Aircraft Wing, was "clearly avoidable," the result of "a chain of wrong decisions." Mechanics had known since July of a glitch in the jet's fuel-transfer system; the Hornet should have been removed from service and fixed, and was not. The young pilot failed to read the safety checklist. He relied on guidance from Marines at Miramar who did not have complete knowledge or understanding of his situation. He should have been ordered to land at North Island. He took an unusual approach to Miramar, taking a long left loop instead of a shorter turn to the right, which ate up time and fuel.

'Twelve Marines were disciplined; four senior officers, including the squadron commander, were removed from duty. Their military careers are, essentially, over. The pilot is grounded while a board reviews his future.

'Residents told the San Diego Union-Tribune that they were taken aback by the report. Bob Johnson, who lived behind the [family] and barely escaped the crash, said, "The Marines aren't trying to hide from it or duck it. They took it on the chin." A retired Navy pilot who lives less than a block from the crash and had formed, with neighbors, a

group to push the Marines for an investigation, and for limiting flights over University City, said after the briefing, “I think we’re out of business.” In a later story the paper quoted a retired general, [who communicated that] the report [was] “as open and frank a discussion of an accident as I’ve seen.” “It was a lot more candid than many people expected.” [Then the next line. She writes there] wasn’t damage control, it was taking honest responsibility. And as such, in any modern American institution, it was stunning.’ (Peggy Noonan, The Wall Street Journal, March 6, 2009)

Now sadly that is stunning! It is stunning when anyone in any modern American institution takes honest responsibility. I want you to know, it should not be stunning when pastors take responsibility. It should be the norm. And in Sovereign Grace we are not about damage control. It would be a complete contradiction of this passage and what we believe about the doctrine of sin for us to engage in damage control. We do not engage in damage control. There will be no damage control in Sovereign Grace. We will seek to walk humbly before God and when we stumble we will not seek to engage in damage control.²⁸⁵ No, instead we will humbly acknowledge with sorrow that we stumbled – we stumbled.²⁸⁶ No damage control. We stumbled because we all stumble in many ways.

So listen. We shouldn’t be surprised when we fail in pastoral ministry, we shouldn’t be surprised when we fail for we all stumble in many ways. And listen carefully, we should not be condemned when we fail. We shouldn’t be surprised, we shouldn’t be condemned but we must acknowledge and we must learn from our failures.

So, here is what this afternoon is about. This afternoon we are just going to acknowledge a few of the ways we have stumbled – a few of the ways we have stumbled recently. Why? So that we can learn and so that others won’t stumble.²⁸⁷ And as I mentioned earlier, we are going to be addressed by two men who I deeply respect. These men have walked through humbling seasons. Humbling season where pastoral failures in the past have become evident²⁸⁸ and they are going to address us. These again are not moral failures, they are failures to humbly and wisely and effectively and compassionately shepherd²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ It is hard to read these words knowing how often you engaged in damage control.

²⁸⁶ I hope and pray you will follow your own exhortation and share openly and honestly with Covenant Life Church and the movement.

²⁸⁷ There was so much all the pastors and wives in the movement could have learned from you at the Conference if you had humbled yourself. Instead they remain clueless to this day.

²⁸⁸ I think a lot was evident to you also.

²⁸⁹ Right down your alley.

the flock of God. Though not moral failures they are serious failures. I think they would both appear on the short list of failures we must avoid.

And I identify with these two men, I identify because I have stumbled in similar ways²⁹⁰ and if I haven't recently stumbled in these two particular ways its only because I'm older, not because I am more mature.²⁹¹

I've also had the privilege to observe both of these men up close and personal through this entire process of evaluation. I have been deeply affected by their example of humility in private. As they became aware of critique and offense they have become the object of correction and evaluation, they have humbled themselves, they have examined their hearts, they've been suspicious of their hearts, they have welcomed the correction of others, even when that correction has not been gently or humbly communicated. They have confessed their sin to God and to the appropriate individuals.²⁹² They have felt deep sadness and they are desirous of sharing with us what they have learned so I am very grateful for their humble desire to serve us and I know you are as well.

Here are some definitions from my outlines on "The Fifty Fruits of Pride." You may find them helpful.

- Deceit - 1. making a person believe as true something that is false 2. a dishonest trick; a lie spoken or acted 3. the quality in a person that makes him tell lies or cheat. Suggests a habit of trying to fool others by covering up or twisting the truth and giving the wrong idea of things.
- Pretense - an aim, an endeavor to arrive; applies to that which is falsely or deceitfully held out as real or true. Pretension - a claim, especially a claim, asserted or tacit, true or false (to something admirable); hence, any quality or feature that invites or aims to invite admiration or attention
- Hypocrite - one who plays a part; especially one who, for the purpose of winning approbation or favor, feigns to be other and better than he is; a false pretender of virtue or piety; one who simulates virtue or piety. Hypocrisy - the feigning of beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not hold or possess; insincerity.

²⁹⁰ Really? In what ways have you stumbled? This was the perfect opportunity to tell people rather than make a vague and undefined confession that sounded humble.

²⁹¹ But it was hardly a confession. It was more of a boast. Your stumbles were in the past. Nothing recently...but only because you were older. Wow.

²⁹² All things you consistently failed to do. That's what you should have shared with the pastors and wives.

The Effect on Our Extended Family

One day it would be nice to see you apologize to both sides of our extended family. They have followed my “career path” with Sovereign Grace Ministries for the last three decades. They were horrified to hear I was fired. They could make no sense of it knowing the extent of my devotion and sacrifice and also the high regard I’ve had for the ministry. It was offensive to them and the work of the gospel was harmed, especially in the minds of unbelieving family members, whom we’ve witnessed to for years. Some strongly recommended I sue Sovereign Grace. I certainly understand from their perspective. That would be the normal course of action in corporate America. Well, Jenny and I found it extremely difficult to explain what happened in a manner they would serve them. In this respect, I’m glad both my parents are deceased. Here was one of my attempts to help our dear relatives.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, January 29, 2011 4:32 PM
To: Extended Family
Subject: Personal Update

To Extended Family,

I thought it might be helpful to drop you a line and provide a little update on my circumstances.

In 1982, I had the privilege of starting Sovereign Grace Ministries (SGM) with three other men. Over the next 28 years, I was privileged to plant, lead and oversee churches in the US and abroad; found the Pastors College (the seminary) and serve on the Board of Directors. I have many fond memories.

In 2009, I resigned as senior pastor of the church I was leading and decided to leave SGM. That was a difficult but necessary decision. Two men in the church acted with great deceit and managed to influence other key players. This led to a bogus assessment of me that was horribly unjust. In the secular or corporate world, I could have filed/won a lawsuit for defamation with compensatory damages. I chose not to take this course out of love and concern for all the good people in the church.

This past year, I began to present charges in private with Sovereign Grace Ministries. Not for money but in order to rectify unethical practices in the organization by some of the leaders. I have pressed for public disclosure and accountability. To date I’ve been unsuccessful.

I consider this the most important work related assignment of my life.²⁹³ It has been difficult and tedious. I've produce over 300 pages of commentary and documentation. This has produced some acknowledgments of wrongdoing but they are insufficient and only in private. My most important concerns have gone unaddressed so far. I am currently working on an additional 300 pages of material.

So my work continues. The next few months are critical. I hope SGM will make confessions of wrong-doing to the public and appropriate reparations to Jenny and me. This effort has been time consuming and included interaction with a number of people who share my concerns and observations. They are looking to me for leadership.

At the end of 2010, I started a new non-profit corporation called Aletheia Ministries. Aletheia is the Greek word for truth. It is designed to provide me the legal auspices to consult, write, preach and teach as a charitable organization. I can also start a church if I choose to.

Jenny is working as you know. Having used up our savings, we are pulling money from our retirement account to make due. It is a challenging time, but I am confident we are doing the right thing. Sovereign Grace Ministries is a very influential organization in American. It is also doing some great things in the states and in many nations. Nevertheless, there are some serious flaws that I am addressing. I hope to be successful in helping them to change and strengthen their ethical foundations.

We have endured a considerable degree of suffering. Thanks for your support.

Love,
Brent

What Happen to the A Team?

Back in February of this year, I like many others received an eNews from Sovereign Grace Ministries. It featured various updates but also answered the question, "What happened to the apostolic team?" It was a good question but the answer was misleading. It was an example of spin for the sake of saving face. Here is the relevant excerpt from the eNews.

²⁹³ Why? I'm trying to strengthen and preserve the ministry I helped to build throughout the course of my adult life. My relationship with Larry Tomczak began in 1978. Then with C.J. in 1979. I graduated from seminary the same year. Since then I've worked in conjunction with Sovereign Grace Ministries. It's been my whole life.

From: Sovereign Grace Ministries
On Behalf Of Sovereign Grace Ministries
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 10:03 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Discounts on books and music, church planting updates, and more

eNews

“What happened to the apostolic team?”

Two members of Sovereign Grace churches recently wrote to us asking essentially the same question: does Sovereign Grace Ministries’ apostolic team still exist?

If you’re curious as well, or just want to know more about the structure Sovereign Grace Ministries has for training leaders and planting churches, read the answer we posted in response to those questions [below].

January 18, 2011 by Andrew Mahr

David and Marie, both members of Sovereign Grace churches, recently wrote to us asking essentially the same question: does Sovereign Grace Ministries’ apostolic team still exist? Below is an expanded version of our responses to them, posted here in case others in our churches have the same question.

The apostolic team, for those of you new to Sovereign Grace Ministries, was for many years what we called the team of pastors who help us facilitate church planting, international ministry, and church care. But over time, we discovered the name confused more people than it helped, so now we’re considering alternatives. We’ve also gained a better understanding of the term “apostolic,” which makes us even more careful in how we apply it. So for now, the team is more commonly just called the regional leadership team.

I wrote my wife and son the following e-mail.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 12:19 PM
To: Jenny Detwiler; Jonathan Detwiler
Subject: What Happen to the A Team

Check out “What happened to the apostolic team?” It is not a truthful answer. The apostolic team was comprised of men we believed were called as apostles, not just pastors, in keeping with the teaching of Eph 4:11, etc. The Statement of Faith makes this clear. It reads, “The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ’s body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry.” Sovereign Grace no longer believes in present day apostles and I presume prophets. The five fold ministry is out. The three fold ministry is in.

What concerned me the most was the effect such an explanation would have upon discerning readers who have been a part of the movement for more than five years. It would undermine your credibility. Except for you; Dave, Steve and I all gave up our pastorates in order to fulfill our calling as apostles. We were not a team of pastors. We were a team of apostles. We were an apostolic team. Not a pastoral team.

Since then Sovereign Grace’s understanding of apostles continues to fluctuate. I’m still not sure if you believe in apostles and prophets per Ephesians 4:11, etc. If you don’t, the Statement of Faith must be changed. But this much I know, when I stepped down from the apostolic team in November 2007, none of us thought of ourselves as a pastoral team.

Sovereign Grace Ministries can change its ecclesiology and polity, but it should not misrepresent the past. Instead be honest. Just say we believed in apostles then, we don’t believe in them anymore. In the past we called it a team of apostles, now we call it a team of pastors.

In Reformed and evangelical circles it is unacceptable to refer to oneself as an apostle or prophet. Those gift ministries have ended according to their theology. But let’s not try to save face in those circles by spinning our understanding of the apostolic team in the past.

Now a days, you refer to yourself as the President and to Dave, Jeff and Joshua as Directors. In my opinion, Sovereign Grace Ministries has become a para-church organization because it no longer has a clear biblical justification for its existence. The five-fold ministry has folded.

Joshua Harris' Humility & C.J.'s Absence at CLC Members Meeting

It's been encouraging to observe Joshua's leadership approach and acknowledgment of wrong doing in contrast to your own. Here is the transcript he provided on the CLC website (www.covlife.org/meeting_notes/) from the May 22, 2011 Members Meeting. I've added underlining and comments via footnotes. Without question you should have been present to commend Joshua and to acknowledge these mistakes were primarily a reflection of you and your leadership. They happened on your watch and during your mentoring of Joshua. It's hard to believe you did not participate in the meeting and ask forgiveness of the church. This should have been a top priority for you. As I listened to Joshua's message I thought to myself, "Where's Waldo? Oh my, he's nowhere in the picture!" God bless Joshua - he took the hit and acted as your fall guy.

Introduction

It's not easy to evaluate areas where we've made mistakes, but God has been helping the pastors of Covenant Life through the constructive feedback of members identify areas where we've gotten things wrong and need to grow. At our Members Meeting Sunday night Josh shared the following message on behalf of the pastors. We're posting it here - both an audio version along with a full transcript - for the benefit of those who couldn't attend as well as former members. We hope you'll be encouraged as you see God's faithfulness to refine us and grow us.

May 22, 2011 | Joshua Harris

Welcome, everyone. Thank you so much for making this gathering a priority. If this is your first Members Meeting, we are so happy to have you with us. For those of you who have been to many of these, let me say at the outset that the format of tonight's meeting is going to be different than past times. Normally we share a number of different announcements and updates, but tonight I'm going to share some important things God has been showing the pastors about where we've gotten things wrong and where we believe we need to grow as leaders and as a church.

At the last members meeting I told you that we'd been receiving feedback from members about changes they'd seen in the church that hadn't been fully

explained. This led to the decision to hold several meetings at my house²⁹⁴ to hear the concerns and questions of members.

I am so grateful for the men and women of this church who have sat down with me and other pastors to help us evaluate our leadership. We had three meetings at my house this winter with nearly 80 people total, and we've also met with different individuals and couples one-on-one. People have shared honestly and courageously and also lovingly. I've experienced first-hand the truth of Proverbs 27:6 that says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." God has used these honest conversations²⁹⁵ to help us.

It's so important to me and all the pastors that this open dialogue continues. This can't be a limited season; it must be an ongoing way of life at Covenant Life. It's essential for the health of our church that you know you can talk to your pastors and share questions and concerns at *any time*. For many of you, coming to us with questions or concerns has been your consistent practice. And for years our Care Group leaders have helped to facilitate an awareness among the pastors of the needs, strengths, and weaknesses they or other members have perceived. I'm grateful for the way they've served. But we've never wanted any member to hesitate to approach us. Sadly, several people have told me that they haven't felt like they could do this.²⁹⁶ It grieves me that anyone has felt this way. We want that to change. Please don't hesitate to bring any concern or question. Please don't wait for an invitation or a special occasion.

One of the things that has been most encouraging about this process is that many of the points we've heard from members have lined up with and clarified things that God was already helping us see. I share this not to imply that we already had this figured out, but to highlight what I believe is a work of the Holy Spirit. This church belongs to God. 1 Peter 5:4 tells us that Jesus is the "chief Shepherd." And I see him shepherding us, growing us and refining us. And that's why, even though it's not easy to talk about our mistakes, I have a tremendous sense of faith for how God is working in our church.

So please understand that what I'm sharing tonight is not a matter of one group of people coming to the pastors with their observations. It's something bigger than that. I believe God is answering our prayer that he would revive us and refine us. Is there anything we need more than that?

²⁹⁴ These three meetings were an expression of true humility. Not just the fact they took place, but more importantly, how Joshua led the meetings and made it easy for people to share their concerns.

²⁹⁵ Something so difficult for anyone to do with you including fellow pastors.

²⁹⁶ Joshua's doesn't explain why.

I want to read something to you from Ray Ortlund's book *When God Comes to Church*. This is a book on revival, and this particular quote has both challenged me and stirred my faith greatly over the past eight months...

Commenting on Isaiah 64:1 ("Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down..."), Ray Ortlund writes:

When God rends the heavens and comes down on his people, a divine power achieves what human effort at its best fails to do. God's people thirst for the ministry of the Word and receive it with tender meltings of soul ... Reconciliation between believers is sought and granted. Spiritual things, rather than material things, capture people's hearts. A defensive, timid church is transformed into a confident army. Believers joyfully suffer for their Lord. They treasure usefulness to God over career advancement. Communion with God is avidly enjoyed. *Churches and Christian organizations reform their policies and procedures*. People who had always been indifferent to the gospel now inquire anxiously. And this type of spiritual movement draws in not just the isolated straggler here and there but large numbers of people. A wave of divine grace washes over the church and spills out into the world. That is what happens when God comes down. And that is how we should pray for the church today.

I've seen a desire for reconciliation, a willingness for self-evaluation, and a quickness to own mistakes; I believe all of these things reflect the work of the Spirit. And I see the Lord working to reform our church and grow us in ways that are needed.

As we learned in our study of Nehemiah, *God* is at work when his people rise up with faith to rebuild the walls.

When we started the Nehemiah series, I had no idea how much that study would challenge me personally and mirror what I believe God is doing in Covenant Life. Just like Nehemiah and the people of Israel, I believe God has led us into a time of honest evaluation of the condition of the walls of our church.

Friends, by God's grace, we have a strong, healthy, influential and growing church. There is so much to celebrate. I thank God that we love his Word and are seeking to center our lives on the gospel. I thank God that in so many ways we are united. I thank God that there is a real commitment to pursue holiness. I thank God for the depth of relationships and fellowship that we enjoy. I thank God that we're pushing forward in gospel mission in our local community, and

in partnership with Sovereign Grace, around the world. God has been so good to us. And we would dishonor him if we didn't recognize that and give him all the glory! I'm so grateful for all the service, leadership and sacrifice that have brought us to this point.

But gratefulness for grace doesn't mean we overlook areas of weakness. The Holy Spirit has also been helping us see places where the walls need repair. This shouldn't surprise us or overly discourage us. We're not in heaven yet. Covenant Life isn't the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God! We're flawed, sinful people whom God is changing. So we don't need to be shocked when we realize that there are still places where God wants to apply grace to grow and transform us. There are areas we need to strengthen. There are places where we need to acknowledge we've gotten things wrong. I don't think this process is negative or counter-productive. It's certainly not an indictment of our rich history. It's simply an acknowledgment of our ongoing need for gospel transformation and renewal. And I believe it is a vital part of ongoing growth and ongoing integrity for any local church.²⁹⁷

This won't be the last time we have to do this. I assure you this won't be the last time we get things wrong. In future days, by God's grace, we'll no doubt see areas of our church that need realignment and refinement, and we'll need to talk about them as a church family. This isn't a bad thing. It's a very healthy part of life together.

So let me share several key issues that I think God has been putting his finger on. I'm going to put these under three headlines that are an attempt to summarize the issues...

1. Reducing To One Practice

For several years now C.J. Mahaney, who was one of the founding pastors of Covenant Life and now serves as president of Sovereign Grace Ministries, has been leading the pastors of Sovereign Grace to recognize the difference between principle and practice.²⁹⁸ A principle is a clear teaching or imperative from God's Word. A practice is a specific action or decision that seeks to apply a principle.

²⁹⁷ Joshua is willing to do what you have been unwilling to do. That is "acknowledge we're gotten things wrong...a vital part of ongoing growth and ongoing integrity." I am glad he sees the connection between confession and integrity. I hope he presses you for the same as one member of the SGM Board of Directors.

²⁹⁸ I'm glad Joshua acknowledged the helpful role you played the last "several years" but you should have made clear to CLC that the blurring between principle and practice was primarily due to your leadership, writing and teaching.

So for example, Scripture clearly teaches that husbands should love and cherish their wives (Eph. 5).

But *how* two Christian husbands put this same principle into practice can differ. One Christian can apply this principle by taking his wife out to dinner every Wednesday. But another husband might find time to communicate with and express affection for his wife with a walk around the neighborhood each night. They're both honoring a biblical principle, but their practice is different.

One of the historic strengths of Covenant Life has been in putting principles into practice. We want to be, as James 1:22 says, not just hearers of the Word, but *doers* of the Word. May this never change! May we be a church community that takes God's Word seriously and applies it to our lives.

Having said this, a strength in application can also be a weakness if we're not careful. Here's what I mean: if we elevate a single practice and invest it with the authority of biblical principle, we can place a rule or burden on people that isn't actually commanded in God's Word. For example, it wouldn't be helpful if we said that the Bible teaches that couples need to go on a date every Wednesday. It's a fine idea, but it's not a scriptural command.

C.J. shared something with me recently that turned the light on for me. He quoted J.I. Packer who wrote that the Puritans were known for their ability to "reduce to practice" – in other words, they took biblical principles and reduced them to specific choices and decisions in their lives. This is a good thing. God's Word, handled rightly, leads to humble and skillful application.

But C.J. pointed out that there can be a problem when we "reduce to only one practice" – and give the impression that there is only one godly way to honor a given principle.

Here are a few categories²⁹⁹ that members of the church have shared with us where they felt a single practice was over-emphasized in an unhelpful way:

- Dating and courtship
- Going away to college
- Girls and college
- Women's Bible studies
- Women working outside the home³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Joshua didn't include the "Modesty Check" list developed by you and Carolyn. In my opinion, it was the most "legalistic" thing ever produced and distributed Sovereign Grace churches. I mentioned this example in RRF&D on pages 110 & 115. Why wasn't it included on this list? Don't get me wrong, I am very grateful for the wisdom contained in such materials.

In each of these areas Christians can have differing practices and yet honor biblical principles. But in various ways I think we “reduced to only one practice,” and at times that brought the unintended consequence of people feeling the pressure that there was only one truly godly way to do things.

So for example, to honor biblical principles of purity, you had to practice courtship according to ideas in my books. Or to love the local church you shouldn't go away to college but stay local. Or to value the leadership and teaching of the pastors, you shouldn't attend outside Bible studies. Or to practice biblical femininity, you shouldn't pursue higher education or work outside the home.³⁰¹

If you went back and listened to past messages, I don't think you'd find us teaching, “There's only one godly way to do this or that.” But we could have worked harder to highlight the differing viewpoints that still honored the principle.

So for example, there were occasions where we featured testimonies of people who passed up job opportunities or the chance to attend an out-of-state college for the sake of staying involved in this local church. These testimonies were designed to highlight sacrificial choices members made for the sake of participation in the church.

But we should have also featured testimonies of people who were glorifying God by excelling in their studies and in advancement in their careers even as they prioritized involvement in any other Bible-believing church. As pastors we allowed a culture to be created where the godly way was too narrowly defined.

All this is a disservice to you for several reasons. First, because it doesn't teach you to grapple with God's Word for yourself. We want you to study God's Word yourself, see the biblical principles clearly, and put them into practice based on a clear conviction, not the conviction of someone else.

³⁰⁰ The practices developed and implemented over years in these five categories occurred while you were the sr. pastor. For instance, *Feminine Appeal* was first printed in 2003.

³⁰¹ All of this was built into the church under your tenure as senior pastor and spilled over into your discipleship of Joshua after you turned the church over to him in September, 2004. Here is a quote from the transition article, “I Believe God Has Provided the Best by Ken McIntyre and Shelley Reinhart. “None of us was quite prepared for the news announced by C.J. Mahaney, the only senior pastor Covenant Life has ever known, at our Family Meeting the evening of Nov. 16, 2003! Joshua Harris, who has trained under C.J. for more than six years and served as executive pastor for the past two and a half years, will assume the role of senior pastor in September 2004. ‘I will continue to train Joshua. My job's not done, folks.’ C.J. said, to appreciative laughter. ‘I will continue to train Josh.’”

This is also a problem because it can lead to a legalistic environment where some people are more concerned with what other people practice than with the sufficiency of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reducing to only one practice has also resulted in people feeling judged by others for not having the same practice.

One of the realizations we're coming to as pastors is that we can do a better job in teaching the principle of Christian liberty taught in passages like Romans 14 and 1 Cor. 8-9. The principle of Christian liberty is that as followers of Christ we have freedom to make decisions about matters that are not revealed or mandated in Scripture without fear of sinning against God.

We can do a better job of teaching that one person's or one pastor's practice of wisdom is not God's law and shouldn't bind another person's conscience.

We all need to wrestle with questions of wisdom. We all need to humbly seek to practice biblical principles and then discuss our differences with each other charitably and humbly. But we cannot as a church make everyone adopt the same practice. No matter how wise we think our practice might be, we can't invest it with the authority of God's Word.

We want to do a better job of teaching the principles of God's Word and encouraging you as individuals and families to apply the Word as you see fit before the Lord. We still want to encourage each other to put God's truth into practice. But we also want to emphasize the freedom we have as individuals and families to have different practices of the very same principle. We want to cultivate an even greater culture of grace even as we strive for holiness.

As a team of pastors³⁰² we are committed to growing in this area. We've spoken with people who have shared where they were negatively affected by this, and we've asked their forgiveness. If you're someone who has any experience or circumstance that you'd like to talk about with us, we would love to sit down with you, listen to you, and wherever necessary ask your forgiveness as well.

³⁰² Do you agree with the CLC pastors that they erred and needed to ask forgiveness of people? Or put another way, do you fully agree with Joshua's conclusions and comments in this transcript. I am just wondering why you have taken no responsibility for these mistakes in public.

2. Good Parents = Good Kids

This issue is closely tied to the issue of practice. In various ways, especially in the area of parenting, I think at times we have slid into the mistake of trusting practice more than God and his faithfulness.

And the basic lie we've been tempted to believe is that if you get all your practice right—if you parent right, discipline right and train right—then your kids will turn out right. In other words *good parents = good kids*.

Well, as most of us know, this just isn't true. And it's unhelpful on many levels. In fact even the label "good kids" is an unhelpful one that focuses more on outward behavior and image. Even many so-called "good kids" can be struggling with unseen spiritual struggles. The reality is that, like us, all of our kids are in process and need the power of God to save them and transform them day by day.

Now I don't think the "good parents = good kids" idea has characterized our teaching on parenting, and I don't think every pastor or leader has made this mistake. I'm grateful for the good fruit that's been born over the years from the biblical teaching on parenting here.

But I know that I have made this mistake and often carried this wrong mentality. And there are many negative results to this wrong thinking:

- Fear-driven parenting
- Pride and self-righteousness when our kids are doing well
- Condemnation and shame when our kids struggle or stray
- Judgment toward those whose kids are struggling³⁰³

Please don't misunderstand. Parenting matters. God rewards faithfulness and diligence. I'm not suggesting we should minimize the importance of instructing, training and disciplining our kids—it's clearly commanded in God's Word.

But we need to do this trusting in the Lord and recognizing that we cannot control our children's hearts or save them. We can do our best and be faithful, and our children can still choose to sin and rebel against God.

There are some of you who have felt judged by others when your kids struggled. Instead of feeling loved you felt critiqued. I'm sorry for this. I know my leadership has contributed to this.

³⁰³ What responsibility do you bear for these bad fruits?

Over the years, a number of the pastors have faced significant parenting challenges during the teenage years. In one of those cases, I can see now that I did a poor job caring for my brother.

In an attempt to care for him, I began to focus on trying to point out what he did wrong in his parenting. I was placing my hope in a parent's obedience rather than the sovereign grace of God to save the child. This was a lack of love for him. When I should have been caring for this brother, I was correcting him. I've asked for his forgiveness for my wrongly placed hope and my poor leadership, and he has graciously forgiven me. Reviewing this with him as a pastoral team has helped us to see ways that we trusted parental faithfulness more than we relied on the gospel of grace.

But I'm sure there are others of you who to differing degrees have experienced the same thing—whether from pastors or from other members of the church. Parents in the church have shared that when their child rebelled, they felt isolated and abandoned instead of cared for and surrounded. They felt labeled as “bad parents” and marginalized in their involvement. And when their child was labeled a “bad kid,” other parents withdrew from them and sought to protect their children from them.

Many times we emphasized Proverbs 13:20—“...the companion of fools will suffer harm”—but have not adequately emphasized the truth of passages like Luke 15:4 that show that Jesus goes looking for the lost sheep.

So at many times we've been more focused on protecting our so-called “good kids” from the so-called “bad kids” rather than expressing God's great love and compassion for all of our children.

We want to acknowledge that we've often done a poor job of caring for and pursuing young adults³⁰⁴ in this church who were struggling spiritually or wandering. We are seeking, with God's help, to change. We want to be like our Savior who came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). We want to obey 1 Thessalonians 5:14 that tells us to “admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.”

Please forgive us for any time we failed to care for and comfort you as you watched your child struggle. Forgive us for ways we failed to more actively pursue children that were wayward. We want you to know we are praying

³⁰⁴ Does this reflect your tendency to distance yourself and withdrawal from people? What responsibility do you accept for the “poor job of caring for and pursuing young adults” who wandered?

with you for them and want to hear if there are any steps we can take to reach out to them. And again, if you'd like to meet with a pastor to talk about your specific experience, please contact us. Wherever we can we'd want to talk with you personally.

In our church, the past 10 years have seen the first generation of kids come into adulthood. We've all learned a lot in the process. As our children have passed through their teen years, I think we have all grown in our realization that good parental training doesn't guarantee "good" kids. It's an incredible mercy if our teens don't wallow in the mire ... and even if they do, that's not the end of the story. God is mighty to save! He delights in rescuing those who have strayed! Rather than expending all our energy seeking to keep our kids from straying (and judging those who do), may God help us all learn to parent with a persevering hope in the gospel to do what we can never do in our own strength.

3. Disciplinary Consequences at Covenant Life School

Many of the concerns shared by members in the meetings we've had stemmed from their experiences with Covenant Life School. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with our school, let me provide some brief background information.

Covenant Life School opened its doors in 1979 with the goal of providing a distinctly Christian education for families in our church. It has provided an outstanding education for hundreds of students, and we couldn't be more proud of both our staff and the quality of students.

As the school grew in size and scope, it consistently expected and enforced high standards of behavior. In cases where students fell significantly short of these standards, disciplinary decisions were made by the School Board, which consisted of school administrators and pastors.

With the addition of a high school program in 1995 came bigger disciplinary issues and more serious disciplinary consequences. You probably aren't surprised to know that teens raised in strong Christian homes still struggled with temptations to sin. It was common for the Board to expel one or more students during the course of a school year.

All of the administrators and pastors involved in these decisions at the time would have felt they were being faithful to uphold biblical standards of conduct. The School Board made its decisions with the knowledge and support

of the pastoral team³⁰⁵ and sought to communicate genuine care and concern for the families involved.

But after evaluating the fruit of the school's disciplinary practices over 15 years and receiving honest and gracious input from many members, we have come to see that in some cases our disciplinary consequences were unnecessarily strong, and the effects on those we disciplined were more painful and costly than we realized.³⁰⁶

While rightly concerned about protecting the spiritual health of the school community, we as pastors could have done far more to demonstrate care for the individuals being disciplined, and for their families. Removing them and their negative influence from the school community was seen as an urgent priority; restoring them to the school and church community was not. Once they were gone, we as pastors had no clear strategy for pursuing them in love. The result is that they felt cut off from the school, and consequently from the church. As a result, very few of those students who were removed from the school ever returned. Very few are members of our church today. It sobers and saddens us deeply to know that our practices tempted students to feel cut off from the Lord and his grace.

By God's grace, we have been able to speak with many of these students and their families directly. They have been amazingly quick to forgive. Each conversation has only strengthened our commitment to practice school discipline more wisely, more patiently, and more redemptively in the future.

A number of changes have already been implemented over the past several years. We have involved parents more consistently in the process of evaluating and correcting student behavior. We have modified disciplinary consequences that were excessive. We have added several parent members to our School Board to ensure that school policies and practices benefit from their vital perspective. And we have grown significantly in expressing God's redeeming love for students before, during and after the disciplinary process. I think we are moving in the right direction.

If you're a parent or a student who would like to sit down and discuss any past issue in the school, please contact one of the pastors. We would be happy to revisit any issue and hear your perspective.

³⁰⁵ The school was an extension of pastoral care for the training of sons and daughters of church members. You were ultimately responsible for the mistakes Joshua's acknowledges.

³⁰⁶ Much of this happened on your watch and with your knowledge and/or involvement.

Our prayer is that Covenant Life School would thrive as a community of grace where our sons and daughters – all sinners like us – are supported and encouraged as they grow up into Christ. When they stumble, we want to help them regain their footing and press on toward the prize. And if some are disqualified from attendance because of their sin, we will do all in our power to assure them of our love, our commitment, and our vision for their return.

Conclusion

Those are my three categories. But let me take a moment to express my regret to you on behalf of your pastors.³⁰⁷

Where our leadership was characterized by these patterns—in ways that I’ve shared and in ways I haven’t fully seen— we want to ask you to forgive us. We’ve been wrong. Deficiencies in our leadership have been hurtful to some of you. We are very sorry. Please forgive us.³⁰⁸

There are people who have left Covenant Life over the years in part because of the very areas we’re talking about. I know many people who have grown up here whose walk with God has been significantly hindered by these issues. I want to try and get this apology out to them. We’re going to have the audio of tonight’s message available online and hope you’ll pass it along to anyone who needs to hear it.

And if you’re one of these people, and you’re listening to this sometime in the future, please hear this: we’re asking for your forgiveness, too. And we sincerely pray that our failures as pastors and our failures as a local church will not hinder you from trusting in the perfect Savior Jesus Christ. If you’re thriving in your faith in another church, we praise God. But if you’re not walking with Jesus, and in some way our practice and example has distorted your view of Jesus, please forgive us and please turn back to him.

I realize you may never love Covenant Life or come back to this church, but I hope that you will come back to Jesus if you’ve strayed. And I want you to know that we would love to have you join us again at Covenant Life as we seek to grow in grace together. By the power of the gospel of grace, we are committed to growing and changing with God’s help.

³⁰⁷ Including C.J.? Nope – you resigned in September 2004.

³⁰⁸ Unless you disagree with Joshua and the CLC pastors, you should also be publically acknowledging wrong-doing and asking for forgiveness. In many cases people’s offenses are with you. People need to hear from you regarding reducing to one practice, good parents = good kids, and disciplinary consequences at Covenant Life School. That is of course, unless you feel you’ve done nothing wrong.

For everyone here tonight and anyone listening, if you want to sit down with any of the pastors and talk about any specific circumstances from the past, please contact any of the pastors. We would love to do that.

I recognize that this apology doesn't fix anything if you've been hurt, but I pray that God will use it to bring healing and closure for you.

What This Doesn't Mean

I realize that some of what I've shared may raise questions or even concerns for some. Maybe you'd say, "I never experienced what you're describing." I'm very glad if that's the case. I think we all need to remember that in a church our size different people will have different experiences based on factors like the age of our children and the circumstances of our lives. What's most important for me to state is that the basic values of our church are not changing at all.

Let me state as clearly as possible what all this "doesn't mean."

1. It doesn't mean we're saying everything we've done in the past has been wrong. There's so much grace we can celebrate in our church!
2. It doesn't mean we're going to care less about holiness. We need to be challenged by the Word of God. But we also need to help each other cultivate conviction by studying God's Word for ourselves.
3. It doesn't mean that wisdom and godly practice don't matter. But how we relate to each other when we disagree is an important area in which we can grow. So we're going to study in the coming days what Scripture teaches about Christian freedom, how to relate to people with different standards, and how to avoid self-righteousness even as we hold up biblical standards for righteousness.
4. It doesn't mean that everything is fixed, and now we have perfect church. I wish it did! But we will continue to need to mature. We will continue to need to be refined by God's Word. We as your pastors will continue to need your input, feedback and questions. We will still make mistakes.

Where Do We Go From Here?

I'm glad to say that in many of these areas we have already been growing and changing. Part of the reason this statement tonight is important is because we need to publicly acknowledge³⁰⁹ where we're seeking to change so that we can better press ahead. This is another area where I've realized my leadership

³⁰⁹ I hope you follow their example.

needs to improve. At times we've changed our practices, but I've not clearly explained why.³¹⁰

I've not clearly stated where we realize we've gotten things wrong. I'm sorry it's taken me so long to see this and share this with you. But here we are ... better late than never!

It's a funny thing. I've never been more aware of my deficiencies as a leader. And yet I've never had more faith for the future of Covenant Life Church. I am so honored to serve as one of your pastors. I feel God humbling me, and yet I am more aware of his presence and his grace than ever.

He is with us. He is doing good to us. He is disciplining us because he loves us. And I believe he is positioning us to be more faithful and effective in the mission of reaching lost people with the gospel. All the areas that I've shared with you tonight are areas in which changing and growing will help us better welcome and disciple unbelievers.

God is not helping us see our mistakes to rub our noses in our failure—he is moving us forward in our mission. He is refining us so that we can better reflect and display the glories of the gospel. He is refining us so that we can be a church where people encounter grace and love and compassion. He is at work for his glory and our good.

Having listened to Joshua's message, I wrote to encourage and thank him.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2011 11:49 AM
To: Joshua Harris
Subject: Members' Meeting

Excellent job last night. Your honesty and humility were refreshing. I am sure people appreciated your candor and openness.

I also wrote him about some folks in the church who were struggling and added some other reflections on his leadership.

³¹⁰ So true under your leadership of Sovereign Grace Ministries. Not only changes in practices but changes in theology having repeatedly gone unexplained or been inadequately explained or been explained years after the fact. I always appealed for timely and candid explanations to the movement or pastors. I thought integrity (and wisdom) necessitated explanations. To the best of my recollection each of those appeals were denied. For instance when you changed your pneumatology and position on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, singing in the Spirit, prophecy, the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, etc.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, May 24, 2011 1:25 PM
To: Joshua Harris
Subject: RE: Members' Meeting

I hope you can win them or at least help them. It appears their offenses are largely with C.J. Thanks again for holding the meetings in your home and soliciting the input of critics, then processing it, then reporting on your findings in a God honoring fashion. Great leadership.

C.J.'s Blackmailing of Larry Tomczak

On May 15, 1997, Larry wrote a humble and honest confession to all the members in PDI churches (now Sovereign Grace Ministries) acknowledging his need to take step down from the apostolic team and take a leave of absence as senior pastor of City Church in Atlanta.

May 15, 1997

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord!

Charles Spurgeon, pastor and evangelist, once made this statement "Failure at a crucial moment may mar the entire outcome of a life." The truth of this statement is most real to me at this time as I want to share some significant dealings of God in my life.³¹¹

Recently, the Holy Spirit, through the gentle and consistent correction of many, has been bringing illumination to me concerning a number of sinful areas in my life. I am starting to see my blindness and sins, especially in the area of pride. Over the years, others have repeatedly sought to address these issues in my life, but sadly, I have not responded to God in humility or embraced their correction in repentance. I have not been teachable and therefore made it difficult for them. Looking back, I am sorrowful for how I have hurt God and so thankful for the forbearance that has been shown me and the mercy that has been extended to me.

³¹¹ I hope you will do the same.

By God's grace, I am beginning to see the ways the depravity and deceitfulness of sin in my heart has expressed itself in my life. This has occurred primarily through the agency of others. I have had the benefit of receiving input from my friends and fellow leaders in PDI, many of us having served together for over 20 years. I am especially grateful to C.J. Mahaney, Steve Shank, and Paul Palmer of the apostolic team and Larry Malament who serves with me in local leadership. Without their patient care and counsel, I do not believe I would be seeing many of the things God is revealing. How I need them and thank God for faithful friends!

Jonathan Edwards in his tract on "The Necessity of Self-examination" (1788) stated the following:

Consider what others may say of you. Sometimes people live in ways that are not at all appropriate, yet they are blind to it themselves. They do not see their own shortcomings though the faults are perfectly plain and evident to others. They themselves cannot see their failings yet others cannot shut their eyes or avoid seeing where they fall short.... There is no trusting our own hearts or our own eyes in such cases, so we must hear what others say of us, observe what they charge us with, heed what fault they find with us, and strictly examine whether there is some foundation for it.... We should especially listen to what our friends say to us and about us. It is foolhardy as well as un-Christian to take offense and resent it when we are thus told of our faults. 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy' (Prov. 27:6). We should rejoice that we are shown our spots.

I am grateful to God that over the past two months, he has providentially placed me in the position to be "shown my spots" (sins) in a way that is grievous to me, yet obviously orchestrated by God. "You hem me in--behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain" (Psalm 139:5-6).

What are the sins God is currently revealing in my life?³¹²

- Pride - Manifested in many ways: Serious and long-standing deficiency in conviction and confession of sin; failure to discern the motivations of my heart; and a sinful desire to be recognized by others and do things to preserve and promote my reputation.
- Selfishness - Making decisions motivated by the sinful desire to impress others and not risk losing their admiration.

³¹² While not detailed, I respect Larry for the specificity contained in these four categories.

- Deficiencies in the Family - Not effectively training my children in the Lord. Focusing more on external behavior and attitudes and missing many critical issues of the heart in their lives.
- Lying - Being deceitful and submitting to fear by concealing sins and problems areas in the family.

Because of the above, my friends and fellow leaders have rightly expressed a lack of trust and confidence in my leadership. I agree completely. As a ministry, we have always embraced biblical standards for leaders, especially that we are to be “above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2), which I am not at this time.

Therefore, it is right and necessary for me to step down from the apostolic team and fulfill what is a mutual decision to take a leave of absence as senior pastor of City Church for six to twelve months.³¹³ This will enable me to address the areas of concern in a redemptive and concentrated manner and, Lord willing, regain trust to return to service in a manner God sees fit. Ultimately, the timing of my return will be determined by the apostolic team and the local leadership as they observe and confirm genuine change in my life.³¹⁴

For our local church in Atlanta, Larry Malament will serve as senior pastor in my absence, assisted by George Harrington and Todd Twining who are the two men currently being developed in leadership. Larry has been a faithful friend throughout this process. I am greatly indebted to him. I am also confident Larry will do an excellent job along with the other men. Furthermore, Steve Shank of the PDI apostolic team will be assuming oversight of the church. Steve’s wisdom, love, counsel, and correction have been a wonderful means of God’s grace and mercy.

It is critical that everyone actively resist any temptation to drift into speculation or suspicion. I totally agree with the course of action we are taking and view it as God’s mercy for me and my family. This leave of absence is an undeserved expression of mercy by the leaders involved in this decision.

C.J. Mahaney, who has been my dear friend for over two decades, has done a wonderful job in skillfully and compassionately steering us through this process. More than anyone, he has helped me to see the issues at hand and encouraged my heart in the Lord. I could never adequately thank him. I also want to honor all the apostolic team members for their forbearance, care and input throughout. I only wish each of you reading this letter could have

³¹³ I wish you had been as humble as Larry. You were profoundly offended at the notion of confessing to a larger group (let alone the movement like Larry) or stepping down as the team leader.

³¹⁴ Larry later regretted the inclusion of this statement. He reneged on this commitment four months later by letter on Sept 13 and in person on Sept 24 when we met in Atlanta.

personally witnessed our recent meetings firsthand to experience the character of the men involved. Without question, our Lord was pleased and His presence was evident throughout our time together.

C.J. asked me to make it clear to you in this letter that there is no immorality, marital discord, or financial impropriety on my part and no “untold story” in this matter.

My wife Doris has been right at my side throughout this time of God’s dealing. I can’t express in words what this woman of God means to me and how much I love her after 21 years of marriage. She is doing fine and has no question that this is God’s will.

In this defining moment in my life, I ask for your prayers on my behalf and for all those involved in this matter. I am regretful first to God, then to my family, and finally to all of you that I have fallen short of being the man of God I am committed to be. The men around me have been gracious to forgive me. I ask for your forgiveness.³¹⁵ My commitment is to honor God, my family, and fellow leaders as I grow through this process. I want to emerge a changed man, better able to serve God and His people and ultimately finish well for the glory of God. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Grateful for the grace and mercy of God, I am your servant,

Larry Tomczak

C.J.’s Letter to PDI Pastors Regarding Larry - May 19, 1997

Here is your cover letter to all the pastors accompanying Larry’s confession.

May 19, 1997

Dear [Pastor],

I trust this notes find you enjoying God’s grace.

This week the members of your congregation will be receiving the enclosed letter from Larry Tomczak informing them of disciplinary action that was necessary this past Sunday. I believe you will find Larry’s letter to be clear and

³¹⁵ Something you need to do also.

complete, but if you have any questions, please call the appropriate team member.

On Sunday I met with the Atlanta church for this announcement and the meeting was very effective. Afterward, a first time quest expressed to me how deeply affected he was. And a member of the church said to me, "That was the most profound demonstration of integrity³¹⁶ I've seen in 21 years of being a Christian." There seemed to be a wonderful combination of the fear of the Lord and the mercy of God both during and after the meeting.

Please pray for Larry Tomczak and his family. Pray as well for Larry Malament, George Harrington, and Todd Twinning. These three men have been exemplary in their character and their care throughout this process. Finally, pray for Steve Shank who has been involved from the beginning and has served this church so effectively throughout this time in a way I will always be grateful for.

With my respect,

C.J.

Unfortunately, Larry broke his commitment to this restorative process just four months into it. On September 13, he wrote to tell us he was leaving PDI due to "a clear change in direction and doctrinal emphasis," the negative effect our "Calvinistic/Reformed" doctrine was having upon his family, and disagreement with our "evaluation of [his] ministry and calling." You responded to him as follows.

September 18, 1997

Dear Larry,

Even though we will be meeting next week, I wanted to write and communicate how sad I am to receive your letter and hear of your desire to leave us. I will certainly do all I can to persuade you to reconsider as I do not believe this would be God's will in light of our history together and the future we have anticipated. You have articulated this commitment countless times.

Please know that if you do leave, (the thought is so grieving and almost inconceivable to me), it cannot be due to doctrinal differences. Your [September 13] letter is a serious (slanderous actually, in its present form) misrepresentation of both the attitude and doctrinal position of the team. And

³¹⁶ I agree. I just wish the same were true with you. Integrity requires a confession to the movement.

there are those within PDI who hold a similar position as yours and they see no reason to leave having only experienced the support of the team in the midst of disagreement. No, trying to walk away due to supposed doctrinal disagreements is simply not legitimate. It appears to be fabricated to avoid the real issue.

The only point on which we have serious disagreement at present is whether you are qualified to return to ministry at this time. No one on the team or any of those in leadership in City Church believes that you are and the contents of this letter would provide further confirmation of our assessment. Larry, we all want you to return to ministry and are committed to this end but we would not be obeying God or serving you by allowing this to occur before the serious sin which has been revealed in our heart and life and which you have at least acknowledge is sufficiently addressed. Not only is 4 months not sufficient time for the changes necessary but everyone involved would agree that you have not even demonstrated to date a clear perception of sin in your life much less the changes necessary to serve in ministry. To seek counsel and encouragement to leave PDI and return to ministry from those outside PDI and to refuse to inform us of this action or tell us who these individuals are is not only a clear and sinful lack of integrity on your part it would also reveal your motivation to avoid this wise, caring and necessary discipline in your life. And to attempt to describe your separation as due to doctrinal differences is simply not true. Larry, when you are ready to return to ministry cannot be your call. Given the sin revealed in your life and how imperceptive you have been, you are in no position to declare yourself mature and ready to return.³¹⁷

I am looking forward to our time together on Wednesday. I am praying for God's mercy and wisdom to be evident in our time together. I am praying that you will recognize how much we care for you as well as sin which seems to motivate you in your pursuit of separation from those who have been your friends for more than twenty years.

One of those friends,

C.J.

As a result of Larry's letter, we quickly set up a meeting in Atlanta the following week on September 24. Those present included you, me, Steve Shank, Gene Prince, Larry Malament, and George Harrington. At this meeting, we hoped Larry would listen to our appeals to remain faithful to his commitments but we had no success. We were

³¹⁷ I've included this material on Larry so you can contrast your handling of him with your lenient treatment of yourself. I've studied over 1,000 pages of material related to Larry. There is so much more that could be said. Simply put, what you required of Larry, you did not require of yourself.

shocked, troubled and dismayed that he was deceitfully leaving PDI. It was a heart breaking experience for all of us.

During this meeting, Larry told us he no longer trusted the apostolic team and local pastoral team to properly assess his character and gifting (i.e. calling). He also said, "What I couldn't say [four] months back, I can say today regarding my character. I feel qualified in God and restored to ministry." He went onto to say, "I would view the sentence about the assessment of the team and local leaders as a mistake. I would not put that sentence in the confession if I had it to do over." That is, the following sentence, "Ultimately, the timing of my return will be determined by the apostolic team and the local leadership as they observe and confirm genuine change in my life." He also said, "I have seen a process unfold that is flawed."³¹⁸

This then became a source of conflict. Larry wanted to present his leaving PDI as largely due to doctrine. We believed he was fleeing a restorative process that was focused on his character. We felt Larry was using doctrinal differences as an excuse for leaving. Larry strongly disagreed. In a later letter to friends, Larry said, "It is critical that one point be abundantly clear: I am not leaving this ministry out of convenience, independence or unwillingness to deal with some character and family deficiencies identified, acknowledged and being addressed" (September 13, 1997).

Two days after our meeting, I wrote a lengthy letter to Larry. I covered a number of subjects including his misrepresentation. Here is a short excerpt representing my perspective on the issue of doctrine and calling. "Let us help you to grow in humility and integrity. Let us be able to commend you in God's time. Later we could send you out if you feel you must leave over doctrine or differences in our assessment of calling. This is about character - not calling, not doctrine."

Larry had publically acknowledged that character deficiencies in his life and home rendered him disqualified to be a pastor until rectified. Here are some his public statements regarding family (underlining is mine).

- "Deficiencies in the Family. Not effectively training my children in the Lord. Focusing more on external behavior and attitudes and missing many critical issues of the heart in their lives." (Larry's written confession to all PDI members on May 15, 1997)
- "The areas I needed to focus on were areas of character deficiencies in my own life, as well as deficiencies in my home that rendered me disqualified for Biblical leadership. During this disciplinary process, I focused on these areas and now feel

³¹⁸ For instance, the harsh and bruising treatment Larry received at the hands of Larry Malament who replaced him as the sr. pastor.

God has done a gracious and restorative work in my life as well as in the life of my family.” (Larry’s “To Whom It May Concern” letter from October 1997)

- “Larry Tomczak is back. After spending 15 years tucked away in ministry with People of Destiny International (PDI), Tomczak has left that network of churches and resurfaced as a teacher at the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry...and reconnecting with the wider body of Christ, after years of being isolated in his own charismatic denomination.... “I’m delighted to be much more connected,” Tomczak told Charisma.... Last fall, in a move that was painful and emotionally draining, Tomczak left PDI. “The ministry was going in some different directions, and I didn’t fit in those directions”.... Although he’s always had solid family relationships, Tomczak said God addressed “faulty foundations” in his home life. (“Larry Tomczak Gets New Start in Ministry,” *Charisma*, July 1998)
- “Through the obstacles I faced, God revealed my own misguided passions. He jolted me as one of my children began deviating from the “straight and narrow.” He stripped me and broke me by removing all my props – security, reputation, position.” (Larry Tomczak, *Reckless Abandon*, Charisma House, 2002, p. 76)

A week after our meeting in Atlanta a group of us had a follow up conversation with Larry by phone on October 2, 1997. You led the conversation. Those participating included Steve Shank, Larry Malament, George Harrington and me.

During this conversation, you again told Larry it was wrong for him to present his leaving PDI as due to differences in doctrine. You said, “The only point that has merit is our disagreement over the assessment of your character.” You continued by saying that Larry “must confine [himself] to that point in order to leave peacefully.” In other words, you could accept Larry telling the movement he was abruptly and prematurely pulling out of the disciplinary process because he disagreed with our assessment of his character. You would not allow him to explain his departure in terms of doctrinal differences. But then you went further. You told Larry if he included doctrine as a basis for leaving “we will go into more detail regarding your sin and if necessary Justin’s sin.” This was an unauthorized comment. We had not discussed or approved such an approach. It was entirely your doing. You emphatically stated, “If you [Larry] communicate your leaving is due to doctrine in even a secondary way, in print or orally, we will go into more detail.”³¹⁹

Larry called you the next day and secretly taped the conversation. Doris was on the line but you didn’t know it until later in the conversation. A year later in December 1998, Larry sent us “An Appeal to the PDI Leadership for Repentance, Reconciliation

³¹⁹ Needless to say, you were sinfully angry at Larry. You restated this threat to Larry and Doris the following day.

and Closure.” In that document he provided a partial transcript from the secret recording dealing with your threat to reveal details regarding the “teenager” who deviated from the “straight and narrow.” He also added a “Note” and final comment. The underlining is Larry’s not mine. Here it is.

Transcript of Phone Conversation between C.J., Doris and Larry Tomczak on October 3, 1997 [pp. 10-11]

C.J. “Doctrine is an unacceptable reason for leaving P.D.I.”

Larry “C.J., I’m not in sync with any of the T.U.L.I.P., so whether you agree or not, doctrine is one of the major reasons I believe it is God’s will to leave P.D.I. and it does need to be included in any statement put forth.”

C.J. “If you do that, then it will be necessary for us to give a more detailed explanation of your sins.”

Larry “Justin’s name has been floated out there when there’s statements like ‘revealing more details about my sin.’ What are you getting at?”

C.J. “Justin’s name isn’t just ‘floated out there’ - I’m stating it!”

Larry “C.J. how can you do that after you encouraged Justin to confess everything; get it all out. Then when he did, you reassured him - ‘You have my word, it will never leave this room. Even our wives won’t be told.’ I repeatedly reassured him: ‘C.J. is a man of his word. You needn’t worry.’ Now you’re talking of publically sharing the sins of his youth?!”

C.J. “My statement was made in the context of that evening. If I knew then what you were going to do, I would have re-evaluated what I communicated.”

Doris “C.J., are you aware that you are blackmailing Larry? You’ll make no mention of Justin’s sins, which he confessed and was forgiven of months ago, if Larry agrees with your statement, but you feel you have to warn the folks and go national with Justin’s sins if Larry pushes the doctrinal button? C.J., you are blackmailing Larry to say what you want!

“Shame on you, C.J.! As a man of God and a father, shame on you! This will send shock waves throughout the teens in P.D.I. and make

many pastors' teens vow, 'I'll never confess my secret sins to C.J. or any of the team, seeing that they'll go public with my sins if my dad doesn't toe the line.'"

"C.J., you will reap whatever judgment you make on Justin. You have a young son coming up."

"Another reason for my personally wanting to leave P.D.I. and never come back is this ungodly tactic of resorting to blackmail and intimidation of people!"

C.J. "I can't speak for the team, but I want them to witness this. We'll arrange a conference call next week with the team."

Doris "I want Justin to be part of that call. It's his life that's at stake."

C.J. "Fine."

Note: C.J. never spoke with us [Larry and Doris] again. He was not a participant in the critical phone meetings that followed. It is still hard to fathom that after all the years, at such a crucial juncture, C.J. simply bowed out. He did speak at CLC [Covenant Life Church] in a public meeting (visitors present) in labeling me a liar and stating he'd rather be "dead then do what Larry Tomczak is doing." Local leaders at CLC were then affirmed by C.J. and after a pause, people present (knowing only what they had been told) stood and gave a standing ovation. One family, aware of more of what was going on than the bulk of the congregation, remained seated. Was this necessary... pleasing to God...the spirit of Christ?

Brethren, what you have just read truly is tragic and grievous to the God who gave His life for us and told us to walk in love with one another as His disciples. The illegality and callousness of what you just read is staggering until this day."

As a prelude to the section quoted above, Larry stated the following.

"Instead, you [C.J.] pursued a heavy-handed, unChristlike, illegal, unethical, and reprehensible approach of attempting to blackmail me! Yes, that is the legal term describing what was done. The day C.J. told Doris and me on the phone his threat concerning our son, we couldn't believe our ears! To threaten...to resort to blackmail...this cruel tactic in our most vulnerable area was obscene and it was sin. It must be acknowledged and there must be repentance. To sacrifice and exploit a young man **and his entire future** to

preserve the image of a ministry felt to be endangered if word “leaked out” that there were very real doctrinal issues involved is truly a serious abuse of spiritual authority and a gross miscarriage of justice. Are you aware of the enormity of this transgression? For those not fully informed, consider the phone call. (pp. 9-10)

I was one of those not fully informed. You described the conversation to me a year earlier but this was the first time I had an actual accounting of the conversation between you, Larry and Doris.

A little later in the document Larry continued with this comment.

“How could some of you church leaders [i.e., C.J. and Steve] give your word to a young man in the throes of teenage turmoil who shared with you [C.J. and Steve] in the strictest of confidence what you asked for, then later you [C.J.] threaten to go national with his sins in a reversal of sacred commitment if his father didn’t do things your way?” (p. 15)

In 2002, Larry released a book available to the public entitled *Reckless Abandon*. It was published by Charisma House and dedicated to nearly 50 nationally recognized leaders by name. It is still available today for purchase at Amazon.com, etc. Here is an excerpt that references your threat.

“Doris and I, along with one of our teenagers, were threatened in various ways if we did not cooperate with the ministry that we were leaving. We were encountering a spirit of control. We were shunned. A letter was circulated in an attempt to discredit me and to distort the events surrounding my departure. Our own family members were divided. We felt helpless, abandoned and for the most part, alone. Our experience was very painful. It seemed like some unbelievable nightmare.” (Larry Tomczak, *Reckless Abandon*, p. 15)

Larry was very clear about your (and Steve’s) threat to reveal details regarding their child’s sins.

“We feel such a sense of anguish in finding ourselves to be the object of outright blackmail (that was only withdrawn after we communicated to you the immorality and illegality of this threat)!” (“An Appeal to the PDI Leadership for Repentance, Reconciliation and Closure,” December 1998, p. 12)

“From our perspective this was an unconscionable violation of our covenant fellowship over many years. We feel it is necessary that we refute what has been gross intimidation on your part, which so distressed us that we had to

consult with an attorney in this matter.” (“An Appeal to the PDI Leadership for Repentance, Reconciliation and Closure,” December 1998, p. 13)

Four days after your phone call with Larry and Doris; Steve and Paul had a follow up call with Larry, Doris and Justin on October 7, 1997. Steve upheld your sinful approach and maintained the threat. The Tomczak’s secretly taped this conversation also.³²⁰ Here are the notes Steve sent us regarding that conversation the next day before our phone meeting.

From: Steve Shank
To: Brent Detwiler, Dave Harvey, Bo Lotinsky; Paul Palmer; C.J. Mahaney; Danny Jones; Larry Malament
Date: October 8, 1997, 9:53 AM
Subject: Atlanta Today

A few more thoughts/impressions regarding Larry and Doris that will help you prepare for time today... As [you] could predict, they see any reference on our part to disclose Justin, his sin, nationally as smearing reputation, low blow, blackmail...This point brings out the greatest hostility, anger, attacks and threats...the greatest amount of accusation [against] our integrity...

[Steve then included this quote from Justin] “You [C.J. and Steve] never told me when you were almost forcing me to confess my sin, that it would be confidential unless my dad slanders you... You said my confessions to you as my pastor would be kept in confidence... I do not give you permission to disclose any of the things I confessed to you... I don’t know how I can say it any clearer... I just want to go on record as saying that...”

The way Larry was conducting himself on different fronts was wrong and misleading. But this serves as another example of how aggressively or angrily you can respond when you feel sinned against by someone, especially if you don’t like them, which was the case with Larry. You had renounced him as a friend. This illustration also shows Steve’s willingness to follow your sinful instructions. You and Steve need to be carefully monitored so blackmail, threats and coercion are never used again by either of you.

You didn’t want Larry to misrepresent his departure and put us in a bad light. You were concerned for your reputation. These two, bitterness and love of reputation, were the cause of your rage and compromise. In that conversation on October 3, 1997, you blackmailed Larry and Doris and broke your word to Justin. For 13 years, Larry tried to

³²⁰ I never heard this second recording either.

help you see this sin against them. Finally, his prayers were answered and his perseverance rewarded. He and Doris were long suffering with you.

Here is a newspaper article that appeared in The Washington Times and was based upon an interview with Larry. It was written 2½ years ago.

Evangelist Tomczak still a force
By Julia Duin
The Washington Times
November 6, 2008

More than 30 years had passed since I last saw him, but Larry Tomczak looked like the same guy I'd seen leading a wildly successful series of youth prayer meetings in the 1970s called "Take And Give" (TAG).

Square-jawed, with black hair and a disarming smile, Mr. Tomczak, now 59, teamed up with C.J. Mahaney, a fellow young evangelist, more than three decades ago to minister to more than 3,000 young people who packed the pews every Tuesday night at Christ Church on Massachusetts Avenue.

I went there in the mid-1970s during the height of the Jesus movement.

Mr. Tomczak was especially good in explaining the Bible for the spiritually hungry crowds. His book "Clap Your Hands," about how he went from being a nominal Catholic to a born-again Christian, sold 250,000 copies -- an enormous number for someone who at the time was not known outside the Washington, D.C., area.

Those meetings morphed into a new church, now known as Covenant Life, in Gaithersburg, the mother church for a new denomination called People of Destiny International (PDI), later renamed Sovereign Grace Ministries. The big question was which of these two gifted men would end up leading the movement.

Mr. Mahaney became pastor of Covenant Life, and Mr. Tomczak took over PDI as its main church planter. Disagreements arose between them over the increasingly Calvinist direction the church was taking.

Then one of Mr. Tomczak's sons got involved in what the father terms "teenage rebellion." Mr. Tomczak's fitness as a father was called into question over his son Justin's behavior, and 12 years ago, the elder Mr. Tomczak left PDI. Church leaders later apologized to Justin, who mended his ways and went on to attend

Harvard and become the political director for the re-election campaign of Sen. Saxby Chambliss, Georgia Republican.

“There was admittance as to wrongdoing as to the way he was treated,” Larry Tomczak told me. “I and my wife wait for the same thing to be admitted to us.”

He and his wife, Doris, have tried to move on. He founded Christ the King Church in Acworth, Ga., a congregation he just turned over to the leadership of another son, Jason. Mr. Tomczak and his wife, Doris, moved to Nashville last year to direct the International Center for Evangelism, Church-Planting and Prayer (ICECAP) to mentor young evangelicals.

“We’re praying more to be used strategically in this nation,” Doris Tomczak told me. “Larry is ready to exhort, preach and help the next generation.”

But that generation is asleep to spiritual realities, said the Tomczaks, who were quite unhappy about how many evangelical youths supported the Barack Obama campaign despite the candidate’s liberal positions on many cultural issues. This summer, Larry rushed into print “Here’s the Deal,” a book to educate youth on faith and politics, abortion, gay marriage, divorce and other critical issues.

“They’re not asking the hard questions,” Mr. Tomczak said. “Kids don’t want to study or do their homework on these issues. They have no discernment.”

A lot of the “major-league” churches had avoided talking about these issues, which confuses young people “who look at these megachurches and see how they have compromised in order to be successful. And this election year, we are reaping the results,” he said.

Instead, churches have focused on “non-offensive and pleasant,” his wife said. “We are turning out young people who are so lukewarm in their passion for God.”

Contact Julia Duin at jduin@washingtontimes.com.

A similar summary appears on Wikipedia. Here is an excerpt.

Departure from PDI

Tomczak eventually left the leadership of PDI in 1998 and has subsequently suggested that the increasingly Calvinistic theology of PDI was a major factor in this parting of the ways. Some of this period’s tensions also arose because

Tomczak's fitness as a father was called into question by church leadership over what Tomczak described as the "teenage rebellion" of his son. Tomczak declared that this time "...seemed like an unbelievable nightmare" during which he, his wife Doris, and their son Justin "were threatened in various ways if we did not cooperate with the ministry that we were leaving... A letter was circulated in an attempt to discredit me and to distort the events surrounding my departure. Our own family members were divided." Tomczak claims never to have received an apology for the events of this period.

C.J.'s Letter to PDI Members Regarding Larry - October 15, 1997

Here is the discrediting letter referred to above. While you didn't reveal any detailed sins, you referred to them in this letter to all the members in the "team related churches." I signed this letter but played no role in writing it.³²¹ This was written after your threat on October 3.

October 15, 1997

Dear Friend,

I hope this notes finds you grateful for God's grace.

This is a letter we never anticipated having to write. Indeed, it represents a sad day, for it involves a departure by one of our pastors from the biblical values we have taught and practiced.³²² Recently, Larry Tomczak informed us that he will be leaving PDI and the disciplinary process he was involved in. No one is more grieved than the PDI leadership team by this unexpected development.

As you are aware, in May Larry stepped down from his position in the Atlanta church due to patterns of sinful behavior which, on the basis of Scripture, disqualified him from serving in ministry.³²³ (See the attached letter Larry distributed). This discipline was necessary and unavoidable, yet redemptive in intent, and at the time fully supported by Larry.³²⁴ It has always been our desire to work with Larry so that he might once again biblically qualify for pastoral ministry and be restored to the position of senior pastor. As you may recall, the letter Larry sent to you communicated his agreement with the disciplinary action and he wrote that, "Ultimately the timing of my return will

³²¹ I was enjoying life from a tree stand in wild and wonderful West Virginia!

³²² I hope you have a mirror in hand.

³²³ And how about you? What do you see in the mirror? Are you more qualified than Larry was at the time. No, not in any way.

³²⁴ You resisted all discipline and averted it by taking over the process.

be determined by the apostolic team and the local leadership as they observe and confirm genuine change in my life."³²⁵

After only four months Larry informed us that he considers himself qualified to return. We regret that we cannot support this assessment. Neither the three men locally responsible for Larry, nor any member of the of the PDI leadership team agree with his current assessment of himself or his decision to leave. All of us have been Larry's friends and have served with him in ministry for 15-20 years. In every way that we know how we have appealed to him to remain until the trust he violated has been restored³²⁶ and we can confirm by his patterns of behavior over time (the fruit of repentance) that genuine change has truly taken place.³²⁷ Sadly, Larry is resolute in his decision to leave PDI. Larry has asked us to entrust him to God. As always, we do entrust him to God but we do not and cannot endorse his decision to abandon the restoration process.

It has always been our desire to see Larry restored and serving according to the call upon his life. But calling alone is not sufficient. Scripture is clear that there must be character and conduct commensurate with the call to ministry (1 Tim 3:1-6; Titus 1:6-9). Scripture is also clear that there is to be no favoritism when determining or disciplining leaders (1 Tim 5:21).³²⁸ The pattern of sin revealed in Larry's life over a period of years, as well as the needs in his family, were serious and grievous. These not only disqualified Larry but also necessitated a sufficient period of time for the necessary changes to occur. As was stated in Larry's letter, a period of 6-12 months was agreed to as a minimum. Four months is an inadequate period of time to achieve the changes necessary, nor is it sufficient time to reestablish trust in light of the serious patterns of sin which Larry acknowledged as characteristic of his life.³²⁹ (Please understand that throughout this process specific details have been withheld because they involve sins that have been confessed to appropriate leaders with the Atlanta church and the PDI leadership team. It has always been our desire to be merciful, and there is presently no justifiable reasons for revealing any further details regarding these sins.)

More importantly, one's return to ministry should never be determined by the one being disciplined. Rather, re-commendation to ministry should be determined by the local pastoral team working in conjunction with the PDI

³²⁵ If effect, you were no different. You repudiated and cut off all our input into your life.

³²⁶ You did not care about our loss of trust in you.

³²⁷ You have very recently confessed to some long standing patterns of serious sin after an arduous process that lasted 10 years. I hope you and the men around you are following the advice given to Larry to observe "patterns of behavior over time...that genuine change has truly taken place."

³²⁸ I hope you are holding up the mirror and see the hypocrite in front of you.

³²⁹ But no "probationary" period is necessary in your life?

leadership team so that together they may confirm that appropriate and measurable change has occurred. This is our established and previously agreed upon practice in PDI, for a man simply cannot trust his own assessment of himself nor determine unilaterally when he returns to ministry once he has been disqualified.³³⁰ Though it is often a temptation for disciplined leaders to revise their convictions and flee from the restoration process, Larry has taught differently, believed differently and exhorted others differently.³³¹ Larry's premature departure from this redemptive means of restoration is extremely disappointing for those of us who have cared for him for and served alongside him for so many years.

Please pray for the church in Atlanta. Larry Malament³³² and George Harrington have done a heroic job serving both the church and Larry Tomczak. The character we have observed in their lives has provoked our deep respect. Their leadership will again be tested through this development, but their personal integrity and care for the flock will make all the difference during this difficult time.

And finally, as Larry himself counseled in his May 15 letter, "It is critical that everyone actively resist any temptation to drift into speculation or slander." This will necessitate refusing to participate in slander or listen to gossip. If you or anyone else have any questions or concerns, please direct these to your pastor, who is best equipped to answer your questions and prevent unnecessary division. Let's glorify God by purposing to "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit" in our respective local churches. Let us also walk humbly before God, remembering Galatians 6:1, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted."

With great sadness,

C.J. Mahaney

Brent Detwiler
Paul Palmer

Dave Harvey
Danny Jones

Steve Shank
Robert Lotinsky

³³⁰ The only thing you did trust was your own assessment of yourself. You didn't need us.

³³¹ You didn't flee the disciplinary process. You just shut it down and focused on others.

³³² Later, we found out how poorly Larry M. handled the Tomczaks.

Here is Larry's perspective on your letter.

"Instead a letter was eventually sent out nationwide (October 15, 1997) that was, I firmly believe, uncharitable, misleading and lacking in integrity."³³³

"Was it honoring to God and fair to me when in this letter sent nationwide and given by some of you to other leaders, you included phrases that "baited" people with references to "serious patterns of sin"..."specific details have been withheld because they involve sins that have been confessed [locally]"..."no justifiable reason for revealing any further details regarding these sins."³³⁴

"After C.J. told me to insert in my initial letter that "there is no untold story in this matter" (May 15, 1997), people's carnal curiosity was baited. "I wonder what they're talking about? What did he do? Could it be pornography? Theft? Drugs? Adultery? Homosexuality?"³³⁵

"One leader told me that what he read in the letter reminded him of what is done by "National Inquirer" and other tabloid publications. Deliberately or inadvertently, you employed deceptive tactics to gain ground with unsuspecting readers who were being misled."³³⁶

"The letter about me that was drawn up and distributed nationwide was in tone and content unwarranted and unredemptive."³³⁷

"The average person reading the letter gains the impression that I must be a rebellious and unrepentant renegade actively resisting correction of "grievous... serious... long-standing, serious patterns of sin" that the signers have benignly withheld from public knowledge... The reader is baited in a manner similar to that of tabloid journalists."³³⁸

"You were judgmental and self-righteous where you could have been merciful and redemptive. Portraying me as if I were some habitual deceiver and evil figure flies in the face of almost thirty years of service for Christ; a commitment to moral purity, integrity, marriage and a strong family (with some failures like yourselves along the way)."³³⁹

³³³ An Appeal to the PDI Leadership for Repentance, Reconciliation and Closure, December 1998, p. 21.

³³⁴ Ibid, p. 22.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid, p. 46.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid, p. 47.

At this point in time, I was the least involved in the situation. Nevertheless, I should have spoken up and addressed this particular transgression - blackmail. I did not. That was a lack of love and courage on my part. Please forgive me. Only later did I try to get your attention. I was the only one to do so. But even then, it was too weak an effort. I was troubled by your actions but I never adequately spoke up.

By December, 2000, I purposed to address these kinds of sins in your life. There were just too many occasions when you acted badly. It was time to deal with you more clearly and more firmly. Here is what I said in RRF&D on page 5.

“Fast forward. During a team meeting on December 4, 2000, Dave, Steve and I began to raise issues of concern for you. For example, we pointed out you were often difficult to correct, became offended when you felt misunderstood or judge by others, quickly and hastily arrived at conclusions about people based on limited information, came to extreme conclusions about people in a presumptive and premature fashion, were stubborn when you thought God had spoken to you or you had a strong opinion about something, made decisions without adequate appreciation for the personal effect on others, and led the apostolic team more by expedience rather than by process. We also noted a lack of discussion and involvement as a team in decision making. These things didn’t happen all the time but tended to be general patterns. For the next three years, I led a process whereby we consistently tried to help you see these and other issues of character. Unfortunately, that lengthy process proved unsuccessful.” (RRF&D, p. 5)

The way you treated Larry was similar to the way you treated others when angry. Dave, Steve and I began to address character issues related to your handling of “others” but did not specifically include the matter of threatening Larry. Why? Your sinful reactions were typically accentuated toward Larry. We began with others less offensive to you.

On January 18, 2001, however, I sent you a 20 page memo to be used in preparation for an important meeting between you and Larry on January 25, 2001. This was your first meeting with Larry since he left in 1997 in an effort to make progress toward reconciliation. Here is what I wrote in my cover letter.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2001 3:37 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Cc: Bo Lotinsky; Dave Harvey; Steve Shank
Subject: Meeting with Larry

Attached are my notes. I hope you find them helpful. You will have to wrestle with the issues related to whether you need to ask forgiveness of Larry for anything. I have sought to isolate the main areas of offense he has with us and those we have we him. There are many lesser points that are left out.

I've organized the material into four sections as follows:

1. Chronology of major events and important quotes.
2. Issues of sin or wisdom for us to consider.
3. Issues of sin that Larry and Doris must confess.
4. The need for and circle of confession necessary before reconciliation can occur.

I am going to overnight a hard copy in case the document does not print well for you, etc. Let me know if I can help in any other way.

Your friend
Brent

The second section of my memo was entitled, "Issues of sin or wisdom for us to consider." I hoped we would enter into discussion regarding what "we" did wrong. I admit this was largely an editorial "we." I had you primarily in mind (and secondarily Steve) but attempted to gently word my statement. That is why I also said, "You will have to wrestle with the issues related to whether you need to ask forgiveness of Larry for anything." I was treading on thin ice. But this appeal resulted in no acknowledgment of any wrongdoing. You were very angry and bitter at Larry. Correcting you for sins towards Larry rarely went well. Nevertheless, I did not serve you adequately during this time period. I should have corrected you more clearly and more strongly.

Here were the three issues of greatest concern that I brought up to you in the following headings. First, your "'Blackmail' of Larry." Second, "C.J. Telling CLC Larry is a Liar." Third, "No Send Off from CLC."

Under the first heading, I asked with regard to blackmailing Larry, "Should C.J. have even introduced [Larry and Doris' child] into the picture during the phone conversation?"

Under the second heading, I asked with regard to telling Covenant Life Church that Larry was a liar, "In retrospect should you have communicated in such an unqualified way?"

Under the third heading, I asked with regard to not sending the Tomczak's out from Covenant Life Church to Fairfax Covenant Church, "In retrospect should some kind of 'sent off' been done for Larry and Doris?" You were adamantly opposed to giving Larry any public recognition even though he served Covenant Life Church for 13 years. Larry recalls this episode in "An Appeal to the PDI Leadership for Repentance, Reconciliation and Closure."

"Sitting one day in a Marriot restaurant I finally asked C.J. point blank, 'Do you want me here in C.L.C.' For Doris and I it was painfully obvious that the senior pastor in the church we gave our all to establish no longer wanted us.³⁴⁰ We soon left for Fairfax, Virginia, without even a "send off" in the Sunday meeting after over thirteen years of service." (An Appeal to the PDI Leadership for Repentance, Reconciliation and Closure, December 1998, p. 18)

After your meeting with Larry you called to fill us in on your time. Here are some of the things you reported to us. You told Larry you "never meant [your comments] as a threat" and you "never intended to go into details" but could "understand how [they] could interpret your comments as a threat or blackmail."³⁴¹ You made it clear to us that you "did not acknowledge any sin" and "did not ask forgiveness for anything."³⁴² You also told Larry he "was not a friend" and communicated your concerns for him and his family.

This was sad but unsurprising. It was in keeping with your long standing perspective that you had done nothing wrong. For instance, you said the following 20 months earlier in a personal letter to Larry.

"Let me address a few other items from your last letter. First, you accuse me of blackmail. I hope at some point you can acknowledge this was a misunderstanding on your part." (Personal Letter to Larry, May 6, 1999)

Here you put the onus on Larry and corrected him for wrongly accusing you of blackmail. It was all his fault.

Larry followed up on your January 25, 2001 meeting with him in March. Here is his letter. He mentioned for the first time the possibility of involving others in his appeal for repentance.

³⁴⁰ That was very true. Something I now share in common with Larry.

³⁴¹ You were covering your tracks. This was spin and manipulation.

³⁴² You strenuously maintained your complete innocence's.

March 6, 2001

Dear C.J.,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus! I am grateful to God that we were able to finally sit down together and share some fellowship six weeks ago [January 25]. It was good to catch up on one another's lives and take a first step in the process of reconciliation.

I have waited and prayed these past weeks so my response to you would not be tainted by the flesh but motivated by love and the quest for an honorable solution to our situation. I must confess that I was disappointed at what appeared to be justification for past, serious sin rather than repentance.³⁴³ I would have thought upon actually hearing the tape recording of how we were threatened, you would have been quick to ask forgiveness... Also, saying there were "other ways" to view what was done and offering to converse with [our child] fell short of what I believe would have led us to deal with the injustices Biblically and redemptively. My prayer is that we can still do this (and possibly avoid widening the circle by bringing others into the process).

C.J., upon returning I spoke with my [child] who (in Doris and my opinion) has never been quite the same in [child's] relationship with God or spiritual authorities due to the abuse of spiritual authority [the child] experienced with you and the other men. Since there was no expressed intention to repent and seek forgiveness of Doris, [our child], and me; [our child] communicated no desire to simply talk with you on the phone. The "wound" (a Biblical term) runs very deep.

When we met I told you that [our child] has never been able to go back to that restaurant. Remember? Well, when I refer to what happened to our [child], I think you should realized the following. Prior to [our child] meeting with you men, [our child] was struggling to establish an intimate relationship with Jesus. [Our child] thought by coming clean of every hidden sin (as you coached), that this might be the "missing link" to turn it all around. Instead [our child] was betrayed, threatened and blackmailed which unfortunately not only shattered [our child's] trust in men of God but also spilled over to God Himself whom you men purported to represent..."

Yours sincerely
Larry

³⁴³ You were manipulating Larry not just justifying your sins.

Here is your response to Larry a couple months later.

May 4, 2001

Dear Larry,

I hope this letter finds you experiencing and enjoying God's grace.

Larry, we have once again considered all of the points in the documents you sent and regrettably find ourselves with a different perspective and understanding of what happened and how it happened.³⁴⁴ Even though I'm sure this is a disappointment to you, I hope you can at least appreciate the effort we have invested in considering your offenses and concerns. We have reviewed your material on more than ten different occasions over the years and I am sorry that we still differ.

As I look back upon the process I believe we were motivated by a deep care for you and your family. I do regret involving [your child] even briefly as we considered how to respond to inquiries about your departure. This obviously gave you the impression that we were threatening you. That was not our desire or intention, and I regret if there ever was even the impression of a threat as you perceived it.³⁴⁵ Also I wish I could heal any pain you, Doris or [your child] have experienced. Part of our challenge is that we have (it appears) different convictions about qualifications for leadership and when discipline is appropriate. I believe we were required by Scripture to exercise discipline in your situation. From the beginning this discipline was intended to be redemptive and for the purpose of restoration. It was always my hope that you would return to the Senior Pastor position of the church. However, we cannot relate to you or anyone else with favoritism.³⁴⁶

Within the last two months two different Pastors have had to step down from their positions within PDI. While their situations were similar to yours these men would have a completely different perspective on the benefits and blessings of this process. This would apply to Benny Phillips and others within PDI as well. I don't think the team has related to them any differently than we have related to you, but their response has been one of gratefulness and

³⁴⁴ You issued this denial but the truth was on Larry's side as it pertained to the charge of blackmail. You could not back up your "different perspective" with evidence. Larry had the tapes which were clear and convincing.

³⁴⁵ Again you put the blame on Larry for wrongly perceiving your comments as a threat when no threat was intended. This was pure spin.

³⁴⁶ With at least one big exception - yourself. What you required of Larry, you have not required of yourself.

support. Though we are saddened that you have interpreted this discipline as cult-like³⁴⁷ we would disagree and believe that we are simply seeking to care for Pastors, churches and honor God's word. Ultimately, we are required to submit to the authority of Scripture³⁴⁸ in these matters assured that our Lord is wise and good.

At this point I am not sure of much else that can be done. If you would send us a copy of the phone call you recorded we would be glad to review this in its entirety. Also, I would still be very desirous of talking with [your child] and hearing [your child's] perspective. I am not clear on how [your child] can justify not at least talking with me.³⁴⁹ Though we have not been able to agree on a mediator, if you choose to inform another leader the team would be willing to meet with that individual alone and describe our experience with you and evaluation of you as well as hear his perspective. We would also encourage that individual to contact the different men who have experienced a similar discipline within PDI. It may also benefit any interested party to talk with the Pastors who served under you. And as for our announcement of your departure, we simply disagree with your portrayal of the both our attitude and the content. The announcement was brief and quite merciful.

Larry, our approach continues to be different from yours. We have not repeatedly asked you to review the offenses and disagreements we have with you. We have chosen to commit you to the Lord and pray for his blessing on you, your family and your church. Though our disagreements with you in both doctrine and practice³⁵⁰ are many and are serious, we believe you love the Savior and desire to glorify him. We hope you can affirm the same about us.

In His grace,

C.J.

At the end of 2001, Larry wrote back regarding his plans to "widen the circle."

December 20, 2001

Dear C.J.,

³⁴⁷ The discipline was not, but the threat was "cult-like."

³⁴⁸ Something we failed to do with you. If Larry was disqualified from ministry and in need of discipline, so were you.

³⁴⁹ I can - the child was afraid of you. You threaten to break your word and reveal details regarding the child's "deviating from the 'straight and narrow'" in order to constrain Larry.

³⁵⁰ This sounds eerily familiar! But I am not an Arminian like Larry. Well, who knows maybe I'm worse...do you think a closet Pelagian? ☺

...As 2001 comes to a close, I complete four years of unsuccessful attempts to see reconciliation between us. I believe it is the will of God for you to acknowledge your wrongdoing to my [teenager] and ask [the teenager's] forgiveness....

The blackmail/illicit coercion was a most serious violation of Biblical, ministerial ethics (preserved on tape)...

I am asking you to address this grievous conduct...

If you choose to disregard this Biblical appeal for handling this offense, then regretfully Doris and I are left with no alternative but to "widen the circle" in line with our Lord's instructions of Matthew 18:15-17...

In the absence of this admission of sin and repentance for wrongdoing, I will proceed ahead...

Your friend and fellow laborer in His Kingdom

Larry

Here are excerpts from the letters Larry received from 7 leaders. Six of them were nationally/internationally recognized and one was a former senior pastor in PDI. Each of them listened to the October 3, 1997 taped conversation between you, Larry and Doris. I've also included Larry's cover letter to you.

July 3, 2002

Dear C.J.

...Again, more time has gone by and we still await your humble response to our Biblical appeal. The serious sins have never been addressed. I am left no choice but to do as I stated in my December 20th letter, in line with Matt. 18:15-17. I will continue to "widen the circle" until you handle this matter as God directs. Please acknowledge the sins and make restitution to honor God and repair this breach. You have a moral responsibility to do this - especially in light of the reprehensible things done to my [child] and Doris and me..."

In His service,
Larry

Leader 1: Stephen Strang of Strang Communications

“I want to let you know how alarmed I was to hear the tape that you allowed me to hear. I think that it is highly unethical for the leaders of PDI to use [the child’s] vulnerability to try to bring pressure on you. I really feel that this is an injustice that needs to be corrected. I want to let you know that I am ready to help you in this matter, as the Lord leads.” (January 23, 2002)

Leader 2: Rick Joyner of MorningStar Ministries

“I wanted to let you know that I have listened to the tape that you sent and I was shocked and grieved at what I heard you and your family had been subjected to. I would strongly consider that you challenge them for their actions which in my opinion are clearly in violation of authority and integrity. I believe that it reveals roots of very serious problems and it would be remiss not to challenge them.” (March 20, 2002)

Leader 3: Michael L. Brown of ICN Ministries

“I listened to the taped conversation, as requested, and I was both saddened and pained, in particular with the overt threats made against [the child]. This struck me as a form of spiritual blackmail...” (May 22, 2002)

Leader 4: Che Ahn of The Call International and Harvest International Ministries

“As I listened to the tape...I literally felt grieved and sick to my stomach. I am so sorry that you, Doris and especially [your child] had to go through the unnecessary, illegal and ethically immoral threat of PDI. I pray that God will bring true conviction of sin to PDI’s A-Team leaders and as a result bring about true reconciliation.” (April 22, 2002)

Leader 5: Mike Bickle of International House of Prayer

“A certain phrase in the tape was used several times. It pained my heart to hear it spoken to [your child] in the context of the conversation. The phrase, “we are bound by integrity” to make known Larry’s sins (and therefore, [the child’s]) caused grief to me. It rang of something other than what was being stated...I sincerely ask the Lord not to judge the PDI leaders by the standard in which they have judged you.” (April 15, 2002)

Leader 6: Lou Engle of The Call

“From listening to the tape, it seems to me that the leadership on the tape [a reference to you] displayed a lack of integrity by being willing to betray promised confidentiality for the purposes of protecting the ministry’s reputation.” (May 23, 2002)

Leader 7: Ken Roberts of Worldview Community Church

“I just listened to it [the tape] this morning and was absolutely disgusted...I think the phone conversation only reinforced my conviction that this is a pattern of intimidation, manipulation, and attempts to control people and situations within the movement. It would appear that it was used as blackmail, as a way to silence your real observations and communication of truth concerning your concerns with the movement... Larry, after I reviewed the tape I would have a stronger feeling/conviction that this stuff just needs to be exposed.” (May 31, 2002)

C.J.’s Letter to the Seven Leaders - July 16, 2002

Larry forwarded you copies of all their letters. You wrote them back on July 16, 2002. Here is an excerpt regarding the charge of blackmail. It was a bold repudiation of their concerns and observations. You must return to each of these men and ask their forgiveness for lying, etc.

“And finally it would be important for you to know that, regardless of what you have heard on this tape, there has been no breach of confidentiality nor will there be. Sharing the details of [the child’s] sin was never an option.³⁵¹ All we were considering was what we should share publicly as Larry left abruptly, not fulfilling the restoration process he agreed to and misrepresenting PDI. In the end we decided simply to communicate our regret at this departure, and disagreement in general with his decision, and avoid any reference to [the child]. And I have assured Larry numerous times, over the years that I have not shared with anyone, even fellow members of the PDI leadership team, what [the child] related to me about [the child’s own] sins. Nor will I as I have given [the child] my word. For Larry to portray himself as under some past or continuing threat is simply not accurate.³⁵² If I or others at PDI have said or

³⁵¹ This was a lie.

³⁵² Simply untrue. You and Steve clearly threatened him in the past.

done something to indicated otherwise, I would be eager to confess and correct the wrongness of that impression."³⁵³

Soon after you wrote this letter to the seven leaders, Larry wrote you regarding the same letter. One of the issues he raised concerned your statement that "Sharing the details of [the child's] sin was never an option." In response, Larry said "Read...your phone conversation with Doris and me AND listen to the tape to see if this is an honest statement. I submit it is not."

I agree with Larry. The statement was a lie. You and Steve indicated to Larry, Doris, their child, and us; that you intended to reveal details if Larry misrepresented his reasons for leaving PDI. You repeated this lie to Larry's child in the following letter.

C.J.'s Letter to Justin - October 16, 2002

October 16, 2002

Dear Justin

We³⁵⁴ have recently heard an audio recording of a telephone conversation that members of our leadership team [Steve and Paul] had with you in October [7th] of 1997. We have also taken a fresh look at the transcript of a conversation between your father and me that same month [October 3]. As we read and listened to our own words, we realize that we have wronged you.

During those two conversations, members [you and Steve] of our leadership team said that we might divulge information³⁵⁵ about you as we responded to questions surrounding your father's departure from PDI. Since you had previously entrusted very personal information to members of the team, in response to assurances of confidentiality, we can understand why our statements would have alarmed you and caused you great anguish. After giving our word we should never have indicated there was any other option.³⁵⁶ Our failure was not a mere mistake in judgment. We violated principles of integrity God has set forth in Scripture, so our behavior was sinful in his eyes.

³⁵³ This wasn't about wrong impressions that you and Steve gave Larry and Doris. It was about actual words and events.

³⁵⁴ The "we" included you, Dave and Steve. I never heard the tapes. I only read the partial transcript

³⁵⁵ You denied doing this very thing three months earlier to each of the seven leaders when you said, "There has been no breach of confidentiality nor will there be. Sharing the details of [the child's] sin was never an option." You were now under growing pressure to get the story right given the clear evidence and ongoing appeals from Larry and the leaders.

³⁵⁶ Here you acknowledged your willingness to violate your word which was something you already said you never intended to do. You were reversing stream and changing the story. This was deceitful.

When you asked us what we would do with the personal information you had confided to us, we did not give you the prompt reassurance we ourselves would have wanted to receive. We sinned against God, and we sinned against you...and for this we are deeply sorry and ask your forgiveness.

Please know that we have maintained our commitment and kept our promise of confidentiality we made to you that evening. The details you shared with two members of the team [you and Steve] have not been divulged to anyone else, not even to their spouses or to other members of the team. In spite of this commitment though, we [i.e., Steve following your counsel] failed to promptly give you the reassurance you requested on October 7. This was wrong of us.

Although our words on two occasions [you on October 3 and Steve on October 7] implied otherwise,³⁵⁷ it was never our intention to make public the detailed personal information you gave us.³⁵⁸ We did think we might have to respond to public statements by your father regarding his departure from PDI. Therefore, we did consider making a statement about relevant personal issues in his [your father's] life, which would have included a general statement about deficiencies in his family leadership that had been revealed by "serious problems in his [child's] life." We did not plan to be any more detailed than this with regard to you,³⁵⁹ for we knew that to do so would have violated our pastoral commitment to you.

Now that we have been able to review these two conversations we realize that we utterly failed to communicate this conviction to you in either of these conversations. Instead, by speaking in generalities and refusing to answer specifically some of the questions you posed, we left you with the impression that we might break your confidence.³⁶⁰ As best we can recall, we corrected this soon after the recorded conversation and gave assurance that we would not divulge personal information about you regardless of what your father did or said. Hopefully this removed the ongoing possibility of disclosure, but it did not cancel the fact that our earlier words had caused you a period of fear and

³⁵⁷ Your comments were explicit. Nor were they an empty threat. It had nothing to do with implications whose meaning Larry inaccurately inferred

³⁵⁸ This was extremely misleading. You did not plan to reveal all the "personal information" but you were prepared to share some of the details.

³⁵⁹ Simply not true. We were talking about how detailed to be and getting legal counsel regarding the same.

³⁶⁰ This was not simply an impression. It was a reality. This is an example of duplicity. Steve spoke in generalities and refused to answer specific questions on Oct 7 because your explicit threat from Oct 3 to reveal details was real and being seriously entertained. Soon after these two conversations, you had Steve look into our legal liability if we divulged details in the public domain. In fact, this letter from you was written right after we received legal counsel and as a result of the counsel decided not to reveal any details.

anguish.³⁶¹ We failed you, and we are deeply sorry for the affect this has had on you.

...if it would help you to hear these words in person, please let me know and I will be glad to arrange a time when we can talk. Although there are significant issues between your father and the leadership team that have yet to be resolved, we hope God will use this letter to move you and the team toward reconciliation.

In His grace,

C.J.

This letter was a clear example of obfuscation. That is “the concealment of intended meaning in communication, making communication confusing, intentionally ambiguous, and more difficult to interpret.” It involved tortuous logic and double speak. But it was worse. Your comments were untrue. You and Steve were both willing to break your commitment to the child and reveal detailed information of a confidential nature in order to prevent Larry from misrepresenting the grounds for his departure from PDI. Here are the facts and evidence in support of this charge.

Receiving Legal Counsel to Reveal No Details

On October 14, 1997, Steve sent us the following letter. Remember, your conversation with Larry and Doris occurred on October 3. Steve’s occurred on October 7. In response to your threats, Larry felt it necessary to see what legal recourse he had in stopping you.

10/14/97

Guys,

Larry informed me he has sought legal counsel in Georgia. His counsel has assured him (it was obvious he was reading from specific notes) of the criminal offense it would be if we share anything pertaining to [his child]. It would be a civil offense and each person who violated the confidentiality would be held responsible, and the consequences would be severe. In Georgia, these laws with clergy and psychiatrists are upheld across the board.

³⁶¹ Here you asked the child’s forgiveness for leaving a false impression that caused “fear and anguish.” But it was not a false impression, it was a purposeful impression. For the sake of argument, however, let’s agree it was a false impression; then, you should have asked the child’s forgiveness for manipulating and deceiving them.

Larry said he was not threatening, just informing. That from his legal counsel, they would have clear and obvious evidence of laws being broken against them, and he pleaded and warned that the laws in Georgia are very much in defense of their confidentiality. Blackmail, defamation of character, (and other things he mentioned) are serious crimes...

Larry M., George H., Todd T., Gene P., need to know in particular that nothing can be said regarding [Larry's child].

I have forwarded this to Larry Malament to forward to the above mentioned.

Steve

After writing us and later the same day, Steve talked to Chip Grange, our legal counsel, to get his perspective on the sharing of this information. Steve sent us the following notes regarding whether or not we should reveal details regarding the child's sins.

Steve's Notes Regarding Counsel from Chip Grange
10/14/97

Gentlemen, here is a bullet form synopsis of our lengthy conversation.³⁶²

3. Re: us divulging [the child's] sins if necessary. He said this is the shakiest part of our perspective. Would STRONGLY recommend we jettison the idea. Court would recognize our responsibility for Larry because he was an employee. [His child] was not an employee. Even though he was a [child] of an employee, it doesn't matter. If we divulged what was shared in confidence in a pastoral climate of counsel and confidentiality, we would be very vulnerable...
9. Regarding us disclosing [the child's] sin, there is a big red flag here. Even if we state more than Larry has said in his May 15 letter, there are major cautions. Strong recommendation we do not divulge [the child's] sins to any degree in any fashion. He was not an employee and we are not responsible for [the child] (legally) unless that has been delegated to us by [the] parents, which it wasn't. Voiced major reservations that we do this. We would be vulnerable if we did...
11. The courts would see a strong line of demarcation between divulging Larry's sins and revealing [the child's].

³⁶² I've only included the relevant points which were numbers 3, 9, 11, 13.

13. The final thoughts that came were from Chip “taking off his legal hat.” He appealed to me that I give him my permission to call Larry and appeal the process of reconciliation be reinstated. I denied, telling him at this point, C.J needs to make that decision, and I told him why. He [Chip] cannot believe this is irreconcilable. He also feels that our playing the sins of [the child] card, was “nuclear”³⁶³ to the reconciliation process and should never have been presented. Feels this may have contributed to the process breakdown. (I tried to walk him through how all this occurred, etc.). Wonders if our using the sins of [the child] as a trading chip³⁶⁴ was detrimental to the process.

The following day, October 15, you also talked to Chip. Here is what you told me about your conversation. First, you did not agree with Chip’s assessment of you. You felt he was offended and influenced by his friendship with Larry.³⁶⁵ On the other hand, you acknowledged Chip was confronting and supporting both of you.

You told me Chip expressed concerns about your comments to Covenant Life Church the previous Sunday. For example, when you said, “Don’t let the example of Larry cause you to distrust the leaders of Covenant Life Church. You can trust their leadership. These men [the pastors] are the exact opposite of Larry.” You indicated Chip was “uncomfortable with the adulation given to men” when these comments resulted in a standing ovation. He also said you “unnecessarily elevated” yourself by saying “I would rather die than do what Larry is doing” and made a “caricature of Larry” whose actions were “so heinous and wicked you would rather die.”³⁶⁶ He felt you “exaggerated Larry’s sins” and “judged Larry’s sins harsher than your own sins.”³⁶⁷

Here is what Larry wrote us in December 1998 about this incident.

³⁶³ Of course, Chip was right. You nuked the Tomczaks.

³⁶⁴ That is why Larry always insisted that your threats consisted of blackmail. Not for money, but for silence. “Blackmail is the act of threatening to reveal substantially true information about a person to the public, a family member, or associates unless a demand is met. This information is usually of an embarrassing, socially damaging, and/or incriminating nature. As the information is substantially true, the act of revealing the information may not be criminal in its own right nor amount to a civil law defamation; it is the making of demands in exchange for withholding the information that is often considered a crime.” (Wikipedia) “Blackmail is 1) the act of attempting to obtain money by intimidation, as by threats to disclose discreditable information; or 2) the exertion of pressure or threats, especially unfairly, in an attempt to influence someone’s actions.” (World English Dictionary)

³⁶⁵ Very typical. You disagree with the assessment because the person is offended (i.e., bitter or resentful).

³⁶⁶ These were hateful and self-righteous comments. You should return to Covenant Life Church and publically ask forgiveness of all the people present that day which still numbers in the hundreds.

³⁶⁷ All true.

“C.J. unnecessarily and uncharitably spoke evil of me and slandered me publically (Slander: “Utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another’s reputation.”) before in excess of a thousand people in an open Sunday a.m. service (filled with longstanding friends plus impressionable youth, non-church members and guest), when he branded me a liar plus violated the Matthew 18 ethic (he never even came to me first about the matter in question.). This was done in the church I founded twenty years prior, in which I had invested fifteen years of my life, family and finances. This also constitutes an abuse of spiritual authority by portraying me as some sort of charlatan before the eyes of a captive audience who have no opportunity to hear “the rest of the story.” Almost twenty years of longstanding friendship and the reputation of a man of God and his family were destroyed in a moment. This was unnecessary. This was shameful and grievous to God. It must be addressed.” (“An Appeal to the PDI Leadership,” pp. 69-70)

In his book, *Reckless Abandon*, Larry references Chip’s involvement. “While the heat of this refining process was still very intense in my own life, Chip Grange, a friend of many years, challenged me not only to forgive, but to pray blessings on those I believed had betrayed me.” (p. 18)

After your discussion with Chip, you asked me to contact Chip in order to share the team’s perspective on Larry and to hear Chip’s perspective on you. It was apparent you thought I would disagree with Chip. I was leaving to bow hunt in West Virginia so Dave was asked to follow up with Chip. Here is my note to Dave. I included the salient points I gathered from my conversation with you.

10/18/97

Dear Dave,

Though I attempted to, I was not able to connect with Chip Grange on Friday or Saturday. I leave today after the [Sunday] meeting for a week of hunting in Franklin. I’ll be in the wild the whole time. C.J. said it would be fine if you could contact Chip instead. Mostly to let Chip give his perspective on C.J. and then succinctly give Chip your/the team’s observations regarding the same.

It appears that the basic issues are Chip feels it is wrong to even consider making any mention any of [the child’s] sins, that C.J. has been harsh with Larry, that he has judged Larry’s sin harsher than his own sins, that he has exaggerated Larry’s sins, that he [C.J.] sees everything as black and white - there are no grays in his [C.J.’s] life...

Brent

C.J. Unwilling to Ask Larry and Doris' Forgiveness

You originally threatened the Tomczak's on October 3, 1997. Five years later on October 16, 2002* you finally asked forgiveness via letter of the Tomczak's child for the "false impression" that "caused...a period of fear and anguish." Now you were talking about meeting with the child in person but you did not want Larry to participate and you did not feel it was at all necessary to ask Larry and Doris' forgiveness for anything from the past. Read along.

January 10, 2003
Larry Tomczak
5123 Sherrer Dr.
Acworth, GA 30102

Dear Larry,

As I stated in my [Oct 16, 2002] letter to [your child], I am eager to talk with [the child]. I am perplexed as to why you are trying to include yourself in this conversation. As clearly stated in my letter the conversation should involve only [the child] and me.³⁶⁸ Please don't prevent or delay this conversation from taking place by trying to include yourself. If [the child] would like to talk with me, have [the child] contact me and I will be glad to talk with [the child] as stated in my letter.

As we confessed in our letter to [the child], we realized that we had sinned against [the child] by not giving [the child] clear, direct, assurances of our commitment to keep the specifics of [the child's] confession in confidence as we dealt with our differences with you. We also realize that our sin against [the child] was committed in your presence and Doris since you were on the phone with Steve. Since you witnessed our sin against [the child], we wanted you to witness our confession as well, so we copied you on our letter to [your child]. We do not see a biblical responsibility to go further than that.³⁶⁹

As I have consulted other team members and Ken Sande, I am not aware of what else we can do at this time. From our experience with you and your letters, there appears to be a lack of humility and an unwillingness to focus attention on your own heart and sin. Although we agree that the Bible places a high priority on reconciliation, it also teaches that there is a limit to how much

³⁶⁸ You would not allow Larry to participate in your meeting with his child as the father.

³⁶⁹ Yikes! No need to say anything to Larry and Doris?

time and energy should be put into these efforts, especially when we believe that the other side is unwilling to hear correction and honestly face up to his own contribution to the problem.³⁷⁰ Frankly, having reviewed our long history with you, your letters, your continuing slander, secret taping of phone calls, threats of lawsuit etc., we haven't found you humble or trustworthy.³⁷¹

Larry, in the many letters I have sent to you over the years, I have repeatedly addressed all the issues contained in your last letter. Since our perspective and position hasn't changed, I don't think it is wise or necessary for me to address these again. Please send all future letters to Brent Detwiler and he will determine whether a response is appropriate. And be aware that Brent will not be obligated to respond to any letter you send unless future communication reveals a change in your attitude and a clear awareness of your sin.

Finally, I will be sending Ken Sande a copy of this letter and asking for his evaluation of attitude and approach.

On behalf of the team,

C.J.

Soon after your letter to Larry, you received this response from Larry.

[mid-January, 2003]

Dear C.J.

Greetings in the Name of Jesus our Lord! Thank you for your recent letter [from January 10, 2003].

I commend you for repenting and acknowledging your lack of integrity (what many would view as blackmail) to keep us from explaining the full story of why we could no longer remain in PDI as a ministry. Even though it happened years ago, it remains a painful chapter we trust God will soon conclude.

When I called [our child, the child] cried as I read your letter of repentance [from October 16, 2002]. I cried too. This has been a long journey and we are grateful to God for what He grace has accomplished.

³⁷⁰ Of course, this was precisely what you were doing with Larry regarding the charge of blackmail.

³⁷¹ The same was true of you.

Five year ago we departed PDI because of certain practices that we said were harmful to people³⁷² along with doctrinal emphases with which we disagreed. It was a costly decision but we had to obey God. I shared with you at the time that I “no longer fit” with the ministry to which I gave my life for almost twenty-five years.

Over the years I’ve watched over fifty leadership couples leave PDI for many of the same reasons and experience the same unChristlike treatment we did. Families have divided (as our did). Folks left the ministry. Reputations have been tarnished.

Your tearful repentance for what was done to Kenny Roberts and the Cleveland leaders a couple of years ago when they departed PDI was significant. Now your admittance of a violation of “principles of integrity” in dealing with our [child] and us is another important step.³⁷³ Please continue so God will be glorified and others can be healed in these days ahead.

May I offer one suggestion? Please don’t wait years to address people’s legitimate offenses. Years ago you stated publically that you wanted to be one of the “quickest people to repent” when you disobeyed the Lord.³⁷⁴

In our case, I sent you a detailed paper over four years ago citing fives issues and an appeal for dialogue. Pre-eminent in the paper was what you acknowledged in your October 16th letter of repentance.

I sent you a transcript and detailed notes of conversation.

In letter after letter I asked for mediation with men like Jack Hayford, Mike Bickle, Terry Virgo, Bryn Jones, and others. Regarding Jack Hayford you said while you “respected him, you didn’t know him,” so you declined.

I sent you over a dozen letters in which I repeatedly cited the need to address sins and offenses on both parts, in a spirit of humility and reconciliation. Please note that I said “both parts.” If you review my letters to you over the years, my emphases has been mutual.

I came to Charlotte to meet with you [on January 25, 2001]. I played the exact tape recordings, I recently sent you, highlighting the treatment we experienced.

³⁷² By January 2003, I was far more sympathetic to Larry on this point. The process of correcting you that began in December 2000 continued.

³⁷³ Though you had not acknowledged any sin against Larry and Doris.

³⁷⁴ I remember the same comment. Any repentance I’ve observed in your life has taken years of extraordinary effort and patience by others.

You had the opportunity to listen to the entire tape and acknowledge your sin almost two years ago, but after listening for only twenty minutes you said, "That's enough!"

A year ago I invited you to a meeting with respected Christian leaders Steve Strang and Rick Joyner, along with Doris and me in Orlando. After four years of making little to no progress with you, I shared that my only recourse, in line with Matthew 18, was to "widen the circle" and enlist mediation help. At the time you declined to participate. We persevered.

Finally, I further widened the circle by having six internationally known leaders get involved. In confidentiality they listened to what happened via the tape recording and sent individual letters that I sent to you in which they all concurred with your unethical conduct. In the interim, I declined to share my story with Charisma magazine and their international news service who offered to help us "move this along to reconciliation" by interviewing both sides in hopes this could finally bring us to the table for discussion and some closure.

As we drove to Boston in September 2002, we stayed overnight at your next door neighbor's house and asked if Doris, [our child] and I could take you to dinner to talk and see some closure in the matter. Your secretary phoned to say you were unable to accept our invitation.

On October 16th, 2002, exactly five years to the month that we experienced the unethical treatment your letter addressed, you finally admitted to our [child] how deeply sorry you were and asked forgiveness for your sin.

Justice appeared to be delayed but it was not denied. For this we honor God and His faithfulness. We would like to assume you included Doris and me in your thinking.³⁷⁵

I prayed each and every day for five years for God's blessing on you and each team member by name. I also prayed for God's intervention that you would come to repentance and we could see reconciliation.

This is an important step to that end.

God is pleased at your response. I immediately phoned to tell you.

I look forward to talking with you in these coming days to hopefully complete the process.³⁷⁶ May family members who are divided and have been unaware

³⁷⁵ Which you did not. You saw no need to ask their forgiveness.

of what was done over five years ago, also come to understand why we had to depart PDI and that we were telling the truth regarding what was being done to our family.

Doris and I love you and stand ready to forgive you.³⁷⁷ Your asking [our child] for forgiveness for what you men [C.J. and Steve] did to all three of us was step one. Please bring closure to this aspect of your breach by contacting Doris and me by phone or in person.

Yes, it have been a long journey but may all of us give glory to God in the end.

Yours in His grace,

Larry.

P.S. C.J., in your letter you told [our child]: “if it would help you to hear these words in person,³⁷⁸ please let me know and I will be glad to arrange a time when we can talk.” He would like you to honor this statement as the leader of the PDI team which acted in unanimity (as stated on the tape) in what was done in October of 1997. Feel free to contact me for a date and time that we can meet as outlined in your letter. Thank you and may God bless you.

Paul Palmer to be Commended

Around this same time, Paul contacted us. He wanted to clear his conscience and acknowledge his part in dealing with the Tomcaks. He should commended by you if you ever make a confession.

From: Paul Palmer
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2003 12:18 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: Forgiveness

Dear CJ,

Over the last several months now I have been in prayer and communion with God in a posture of circumspection (Eph. 5:15-16) so as not to remain

³⁷⁶ That is, asked their forgiveness for blackmail, etc.

³⁷⁷ They had offense with you for legitimate reasons. The same was true of you. There were things Larry and Doris needed to acknowledge for reconciliation to occur.

³⁷⁸ This never happen which was contrary to your promise. Finally, 13 years later, you just met with the child this past December.

foolish...that which I am very capable of being! My specific purpose and plea in sanctification could be summed up in Psalm 139:1-6. The NIV footnotes are as follows:

“God, you know me perfectly, far beyond my knowledge of myself; my every action, my every undertaking, and the manner of which I pursue it; even my thoughts - my words - all fully under your scrutiny - so that I do not escape you. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me...to lofty for me to attain.”

Through this self-examination motivated and sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit and His wonderful work, I have received conviction and need to confess sin related to my participation and role in the Tomczak’s situation.³⁷⁹ The sins that I have been convicted of and now confess to you are as follows:

1. Sinfully self-righteous towards the Tomczaks and their situation.
2. I lacked the spiritual maturity and wisdom to effectively serve the Tomczaks. This is something I should have admitted to the team.
3. I did not express concerns that God laid on my mind and heart regarding the process out of false humility and the fear of man.³⁸⁰
4. I also believe that some of my conversations regarding their situation were biblically unethical.³⁸¹

Knowing the sinfulness of my heart, there are probably other sins which I committed during this time. However, these are the ones that the Holy Spirit has primarily impressed on my heart.

Consequently, I am compelled to ask you and the team’s forgiveness of these sins. I also need to convey my Godly sorrow and grievous sins to the Tomczaks and ask their forgiveness.³⁸²

³⁷⁹ Paul’s sins were small in comparison to you and Steve. As Steve pointed out to Paul, “Relatively, your involvement was minor, compared to the ongoing conversations that the local team had as well as myself and CJ (I believe as many as 10 at one point), and thus your perspective was somewhat limited. So, your negative effect on Larry, whatever you feel that might have been would have been small.” Yet, Paul was the only one willing to confess. He should have been honored for his humility. You should have followed his example.

³⁸⁰ Primarily Paul had in mind the threats made by you and Steve. Paul did not speak out against them even though he felt they were wrong. He felt your and Steve’s handling of the process was unethical.

³⁸¹ Paul participated in the phone call Steve had with the Tomczaks on October 7. During this call, Steve refused to back away from the threat you made four days earlier. While Paul did not support Steve’s actions, he failed to speak up against them which implied his agreement. To have differed with, or corrected you and Steve at the time would have been costly - understandably that presented a great temptation.

³⁸² Which he did and was reconciled to them in friendship.

Please feel free to share this with the other team members who were involved in the situation related to the Tomczak.

In closing, as I read Psa. 103: 8-9, my heart is filled with a deep desire for the grace to love Him more. May He in His kindness grant this desire.

Sincerely,
Paul Palmer

Here is Steve's response to Paul.

From: Steve Shank
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2003 10:11 AM
To: Paul Palmer
Subject: Re: Forgiveness

Greetings Paul,

Thank you for your recent e mail to the team. It was good to hear from you!

In response to your e mail, may I offer a few thoughts?

1. Thank you for writing us to convey what the Lord has been showing you about your heart as you participated in the necessary discipline of Larry. Only the Lord knows where your heart was at towards him during that season. I commend you for your desire to confess your sin regarding this episode and to seek forgiveness.
2. Regarding the observations you now have of your participation, one of the benefits of team ministry is the safety it affords. Larry was not the object of your assessment singularly, but the care of a team of local and extra local men who loved him and painstakingly served him through months of counsel and help. If you feel you were harboring sinful dispositions in your heart towards him of self-righteousness, or lacked the spiritual maturity to really serve Larry with your observations, at least we can be sure that overall, by the local and extra local team of men, there were checks and balances to one another, and Larry was extended the grace and care that the situation warranted.³⁸³ However, if you feel your contribution

³⁸³ We did extend grace and care to Larry but the "checks and balances" were not sufficient when it came to the issue of threatening on Oct 3, 1997 and the demeaning of Larry at CLC soon after. I should have spoken up more strongly about these matters.

was sinfully motivated, you should seek whatever means of acknowledgment you feel the Lord is leading you to.

3. Regarding your false humility and fear of man (as well as the other things cited), I think you can also be confident that the apostolic team would have brought those things to you at that time if they were detected as you participated with helping Larry through his transition from leading the Atlanta church to, for a season, focusing on the leadership of his home.

As to the process, another safeguard Larry benefited from was the checks and balances of both the local team as well as the a-team. If you feel your contribution to the process was sinful or wrong, then I commend you for responding to that conviction. Another thought here that might assure you. Relatively, your involvement was minor, compared to the ongoing conversations that the local team had as well as myself and CJ (I believe as many as 10 at one point), and thus your perspective was somewhat limited. So, your negative effect on Larry, whatever you feel that might have been would have been small. At the moment, as well as during our review shortly after the incidents with Larry, all of those who were primarily involved, felt much mercy was extended to Larry, given the sins that were exposed. However, please know we forgive you for not expressing your concerns out of false humility and the fear of man. If you have concerns about the overall process in general, please let me know what those concerns might be.

4. Since I do not know what you mean by “your conversations regarding the situation were biblically unethical,” it is hard for me to comment. If you care to elaborate, I’d be glad to try and pen a response.

If you choose to speak with Larry, obviously it seems your comments need to be confined to your heart specifically. If you have “concerns” about the process in general, or reference the process critically, then to use your phrase, biblical ethics would direct you to convey those to us first, so we might evaluate our hearts, the process from your new perspective and so on.³⁸⁴ Please know we welcome your thoughts, if they reflect on us.

I pray for and think of you often, and hope you are experiencing God’s grace in health, family and church.

Your friends

³⁸⁴ This was Steve’s real concern. Paul agreed with Larry that you had blackmailed him.

Steve on behalf of the team

The Need for Confession Regarding Larry

Everything related to our handling of Larry occurred in a very public fashion. Thousands of people were affected. This is one of the reasons you should provide the churches of Sovereign Grace Ministries a substantial confession like you asked Larry to do.³⁸⁵ Larry is to be commended for the humility he displayed in his May 15, 1997 confession which was specific in nature. You are guilty of many of the same sins and some more serious. I hope you follow his example. Instead of writing everyone, however, I'd suggest you record a video that can be played in each Sovereign Grace church on a Sunday morning.

This past December, Larry contacted you and asked for a meeting. You agreed and met at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. Larry thought you might be more humble since he was aware of numerous problems in Sovereign Grace Ministries and the growing chorus of people raising concerns for the ministry. In this context, I contacted Larry because I knew your meetings were for the purpose of reconciliation and I had just received your first response to RRF&D and AFA. I wanted to see if those documents were benefitting your soul in the confession of sin to Larry.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, December 23, 2010 2:22 PM
To: Larry Tomczak
Cc: Palmer, Paul
Subject: C.J.

Dear Larry,

Greetings and love in the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ!

It has been a long time and I wanted to reconnect and ask you a question. C.J. recently told me that he met with you and had a second meeting set up with you for this week.

If you don't mind, how have those meetings gone in your opinion? Here's why I ask. Over the past year, I've been appealing to C.J. regarding the long standing and serious patterns of sin in his life with which you are familiar. He recently acknowledged the presence of pride in his relationship with me and others at SGM/CLC. It is my hope that he will do the same with you. I am

³⁸⁵ An action I agreed with and supported.

grateful for this work of grace in his life but there remains considerably more for him to see and confess.

I'd also like to know if C.J. mentioned anything to you about the reasons SGM declared me unfit for ministry. For instance, that I was not carrying out my ministerial responsibilities properly.

By the way, did you get with C.J. this week? Has he acknowledged any wrong doing and proposed any remedy?

Well, grace to you! Thanks for your help.

Brent

We set it up to talk by phone on December 30. It was a good conversation.

From: Larry Tomczak
Sent: Friday, December 24, 2010 8:21 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Re: C.J.

My man, good morning. We are about to depart for Atlanta for family Christmas so I must be brief. Let's talk on the phone next week at your convenience and start there ok? Tx for understanding, we can keep things confidential if you want. I love ya and am eager to chat.

Your friend,
Larry

Not Wise, Appropriate or Necessary to Confess Sins

The next day, I wrote you regarding your times with Larry. I wanted to see if fruit was being born in keeping with your recent confession to me. In particular, I wanted to know if you asked the Tomczak's forgiveness for blackmailing them. That was the central issue. I knew reconciliation was unachievable unless you did.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, December 31, 2010 9:02 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Justin

One of the illustrations I have not raised with you³⁸⁶ in what I've written concerns your (and Steve's) handling of the situation with Larry and Doris and [their child] in the past. While I agreed with you on the issues, I was concerned for your attitude and approach to them. I brought this up to you at the time. I'd like to know what you asked their forgiveness for recently. For example, blackmailing them, threatening them, etc. Those were their primarily offenses.

Here is your response to my inquiry. You refused to reveal any specifics.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Saturday, January 08, 2011 9:13 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Justin

Brent,

It is my joy to give you a brief update on what has taken place between Larry, Doris, Justin and me. After a series of meetings where every issue was discussed and addressed, specific and appropriate confession was made and forgiveness graciously extended, we have all been reconciled to each other. It has been a humbling, redemptive and wonderful experience for us all and I am deeply grateful for and indebted to Larry, Doris and Justin for their humility, kindness, graciousness and forgiveness.

At the conclusion of the process we all agreed that it's neither wise nor appropriate for us to reveal all the specifics³⁸⁷ of our interactions with each other. We simply want to inform folks that we have addressed all pertinent issues, forgiven each other and been reconciled by the grace of God. And we hope everyone will rejoice with us in our reconciliation. I have asked Larry and Doris to be my guest at the November Pastor's Conference and they have gladly accepted my invitation. It will be a unique joy for us to welcome them back at this conference.³⁸⁸

In my last conversation with Larry he wanted me to convey to you his desire to meet with you and there is a possibility he will be in Charlotte sometime soon.

³⁸⁶ Over the past 18 months, I've sought to gradually and progressively share examples with you. Many more remain.

³⁸⁷ You have not revealed any of the specifics with me or the pastors. Actually, you have not shared any generalities. You don't even share the nature of your sin in the broadest terms. You only willing to say you've been reconciled. You claim that to say more is unwise and inappropriate - even to me.

³⁸⁸ This would be the perfect time for you to confess to all the pastors and wives not only regarding Larry but all the other issues I have raised with you.

Larry wanted me to tell you that he would love to get together. I hope you do. Please let him know if this would be your desire.

Because of the Cross,
C. J.

It was great to hear about the reconciliation.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, January 08, 2011 11:13 AM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: [Tomczak Child]

I rejoice with you in your reconciliation! Praise be to God!

Approximately three weeks after my inquiry regarding the nature of your confession, you sent out the following "Update for Pastors in Sovereign Grace Ministries." You reiterated your claim to me that it was unwise and unnecessary (not just inappropriate) to "publicly communicate the details of our interactions with others" and "simply" (i.e., only) wanted to tell people you were reconciled - nothing else. Whether in public or private, you agreed that the acknowledgement of specific sins was neither wise, appropriate or necessary

January 19, 2011

My friends,

I do hope this e-mail finds you aware of God's grace revealed in and through the gospel of "Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2)."

I've got much to inform you about so let's get right to it and let's start with some wonderful news.

It is my joy to inform you that over the past few months Larry Tomczak and I have walked through a process of reconciliation together. After a series of meetings where all the important issues were discussed and addressed, and where appropriate, specific confession was made and forgiveness graciously extended, we have been reconciled to each other by the grace of God. It has been a humbling, redemptive and wonderful experience for me and I am deeply grateful for and indebted to Larry for his graciousness and forgiveness. At the conclusion of the process we agreed that it's neither wise nor necessary for us to publicly communicate the details of our interactions with others. We simply want to inform folks that we have addressed all the pertinent issues,

forgiven each other and been reconciled by the grace of God. And we hope everyone will rejoice with us in our reconciliation.

I have been eager to inform you of this great news. I have invited Larry and Doris to be my/our guests and attend our Pastors Conference in November. They have agreed to come and are looking forward to attending the conference. I can't wait for this conference and I look forward to publicly welcoming and privately spending time with Larry and Doris. I know you do as well.

Who Approved Keeping C.J.'s Sins Secret

My last correspondence regarding your reconciliation was on January 8. It was now March 18 and I felt the need to find out if you had approval from the Sovereign Grace Board of Directors to remain silent about your sins. I stated my purpose in the subject line.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2011 12:11 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

Hi C.J.

I received your second response³⁸⁹ and want you to know I am considering its contents and how to respond. I'll be back to you later.

In this email, I wanted to ask some questions regarding the agreement between you and Larry to remain silent about your sins (see emails below). I'd like to know if you talked to the governing boards of SGM and CLC in advance about keeping secret the sins you asked Larry to forgive? In other words, did they approve this agreement between you and Larry before you met with Larry? Or, did you and Larry make the decision to withhold details independent of their counsel and support? For example, did the Boards approve of your decision to withhold information regarding blackmail and threats of Larry? It is my hope you talked to the boards before making a decision of such consequence.

Sincerely,
Brent

I didn't hear from you so I dropped you another line.

³⁸⁹ To RRF&D and AFA on March 11, 2011

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 12:43 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Re: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

You must be tied up. Any chance I'll be hearing from you this week?

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 10:50 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: RE: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

Brent,

Yep, I have been tied up and I appreciate your understanding. We had our first church planting conference (Plant) that Dave led very well and the conference seemed to go very well. I think you would be encouraged by all that is taking place in this regard. And this conference was preceded by a meeting with the regional guys followed by a meeting with all the pastors from the Northeast. So I am behind on all fronts as the preparation for this conference and these meetings have taken over my schedule for the last month. Again, thanks for your patience and understanding.

I remain eager to respond to questions and concerns about my reconciliation with Larry but after our last exchange, the board asked that the e-mail interaction between us no longer continue.³⁹⁰ In light of the evident fruitlessness of our e-mail exchanges, they felt we had arrived at a time where they should interact with you and play their appropriate role in this process of pursuing reconciliation. So I am deferring to these men in whom I am gladly submitted and accountable. I look forward to the day when we can sit together and I can eagerly hear your concerns and answer your questions while also conveying some questions/concerns I would like to ask you in relation to the intent and purpose³⁹¹ of what you have written about the reconciliation that has taken place with Larry. Perhaps when we meet this can be added to our list.

And just so you'll know both Dave and Jeff have obviously been tied up as well as they have been preparing for this conference and these meetings so I would

³⁹⁰ More on this action later.

³⁹¹ Did you have something malicious in mind?

assume that is why you haven't heard from them. Also, I know Jeff is away with relatives this week. So I know the board is intending to respond to you in a timely manner but they are not involving me in this process. I would anticipate you would hear from them soon and it is certainly my hope that we can meet soon and pursue reconciliation.

In His grace,

C. J.

I sought to clarify my intent in this e-mail.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 12:52 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

Dear C.J.,

I'm sure it was an excellent conference. I hope men's hearts were filled with wisdom and passion to plant gospel centered churches for the glory of God!

It breaks my heart to hear the Board of Directors has ended our interaction. I thought you were finding the e-mail exchanges fruitful, not fruitless. You last wrote me on March 11. Since then I've been praying and putting my thoughts together for you.

I am sorry I was unclear regarding my intent in asking about your and Larry's decision to remain silent about your sins and not inform others. I intended to discover whether or not you talked to the Sovereign Grace Board and the Covenant Life Board in advance of your decision. That is, whether you acted in concert with them or independently of them.³⁹² As I said, "It is my hope you talked to the boards before making a decision of such consequence." I was trying to discover the answer.

Why did I hope you had authorization? Because it was a monumental decision³⁹³ and one you should not make on your own. In your March 11, 2011 response to me you acknowledged the following.

³⁹² Acting unilaterally and independently was a major topic in RRF&D and AFA. I hoped my suspicion was wrong. I hoped you talked to both Boards before deciding to keep quiet about your sins.

³⁹³ Your sins against Larry (and Larry's against us) had a monumental impact upon the movement. Serious discussions should have preceded any decision to say nothing about them to anyone. This was not your decision to make! You might agree to say nothing about Larry's sins but you should be very

“You [Brent] also say that I led the apostolic team more by expedience than by process. I think that was often true... As I look back over the years, I have become aware of a pattern in my leadership of assuming we’ve had sufficient discussion on a topic and that we’re in agreement on a topic, rather than reviewing, discussing, and making sure that everyone on the team is in full agreement on the issue at hand. I regret that there have been many times I have not done this...as I look back on such examples I feel a genuine sorrow. However, I would need you to help me understand how this would be hypocrisy on my part.” (pp. 2, 7)

While acknowledging this tendency you appeared to be making the same mistake with Larry. I hoped not, but I needed to find out. If it was true you didn’t talk to the Boards about the decision, I planned to redemptively raise it as a recent example of independence and hypocrisy in contradiction to your confession.³⁹⁴

Now it appears I’ve been cut off from corresponding with you because of this inquiry. It was my intent to serve you and help you as in all my writings.

Well, good bye old friend. I will always treasure the many years we had together.

Brent

willing to tell the movement and pastors about your sins. Remember your words from two years ago. “So in Sovereign Grace there is no such thing as a flawless pastor, no such thing, but in Sovereign Grace we must acknowledge our flaws! We must acknowledge our flaws and we must learn from our flaws. We must acknowledge when we have stumbled, where we have stumbled, how we have stumbled and we must learn from each and every stumble.... There will be no damage control in Sovereign Grace. We will seek to walk humbly before God and when we stumble we will not seek to engage in damage control. No, instead we will humbly acknowledge with sorrow that we stumbled – we stumbled. No damage control.”

³⁹⁴ I’ve always attempted to discover the facts before sharing concerns. My concerns have been validated. You had no discussions and no approval from either the SGM Board or the CLC Board. You entered into an “agreement” to keep your sins secret without their knowledge or support. This is extremely serious. Why? Because it appears you were concealing the nature of your sins from everyone involved and certainly from a wider circle of leaders and the movement. I don’t know why or when to talked to the Board. Was it after and because of my March 18 inquiry regarding the nature of your confession? When exactly did you tell the Board that you asked forgiveness of Tomczaks for blackmailing and threatening them? Like so many other things I’ve brought to your attention, no one could get away with this and not be disciplined or lose their job. It may be wise, inappropriate, and unnecessary to say anything about the Tomczaks. The same is not true of you. This is a matter of integrity and an issue of deceit. You’re playing the game by a different set of rules.

Email Interaction Ended because of “Evident Fruitlessness”

You responded to my e-mail above the same day but said absolutely nothing about the “Approval to Keep Sins Secret.” You dropped the subject like a hot potato!

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 4:09 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

Brent,

My friend, I think you have misunderstood my heart and possibly the intent of the board with this step. My desire is to meet with you immediately, to restore our friendship and to resolve these issues. I will do that alone, or with a mediator. I have sent both my responses for that purpose and I am confused why you seem reluctant to meet. So please help me understand why we can't meet or pursue a mediator we can both agree on.³⁹⁵

Also, and this is important, the board is not adopting this approach because of your recent inquiry.³⁹⁶ They are simply trying to facilitate our reconciliation based upon the documents that have been created and swapped - not the production of new ones. And their request would predate³⁹⁷ your most recent inquiry. And their request is not that we no longer interact but simply that in relation to all the unresolved issues, it doesn't appear it would be wise to try and interact anymore by e-mail nor should we begin exploring whole new categories. But I'm prepared to hop a flight tomorrow if you will meet with me.

Brent, it remains my hope that we can regather as a team and review all that took place learning from all that took place and that our interaction can have a redemptive effect on us all. It is my hope that I can ask your forgiveness where necessary and appropriate and receive your forgiveness. And as I've said numerous times it is my hope that you can return to pastoral ministry where you belong my friend.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ That is the purpose of this document, “Part 3: Concluding Remarks.”

³⁹⁶ About the “Approval to Keep Sins Secret?”

³⁹⁷ In other words, the SGM Board asked you to cut off email interaction with me before I raised this issue with you on March 18 which was only two days after I received your second response to RRF&D and AFA.

³⁹⁸ Which is in total contradiction of your prohibition. These statements are unhelpful and hurtful because they are manipulative. According to you, Dave, Bob and Gene...I belong in the Sovereign Grace sanitarium undergoing long term psychiatric evaluation and treatment! ☺ I was told to stay out of pastoral ministry until a lengthy rehabilitation was over. At best, I'm a pastoral scoundrel.

Hey, if you change your mind and want to talk my cell phone number is xxx-xxx-xxxx. I hope you call. It would be great to hear your voice.

Your friend,
C. J.

I now asked you for a clarification regarding the meaning of “evident fruitlessness.”

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 5:22 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

You give the reason for the Board’s decision “that...e-mail interaction between us no longer continue.” Here it is. “In light of the evident fruitlessness of our e-mail exchanges, they felt we had arrived at a time where they should interact with you and play their appropriate role in this process of pursuing reconciliation.” What do you and they mean by “evident fruitlessness” and what is that assessment based upon?³⁹⁹ This sounds like a sinful judgment.⁴⁰⁰ I’ve not yet responded to them or to your second response. None of you know what I am thinking. I’ve given no indication. Maybe my response will be fruitless in your/their opinion (i.e., devoid of any good fruit), but what evidence is such an assessment based upon now? What have I done that is so fruitless?⁴⁰¹ The only obvious answer is my inquiry about you and Larry. But you deny this played any part in their decision to cut off our interaction. Fruitless is strong language. It means worthless.

Jeff wrote me back the next day. He did not answer any of my questions regarding the basis for declaring fruitless my email interchanges with you. Once again accountability was avoided by providing no open and honest answers.

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 3:55 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Joshua Harris; Dave Harvey
Subject: Confidential

³⁹⁹ I was genuinely confused.

⁴⁰⁰ Of course, Jeff was unwilling to answer this question in order to determine if a sinful judgment was made of me.

⁴⁰¹ I really did not know since the decision of the Board predated the expression concerns regarding the agreement with Larry.

Dear Brent,

We trust you are doing well and are aware of the grace of the gospel.

We wanted to get back to you concerning the further questions you passed on after receiving from the board our perspective on your documents and C.J.'s second response to those documents.

First, we wanted to let you know that the board is fully apprised⁴⁰² of C.J.'s interactions with Larry Tomczak and supportive of their efforts toward reconciliation. Various ones of us,⁴⁰³ along with Ken Sande, were involved in counseling⁴⁰⁴ C.J. in this process. Their agreement⁴⁰⁵ to refrain from publicizing the details⁴⁰⁶ of their conversations is in no way to withhold information,⁴⁰⁷ but

⁴⁰² Fully apprised of your recent interactions but not your long history with Larry. In preparing to write, I studied over 1,000 pages of material dealing with you and Larry. "Full apprised" must mean an in depth review of C.J. (and Steve's) sins against Larry and his family. This must include a careful review of the tape containing C.J.'s conversation with the Larry and Doris on October 3, 1997 and Steve's conversation with Larry, Doris and their child on October 7, 1997. Grave sins were committed by both men including illicit coercion. The entire SGM Board should be intimately acquainted with this interaction. Are you? Have you listened to the entire tape?

⁴⁰³ Which ones since Jeff and Joshua know comparatively little about the history between Larry and you? As a result they are of limited helpfulness. I am happy to send them my materials.

⁴⁰⁴ I hope the CLC pastors are apprised and involved in the counseling. C.J. may not being willing tell me about his confession, but as I've said before he must tell his pastors. All of them. But especially, the ones who were on staff at the time.

⁴⁰⁵ I take "their agreement," not "our agreement," to mean the Sovereign Grace Board and the Covenant Life Board were not consulted by you in advance. Please correct me if I am wrong. There is every indication you acted on your own and independently decided to "refrain from publicizing the details of their conversations" as Jeff put it. That was wrong and not your decision to make. You should have gained the approval of the Boards before entering in such an agreement with Larry. This was more "expedience" to use your word. Though you did not acknowledged it to me, I know you asked the Tomczak's forgiveness for blackmailing and threatening them. Apart from doing so, reconciliation with them was absolutely impossible and that is not an overstatement.

⁴⁰⁶ Jeff, to be clear, I've not advocated a "publicizing" of details. That is a caricature to put off my point. I do think C.J. owes the movement an accounting and confession of his sins against the Tomczaks since those sins had a huge impact upon thousands of people. C.J. was abusive and put Larry in the worse possible light. For example, he labeled Larry a "liar" before all of Covenant Life Church and told them he'd rather be "dead than do what Larry Tomczak is doing." That must be remedied. C.J. should also acknowledge his hypocrisy. If it was better to be dead than be Larry, where does that leave C.J.? Is it also true it is better to be dead than be C.J.? If so, will one of you make that announcement to CLC this Sunday? Of course, I'm being facetious in order to make a point - C.J must see and acknowledge his hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

⁴⁰⁷ Jeff, you say C.J.'s decision to keep his confession secret was "in no way to withhold information." I wish I shared your confidence but as you know, C.J. has a long track record of deceitfully withholding information regarding his sins. It seems foolish for you to state so emphatically that his motive for keeping his sins secret was altogether altruistic and righteous. When I inquired of C.J., he was unwilling to tell me whether he asked forgiveness for blackmailing the Tomczak family. Why wouldn't C.J. be open and honest with me and just say, "Yes Brent, after all these years I've come to see that I blackmailed and

rather demonstrates a resolve to honor Scripture through a process of confession, forgiveness, and covering sin.⁴⁰⁸ We rejoice over the reconciliation that has taken place between them and trust that this process honors and pleases the Lord.

Your question led the Board to evaluate its role in C.J.'s ongoing communications with you. After reviewing the many messages that have taken place between you and C.J. over the past several months, the Board believes that CJ has made a good faith effort⁴⁰⁹ to respond in writing to your numerous questions and that further written correspondence from C.J. to you concerning details related to your documents and the history they cover would not be a wise or productive manner in which to try to resolve these issues. As we stressed in our letter to you, we would strongly support his participation in a face-to-face meeting with you to discuss your concerns more fully with the assistance of an objective mediator, but we have asked him not to engage in any further written communications with you in an attempt to probe the details of these issues further. Instead, we've requested that he forward your messages to us.⁴¹⁰ If we believe we can provide a helpful written response to a question from you, we will be glad to do so. But if we believe the issue you raise will be more profitably addressed in a face-to-face meeting with C.J. or with us, we will defer a response until such a meeting occurs.⁴¹¹

threatened Larry. I'm so glad Larry has forgiven me. I also want to ask the old apostolic team's forgiveness too for the terrible example I set. That includes you." Why did he conceal that information from me?

⁴⁰⁸ C.J. may cover Larry's sins but he should not cover-up his sins. Remember, we don't do this in Sovereign Grace Ministries. Why are C.J. sins so guarded and protected? Why the total blackout? Specific information regarding past "deficiencies" in Larry's family need not be shared in public. In that case, I agree with C.J. that "it's neither wise nor necessary for us to publicly communicate the details of our interactions with others." But is that true in general? Is it unwise and unnecessary for any details (or even general information) to be shared? I don't believe so. I think C.J. and Larry's sins against each other should be shared with the movement in general and with the pastors in more detail. Especially C.J.'s - only Larry's if he is willing. You can add mine too. If not, why not? It would be wonderful to see the most serious rupture in the history of our movement dealt with in an open and honest way. Everyone could learn so much. Besides, scores of Sovereign Grace pastors have confessed their sin in public. Why are the two apostolic team leaders granted exemption clauses? C.J. and Larry's sins were serious and had a profound impact upon the movement. If the Board neglects this you are not faithfully and impartially executing your duties. In fact, I think Larry and C.J. should acknowledge their sins at the Pastors Conference in November. It would be good for C.J. to humble himself before the pastors and let them learn from his mistakes. He could tell them about his threatening without referencing specific details pertaining to one of the Tomczak children. In fact, both of them could share their stumbles. No - should share their stumbles. Why? C.J. and Larry led the movement!

⁴⁰⁹ The facts prove otherwise.

⁴¹⁰ Of course, I'm not going to send questions I need to ask C.J. if you are going to answer them for him. Correspondence ended as a result.

⁴¹¹ As you know, I've been very willing to meet in person but first I've asked you to provide honest, complete and written answers to my questions and the issues I've brought to your attention.

As for your question to the board concerning an e-mail exchange between you and C.J.,⁴¹² at this point let us say this.⁴¹³ We were encouraged by his timely response,⁴¹⁴ to your e-mail which both gave further explanation as to his previous e-mail⁴¹⁵ and humbly expressed his desire to examine his heart further. In numerous meetings with the men in his caregroup before and since then, the issue of sinful judgment has been revisited with C.J., and we have seen sincere efforts on his part to address this sin. We believe you, too, would be encouraged by the fruit of repentance that is evident in his life.

Brent, as we communicated in our letter to you on 3/11, it is our desire to see the issues you raised in your documents, along with those raised in additional e-mails, fully resolved and to see you and C.J. reconciled. Let us also reiterate our willingness as a board to meet with you, along with a mediator, so that these issues can be explored fully and objectively. We believe that the lengthy responses that C.J. has provided, along with the process of growth and accountability he has pursued, has prepared the way for a fruitful process of reconciliation to take place. Therefore, we look forward to hearing your response to all the material that's been sent already,⁴¹⁶ and especially to the invitation to pursue reconciliation with a godly, objective mediator whom we all trust.

We remain hopeful that we can move forward together in a process that will help to resolve the various issues you have raised and that will result in a reconciliation that honors the Lord and reflects the power of the gospel. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours in Christ,
Jeff

I followed up with Jeff in less than an hour hoping for some answers to already asked questions.

⁴¹² This involved three emails. Jan 21 from Brent. Jan 25 from C.J. Jan 25 from Brent.

⁴¹³ Here it comes...you're about to jump out of the way to avoid getting hit by the ball. You just won't be honest and tell me on what basis you concluded my email interaction with C.J. was "fruitless." I quit. The dodge ball game is over - you win!

⁴¹⁴ Seven weeks later on March 11 - this was your second response to RRF&D and AFA.

⁴¹⁵ Dec 16, 2010 - this was your first response to RRF&D and AFA.

⁴¹⁶ CR is my response "to all the material that's been sent already."

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 4:43 PM
To: Jeff Purswell
Cc: Joshua Harris; Dave Harvey
Subject: RE: Confidential

Quickly and briefly while I have you.

1. Did C.J. consult with you before he made the decision to be silent about the sins he confessed to Larry or did he act independently without your authorization and that of the CLC Board?⁴¹⁷
2. Did you follow up with C.J. regarding his comment that “in the almost 300 pages of documentation you sent me, it doesn’t appear that you make any allowance for potential sins that may remain on your part or how your perceptions and approaches may have been flawed.” He “overlooked” my repeated requests for correction and input. I felt follow up was needed and so indicated. Did the Board get back to ask heart questions?⁴¹⁸ See below.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 5:59 PM
To: Nora Earles; Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Pat Ennis; Tommy Hill; Joshua Harris; Kenneth Maresco; Grant Layman; John Loftness
Subject: Overlooking Statements

As I thought about it there is no need to forgive you for simply overlooking statements. That’s morally free. I think there are other questions to ask but I’ll leave additional counsel in the hands of those around you.

3. C.J. indicated that my “evident fruitlessness” was the reason for ending our e-mail interaction with each other. Would you please answer the questions below?⁴¹⁹

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 5:22 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

⁴¹⁷ I still have not received a straight forward answer to this important question.

⁴¹⁸ I still have not received a straight forward answer to this important question.

⁴¹⁹ I still have not received a straight forward answer to this important question. Three’s a charm!

You give the reason for the Board's decision "that...e-mail interaction between us no longer continue." Here it is. "In light of the evident fruitlessness of our e-mail exchanges,⁴²⁰ they felt we had arrived at a time where they should interact with you and play their appropriate role in this process of pursuing reconciliation." What do you and they mean by "evident fruitlessness" and what is that assessment based upon? This sounds like a sinful judgment. I've not yet responded to them or to your second response. None of you know what I am thinking. I've given no indication. Maybe my response will be fruitless in your/their opinion (i.e., devoid of any good fruit), but what evidence is such an assessment based upon now? What have I done that is so fruitless? The only obvious answer is my inquiry about you and Larry. But you deny this played any part in their decision to cut off our interaction. Fruitless is strong language. It means worthless.

Here is Jeff's evasive response.

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Saturday, April 02, 2011 12:38 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris
Subject: Your Note

Dear Brent,

We have asked C.J. to pass on to the board e-mails between the two of you, and we wanted to get back to you on the one below.⁴²¹ In the e-mail you were responding to,⁴²² C.J. was just trying to explain his understanding⁴²³ of the remaining board's perspective.⁴²⁴ Of course, since then we have sent you our perspective on the best way forward.

It seems that you may have read more into C.J.'s language⁴²⁵ than he intended in that e-mail. We would want you to know that neither C.J. nor we believe that the process involving your documents has been, to use your words,

⁴²⁰ The three we exchanged from January 21 and 25.

⁴²¹ March 29 at 12:52 PM.

⁴²² From you on March 29 at 10:50 AM regarding the cessation of interaction at the direction of the Board.

⁴²³ Did he misrepresent you?

⁴²⁴ Pat Ennis no longer being included.

⁴²⁵ Did he use terminology you did not use like "fruitless?"

“worthless.”⁴²⁶ On the contrary, C.J. has benefitted from your correction and is grateful for it, as are we. We think there has been, by the grace of God, much fruit from this process. However, as we communicated earlier this week, we believe C.J. has made a good faith effort to respond to your documents in writing, and that his responses have prepared the way for honest and productive discussions. It is simply our assessment that the most profitable way to continue these interactions would be in person, with the help of a mediator who could serve everyone involved. This is the reason we as a board have sought to remove C.J. from interacting further over the substance of your documents by e-mail. Brent, we remain hopeful for a God-glorifying process of personal interaction in the days ahead.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Dave, Jeff, and Josh

Here is my e-mail to you from Tuesday, March 29 at 12:52 PM that Jeff, Dave and Steve reference above.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 12:52 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

Dear C.J.,

I’m sure it was an excellent conference. I hope men’s hearts were filled with wisdom and passion to plant gospel centered churches for the glory of God!

It breaks my heart to hear the Board of Directors has ended our interaction. I thought you were finding the e-mail exchanges fruitful, not fruitless. You last wrote me on March 11. Since then I’ve been praying and putting my thoughts together for you.

I am sorry I was unclear regarding my intent in asking about your and Larry’s decision to remain silent about your sins and not inform others. I intended to discover whether or not you talked to the Sovereign Grace Board and the Covenant Life Board in advance of your decision. That is, whether you acted in concert with them or independently of them. As I said, “It is my hope you

⁴²⁶ Your quoting me out of context. I was making the point that trees which are “fruitless” (your word) are “worthless.”

talked to the boards before making a decision of such consequence." I was trying to discover the answer.

Why did I hope you had authorization? Because it was a monumental decision and one you should not make on your own. In your March 11 response to me you acknowledged the following.

"You [Brent] also say that I led the apostolic team more by expedience than by process. I think that was often true... As I look back over the years, I have become aware of a pattern in my leadership of assuming we've had sufficient discussion on a topic and that we're in agreement on a topic, rather than reviewing, discussing, and making sure that everyone on the team is in full agreement on the issue at hand. I regret that there have been many times I have not done this...as I look back on such examples I feel a genuine sorrow. However, I would need you to help me understand how this would be hypocrisy on my part." (pp. 2, 7)

While acknowledging this tendency you appeared to be making the same mistake with Larry. I hoped not, but I needed to find out. If it was true you didn't talk to the Boards about the decision, I planned to redemptively raise it as a recent example of independence and hypocrisy in contradiction to your confession.

Now it appears I've been cut off from corresponding with you because of this inquiry. It was my intent to serve you and help you as in all my writings.

Well, good bye old friend. I will always treasure the many years we had together.

Brent

Here's how I responded to Jeff, Dave and Joshua.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, April 02, 2011 1:48 PM
To: Jeff Purswell
Cc: Dave Harvey; Joshua Harris
Subject: RE: Your Note

Maybe I have read too much into C.J.'s language but you still have not answered my questions. They are not complicated. Did the Board use the word "fruitless" (or a similar word or phrase) to describe my e-mail interchanges with C.J. after his first response to RRF&D and AFA on Dec. 11?

That is how C.J. characterized your perspective. Did he misrepresent you or embellish your perspective? And doesn't fruitless mean without edible fruit and therefore worthless. What good is a fig tree if it bears no figs? Didn't Jesus curse one somewhere or another?

Anyway, what specific e-mails do you have in mind?⁴²⁷ Send them to me. Include your commentary. Tell me why they are fruitless. Seriously! Jeff, please give me straight forward answers. The Board cannot criticize and end my interaction with C.J. without telling me why. What examples did you have in mind? Maybe your judgment [that the exchange has been fruitless] is true and righteous. I want to know. Tell me, how did you come to such a conclusion. My previous questions remain unanswered (below).

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 5:22 PM
To: C.J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Approval to Keep Sins Secret?

You give the reason for the Board's decision "that...e-mail interaction between us no longer continue." Here it is. "In light of the evident fruitlessness of our e-mail exchanges, they felt we had arrived at a time where they should interact with you and play their appropriate role in this process of pursuing reconciliation." What do you and they mean by "evident fruitlessness" and what is that assessment based upon? This sounds like a sinful judgment. I've not yet responded to them or to your second response. None of you know what I am thinking. I've given no indication. Maybe my response will be fruitless in your/their opinion (i.e., devoid of any good fruit), but what evidence is such an assessment based upon now? What have I done that is so fruitless? The only obvious answer is my inquiry about you and Larry. But you deny this played any part in their decision to cut off our interaction. Fruitless is strong language. It means worthless.

Once again, I received no response whatsoever to my questions. But I was able to figure out the sole basis by which Jeff, Dave and Joshua concluded my interaction with you was fruitless. It boiled down to two e-mails from Jan 21 and Jan 25. Here they are again along with your response in between them.

⁴²⁷ It took a little time to figure out but they were one from Jan 21 and the other from Jan 25.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2011 12:47 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: My Response

Dear C.J.,

I've written the Board of Directors on several occasions over the last five weeks but have not heard whether they plan to provide me their perspective which you referenced as forthcoming; so, I think it best to move ahead and not wait any longer in sharing my perspective on your December 16th response.

First, I am grateful to God for your acknowledgements. They represent a work of grace in your soul over the last 12 months. At the beginning of 2010, you were unaware of any ways in which you sinned against me over the past decade. When you wrote last January 10, it was in order to discover if I thought you had sinned against me, not because you were convicted of sin. In fact, the impetus for contacting me came from someone else who informed you that I "might have some offenses" with you. Therefore, after a long and hard year, I am grateful for the evidences of grace reflected in your recent comments. They are meaningful and helpful. I thank the Lord for your progress in grace. I look forward to a time in the future when we can meet together.

Second, I must also admit to disappointment. As I've said before, such a meeting is not possible until you provide a much fuller response and personally embrace the need for public confession. Your "brief overview" is a good start but it doesn't address my most serious concerns for you and the movement. The majority of issues and illustrations I raised with you remain unaddressed. In addition, you still see no need to inform the movement and its leaders of your longstanding patterns of sin and their impact on others. Here is what I wrote at the end of "A Final Appeal."

"Two simple questions remain. First, are you willing to provide a thorough response to "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal." Second, do you see the need for a public acknowledgement to the blogosphere, a general confession to the movement, and a more detailed confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors and staff?" (AFA, p. 164)

To date, you've not provided the former and see no need for the later. I've attached "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine" and "A Final Appeal" as Word documents. If you change your mind and choose to provide a thorough response, you can easily make balloon comments (if necessary Nora

can show you how to use this function under the Review tab) as you progress through the documents. That should simplify your task.

C.J., I appreciate the contents of your December 16th response but there remain a host of vital topics unaddressed. Please interact with me in writing. Please include your disagreements and correction. They are equally important to me.

Responding in writing will serve both of us. Before we meet, I must understand far more clearly how you view my assessment. For instance, in what you've written you acknowledge no lack of integrity, no deceit or hypocrisy, no concealment or cover-up, no damage control, spin or manipulation, no partiality or favoritism, no abuse of authority or lording, no need for a confession to the movement or the leaders, no wrong doing by others, no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others, etc. As such, I assume you continue to believe these are non-issues and have not changed your position since July 2 when you wrote, "Brent, I don't think Sovereign Grace in general or anyone I know in particular is 'lying, covering up, manipulating, lording, etc.'"

I know you are willing to engage these matters in conversation; but first, I need you to engage these matters in print. This is not an unreasonable request. Nor is it an unhelpful one. Just the opposite. It will require you to honestly face and transparently respond to the charges I've brought to your attention. They are serious. I welcome your disagreement. I welcome your correction. I am simply looking for candid, frank, open, and accountable interaction on the multiplicity of issues and examples you did not address.

In closing, would you please provide me a prompt response whatever you decide? If you care not to write a thorough going response, let me know. If you decide to write, could you please clear your schedule as much as possible and make its completion a top priority? The long waits from last year, now into this year, have been exceedingly difficult for many reasons and on many fronts.

I thank God for you C.J. I am confident in the Lord Jesus that he is working all things for the good in both our lives. I am grateful for the humble steps you have taken and hope for a continued outworking of his grace in the decisions now before you.

Prayerfully and affectionately,
Brent

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 10:30 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject:

Brent,

Thanks for getting back to me. I appreciate your encouragement and I am sorry to disappoint you. I trust you know that was not my intention. Please pray for me as I desire to perceive any and all sin I have committed and I pray daily for this gift of sight.

It is my understanding that the board is going to respond to you at some point soon. I am not familiar with their plans or the content of their response as they have not included me in their discussions. So I am waiting for their response as well. Thanks for your patience.

Let me assure you that I am submitted to these men and accountable to them and will comply with whatever they recommend including some kind of public confession. It remains my hope that you and I can meet and pursue reconciliation with each other.

In His grace,
C.J.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 1:54 PM
To: C. J. Mahaney
Subject: Non-Response

Dear C.J.,

I take your non-response as a "no" to my appeals unless the Board of Directors directs you otherwise. In that case, I know you'll do what they recommend. Realistically, that's your only option. I just wish you didn't need to be told what to do if indeed the Board affirms my requests. I suspect they will ask you for a public acknowledgement of limited scope but release you from any further response to me in writing. Obviously, I could be wrong.

I care deeply about you and our relationship. If you had been willing to answer my most serious charges and saw the need for public confession and

accountability, we would have met a long time ago with reconciliation well under way, if not complete. That is the source of my disappointment.

It is good to know we'll be hearing from the Board in the near future. It remains my hope that things will be dealt with forthrightly.

Sincerely,
Brent

Why is this important? Why does this matter? Let me explain. You first provided me feedback on RRF&D and AFA on Dec 16, 2010. I got back to you on Jan. 21. Soon after Dave, Jeff and Joshua labeled my response "fruitless" and told you to discontinue all email interaction with me.

These occasional "moments of truth" or slip ups (i.e., using the word "fruitless") often become cover ups. I tried to get to the bottom of things but was unsuccessful. It is nearly impossible to get straight answers. You need truth serum, enhanced interrogation and water boarding. That's one reason this illustration is important. Here's a second.

It appears the Board gave no humble consideration to my viewpoint or concern for all the crucial issues you left unaddressed. Instead they seemed elated by your response and offended by mine. They certainly didn't try to understand my "disappointment" in your limited response. Instead my January 21 email was labeled "fruitless." That is, worthless - pathetic, wrong, unfounded, misguided, ill-conceived, or whatever you wish to call it. Their lack of objectivity and teachability was my second concern.

Brent's Incomplete, Incorrect and Revised Narrative

If you ever produce an alternative narrative (e.g. for the SGM pastors), please let me review it before you give it out to anyone. I've afforded you that opportunity throughout this process. I've welcomed your feedback and I've included all of it in my documents. In other words, if you send out a critique of me or my concerns please let me provide an accompanying statement. That is only right.

From: Dave Harvey
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2011 8:22 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Steve Shank; Joshua Harris; Jeff Purswell
Subject: Confidential

Hi Brent.

Steve and I wanted to convey some thoughts to you concerning the content of your documents. The board also thought it was important for us to do so. Our letter is attached.

Hope you are well.

Dave

April 1, 2011

Dear Brent,

We (Dave and Steve) have been praying for you, and hope you are experiencing God's grace and presence during this challenging time.

We have also reflected many times over our years of friendship and partnership in service of the Lord with you (dating back to the early 1980's). Those cherished memories have prompted thanksgiving and gratefulness in our hearts. Like you, we feel deeply concerned for the current status of your relationship with CJ (Sovereign Grace, etc.) and are praying that the Lord would be glorified by a complete reconciliation.

Since receiving and processing your two documents, we (along with many others) have attempted to serve CJ at his request in a very thorough and honest assessment centered on the content of your documents. We think it is important that you understand that we are in agreement with some of the points in your documents.⁴²⁸ In fact, we have been able to provide CJ with our own illustrations that supported and amplified certain important issues you were raising. We sense⁴²⁹ these have been important discussions for the future of SGM.

Brent, we think you might want to know about how CJ has postured himself towards your documents. First, CJ circulated them to us and invited our honest assessment of him. He made it clear that he wanted to use this as an opportunity to examine himself, not you. He also invited a number of other people to participate in this evaluation (inside and outside of SGM). We are

⁴²⁸ I sure wish you told me which points you did not agree with and why. I get the feeling I'll find out in the future.

⁴²⁹ Sense? Is there uncertainty or ambiguity?

very encouraged by the climate CJ has created where others are communicating clearly and honestly concerning areas where he needs to change.⁴³⁰

We are seeking to convey that in all of this, CJ has been leaning forward as aggressively as possible to see any areas of deficiency (as well as the fruit that can be ascribed to those deficiencies) put forth in your documents. His heart searching has often left him in tears with deep, painful regret as the Lord shows him his limitations, errors in judgment, and sins. He has also begun to make many changes that have encouraged everyone involved.⁴³¹ We would be happy to meet with you to share more specifics on what we are seeing if that would appeal to you. As you have read and pondered his confession, as well as his document with more specific interactions, our hope is that you too will be able to see God's grace at work in CJ's life. We also hope that you and Jenny will be comforted by the genuineness of the change beginning to occur.

Brent, one significant concern emerging from your documents is your depiction of certain points of history in which we were a vital part. As men who served alongside of you and under CJ for many years, it's important for us to register that our perspective would be different on a number of key points in your documents.⁴³² We're not attempting to exonerate CJ. It's just appears to us that the narrative presented in your documents (and supported through e-mail excerpts) is incomplete, in some instances incorrect and revised in some substantial ways. Of particular concern to us is how you remember and portray the loss of support for your leadership in your local church ultimately necessitating your resignation.⁴³³ Again, we are aware of the limitations of e mails, brief letters, or even lengthy documents, so we would be desirous to interact with you over the points of disagreement in person if you would allow it.

Brent, we understand your hesitancy to talk about this in person. We consider it understandable because of how CJ has handled at least some of the conflicts you describe in your documents. But we'd appeal to you to consider that your memory and record-keeping could be incomplete⁴³⁴ and ask that you be open to

⁴³⁰ I've already made this point but realistically C.J. had no other choice.

⁴³¹ That's great!

⁴³² That's perfectly fine. Tell me where but please provide hard documentation to show how my "depiction" of these "key points" is errant. No fuzzy memories as sources - I've worked exceeding hard to avoid "he said-she said" proofs where are no proofs at all. I've only included quotes that were carefully recorded. I've excluded "memories" I can't corroborate with evidence. I've arduously provided proof based upon primary source material. You must do the same.

⁴³³ You must have in mind the part where I call Bob a kangaroo. (cf. AFA, pp. 60f.)

⁴³⁴ They sure could - please fill them out for me.

hearing other perspectives about your conclusions.⁴³⁵ This is why since last year, we have urged you and CJ to get the help of a third party mediator who has no history with either of us and has a proven track record of impartiality.

It seems to us that we've all been in ministry too long to overlook the reality that "The one who states his case first seems right" (Prov 18: 17). In your documents you appeal for justice, which we think is reasonable. But your vision for justice seems to necessitate accepting your storyline as the authorized version of history.⁴³⁶ If you truly desire justice and not vindication,⁴³⁷ then we want to appeal that you take the only step that will deliver true biblical justice. Submit your perspective to an impartial, outside mediator who can closely evaluate your charges and help CJ, SGM & all of us to see the things we need to see.⁴³⁸ We would also be willing for you to engage us, Bob, Gene or anyone else you think would be helpful through such mediation, so that all of us--with impartial help--could determine where we have failed, admit our sins to one another and then forgive one another.

⁴³⁵ I am very open Please send them to me. I can only repeated myself again and again. I've asked for this kind of feedback for over a year.

⁴³⁶ I can't wait for the RKDV to come out (i.e., Revised King Dave Version). Do you have a release date? Can you send me an advanced copy? But one appeal. In making revisions please exercise care like a good textual critic. Use autographa not 3rd or 4th Century Gnostic gospels or pseudonymous epistles. And even though Jeff knows Peshitta, no manuscripts from the 5th Century either. Just primary source materials.

⁴³⁷ Vindication, properly understood, is a godly pursuit. It means clearing, exculpation, exoneration, acquittal. All Christians should desire it for the oppressed or innocent. Jesus was vindicated in the resurrection. It is a noble pursuit in the church and in society. That is why we have a justice system comprised of courts and defense lawyers. Justice includes the vindication or acquittal of those falsely charged and found guilty. Condemning the innocent, especially due to prejudice, is a serious transgression in holy Scripture. That's why I've asked C.J. to make a vigorous defense if he feels unjustly charged. The Bible condemns false witnesses. I don't want to be one. I am glad for him to point out using proofs where my charges are false. I'll repent. On the other hand, it is important for sin to be "prosecuted." Transgression must never be concealed or covered up. That is injustice also. It must be remembered that God prosecutes us (John 16:8-11) before he defends us (1 John 2:1-2). Moreover Dave, you seem to confuse vindication with being vindictive or seeking revenge. I have not sought revenge. Just the opposite, I've often chosen to be "wronged" and "cheated" (1 Cor 6:7) but now it is necessary to press for truth and address error. But you and others often resist the pursuit of justice by labeling people as proud, bitter, or vengeful. Dave you did this recently at Kingsway Community Church. Two or three hundred people were concerned, troubled or alarmed by your statements. This was a "last straw" and many left as a result. In so doing you silence and dismiss your critics. Lastly, while vindication is a good thing, that has not been a primary motive for writing. I have written for the sake of the gospel, the integrity of Sovereign Grace Ministries, and the safety of others. I could have researched the experiences of many other individuals and made my case without any reference to myself. I don't think this would have been wise or right. Instead, I've used material with which I am intimately familiar.

⁴³⁸ You are welcome to submit RRF&D, AFA and CR to any outside "mediator." Better, give them to a panel of distinguished judges trained and proven in the rules of evidence. Consider my documents the results of a deposition. They are my sworn "courtroom" testimony. Far better than any board room conversation.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter and consider our thoughts. We nurture the hope that God will enable us to walk through all of the issues you have raised with the help of an impartial mediator, seek your forgiveness in person and restore our fellowship in a manner that honors God and you through this process.

Until then,

Your friends

Dave and Steve

PS: It seems appropriate to mention that CJ has not read this letter nor has he contributed to it in any way.⁴³⁹

I responded to Dave the same evening. Understand my meaning, I don't mind a fair fight but I hate when guys throw grenades and then run for cover. I spoke directly.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2011 10:15 PM
To: Dave Harvey
Cc: Steve Shank; Joshua Harris; Jeff Purswell; C. J. Mahaney
Subject: RE: Confidential
Importance: High

I've repeatedly asked you men to put any and all differences in writing. I've invited your adjustment on everything I've written and everything I've done. You have been unwilling to provide me with your perspective. I've welcomed it and pursued it. I've asked for your correction. Tell me where you differ and on what basis. But it must be in print. You can dismiss many of my critical findings, as you do in the letter, but you offer no explanation or proof. The onus is on you to do so. This does not require mediation. It requires candor. It requires details. It requires facts. Don't accuse me and say "the narrative presented in your documents (and supported through e-mail excerpts) is incomplete, in some instances incorrect and revised in some substantial ways" without making a case. I've not done that with you. You must support your claims. I can't respond to your vague refutations of my depictions without any basis for your refutations provided. Until you do so, your denials [of what I've written] are baseless. No one should believe them!⁴⁴⁰ I have been open, honest

⁴³⁹ Please give him a copy. He should have one.

⁴⁴⁰ This is very important - no one should believe anything you tell them because you say so!

and transparent with you. Not in general but specifically. I've been vulnerable. I've put my thoughts out there for accountability and correction. You have done none of this! I've been accountable in print. You have not! And as a matter of fact, my resignation from Grace Community Church played a very small part in RRF&D and AFA. You are off base in this regard when you say, "It seems to us that we've all been in ministry too long to overlook the reality that 'The one who states his case first seems right' (Prov 18: 17). I have not stated my case (that would take 100 plus pages) in how my assessment was handled or resignation demanded. In fact, I've left it unstated.⁴⁴¹ You are badly exaggerating the case. Let me say again in no uncertain terms. You have not provided me a fact based, evidential response to my points or illustrations in what you now write.⁴⁴² You agreed to provide me your perspective on my documents. Two and a half pages does not constitute a response. You've had RRF&D for 12 months and AFA for 5 months. You have addressed none of my most serious concerns or attended to any of my examples. Lastly, I've continuously expressed my eagerness to meet with C.J., which also applies to you, but not until he and now you, provide a comprehensive response to my concerns and illustrations. As a second condition, I've also required that C.J. acknowledged his sins to the blogosphere; confess his sins generally to the movement and specifically to the pastors. These conditions are just and reasonable in light of Scripture and SGM polity. This should have been agreed to from the beginning.

In the days to come, I will provide my response to the Board's letter and also C.J.'s letter from March 11.

Brent

Phony Baloney

One of the reasons I've limited our interaction to written forms of communication is to avoid being manipulated and misrepresented by you and others. You can distort unrecorded conversations but it is much more difficult to successfully distort or misrepresent written correspondence. You've done this on several occasions by

⁴⁴¹ Let me add something a bit off the point. The other day I had lunch with a close friend. He asked a brave question of me on behalf of others. He wanted to know if I had accepted "hush money" from Sovereign Grace Ministries. Why? Because people find it hard to believe I've remained silent the last two years and offered no defense. They figure it must be the result of a bribe. I told my friend "no" it wasn't because of a bribe since you were unwilling to pay out my asking price of one million dollars. Just kidding.

⁴⁴² I don't say the following with arrogance or any desire to provoke a fight; but, I do not think you can provide this kind of a response because the facts and the truth are not on your side. But I am very willing to be adjusted on any point. Just document your case with actual evidence, not "group think."

misquoting me, quoting me out of context, and making charges contrary to the evidence. I've been able to correct you by resorting to the written record. I believe conversation needs to take place but only after an open and honest dialogue in print.

If you readily distort what I've written, I can't imagine how badly you'd distort what I've said. Of course, there are innumerable historical examples, some of which I included in RRF&D and AFA.

The Board of Directors is not immune to the same folly. Here's the latest example.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Sunday, June 05, 2011 8:49 AM
To: Joshua Harris; Jeff Purswell; Dave Harvey; C.J. Mahaney
Subject: Missed Deadline

I was supposed to have my response [CR] to you by June 3. Please forgive me for missing the deadline. It should be in your hands this coming week. I regret being late in getting back to you.

Brent

From: Jeff Purswell
Sent: Tuesday, June 07, 2011 5:18 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris
Subject: RE: Missed Deadline

Dear Brent,

Thanks for your note, but please know that in our minds there's nothing to forgive. We set no deadline for your response, and in fact the only response we asked about concerned your willingness to meet, either with C.J. and a mediator, or perhaps with the Sovereign Grace board, or with anyone you'd like in order to pursue a God-glorifying reconciliation. That remains our sincere hope and prayer.

In Christ,

Dave, Jeff, and Josh

Dave, Jeff and Joshua's errant "fact" was easily corrected by the fact of what was written.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2011 7:09 AM
To: Purswell, Jeff; Harris, Joshua; Harvey, Dave
Cc: Mahaney, C. J.
Subject: Fact Check

Dave, Jeff and Joshua,

You are mistaken about the "facts." The fact is you asked for a response to all the material you sent me. That's what I've been working on the last two months. Here's what you said on March 30

Brent, as we communicated in our letter to you on 3/11, it is our desire to see the issues you raised in your documents, along with those raised in additional e-mails, fully resolved and to see you and C.J. reconciled. Let us also reiterate our willingness as a board to meet with you, along with a mediator, so that these issues can be explored fully and objectively. We believe that the lengthy responses that C.J. has provided, along with the process of growth and accountability he has pursued, has prepared the way for a fruitful process of reconciliation to take place. Therefore, we look forward to hearing your response to all the material that's been sent already, and especially to the invitation to pursue reconciliation with a godly, objective mediator whom we all trust.

Written correspondence also protects me from being misrepresented or manipulated. It is much harder to twist what is written compared to what is spoken.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, June 09, 2011 8:35 AM
To: Purswell, Jeff; Harvey, Dave; Harris, Joshua
Cc: Mahaney, C. J.
Subject: Phony Baloney

I must add a comment. Your e-mail appears to be a manipulative attempt to frame the issue of my response for your strategic advantage by making it sound as though Concluding Remarks (forthcoming this week) is uncalled for and indeed contrary to "the only response" you asked me to give. That's phony baloney.

I've changed the subject line of my previous e-mail to "Fact Check."

Brent Sharing His Concerns with the Sovereign Grace Pastors

Well, we have reached the end of the road. It is now time for me to share my concerns with the Sovereign Grace pastors.⁴⁴³ For the longest time, I never entertained this course of action. It was inconceivable. But we are at a different place today. You have refused to address or acknowledge many sins of a serious nature and the Board of Directors has taken insufficient action in its correction and discipline of you. Others have gone unaddressed as well.

C.J., I rejoice in the “thirty-fold” fruit that has been born in your life as a result of this ten year process. I am glad that friends have finally spoken the truth to you in love. But the most serious issues I’ve brought to your attention have been ignored, repudiated or denied. Things like deceit, lying, covering-up, hypocrisy, lording, and favoritism. I take no delight in saying this, but you and Sovereign Grace Ministries cannot be trusted until these things are acknowledged. I do not mean to imply the ministry is corrupt or completely untrustworthy. It isn’t. There are many outstanding people of high moral integrity that work for Sovereign Grace Ministries and serve as pastors in Sovereign Grace churches. But given a certain set of temptations related to the love of reputation and self preservation, I have no confidence you, or those around you, will walk in the light, be truthful, or handle people properly. I’ve said this from the beginning.

“Primarily, I hope and desire to see a restoration of integrity, truth telling and justice in Sovereign Grace so there is no lying, spin, manipulation, lording, cover-up, or partiality. I am concerned for the movement. Some men have followed sinful aspects of your example and leadership – the kind referenced in this response. These men have acted deceitfully, judgmentally, unbiblically, and hypocritically. Their example in turn, has harmed others and been corrosive in its effect. These things are not pervasive in their lives, your life or the movement but they are serious. I know you value integrity but when you feel judged or sinned against it is often subterfuged in your life. When you become resentful, bitter and angry – grace and integrity often get left behind. These are fueled by the idols of self-preservation and love of reputation. As the movement has grown, so has temptation and sin.” (RRF&D, p. 128)

There is no lack of illumination, only obedience and a willingness to be open and honest with the movement. I unceasingly pray you will make a thorough confession to the movement and the pastors. I want to see the reputation of Sovereign Grace Ministries

⁴⁴³ I also plan to make my thoughts available to a small group of former Sovereign Grace pastors or employees. Nine to be exact: Dave Bendenelli, George Harrington, Keith Jacob, Bo Lotinsky, Dan McIntosh, Paul Palmer, Todd Twining, Dan Walsh, Steve Whitman. I’ll ask everyone not to make hard copies for distribution or electronically forward any of my material.

restored and preserved. And I want to see you walking in the freedom that comes from a clear conscience. But mostly, I want to see the gospel protected and advanced. I leave you with this final appeal.

“The issues I’ve raised are not obscure or difficult to discern. The examples are numerous and easy to perceive. I hope RRF&D and AFA serve your soul and result in public confession. I completed RRF&D and sent it to you three weeks before the Pre-Conference Gathering at Together for the Gospel in April [2010]. I prayed you’d take the opportunity to tell the Sovereign Grace pastors about the last 10 years (or longer) and acknowledge your hypocrisy. I didn’t hope or pray for these things with a desire to humiliate or embarrass you. I simply hoped you’d follow your own teaching and the example of other men who have publically confessed sin of a much less serious nature and often at your behest. I believe you know the right thing to do but I realize there are many temptations you must resist and overcome in order to do so. Therefore, I’d encourage you again, to be open and honest with the Sovereign Grace pastors and the movement.... There is no greater service you could provide. A public confession would bring glory to God, protect the gospel, restore confidence in Sovereign Grace Ministries, bless the pastors, set an example for the next generations of leaders, and benefit your soul.” (AFA, p. 76)

You can respond to me in many different ways – some injurious. Instead, I hope you’ll respond to God’s Word.

Proverbs 28:13

*He who conceals his sins does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*