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THE UNTOLD STORY
INCOMPLETE VERSION
JUNE 25, 2011

Proverbs 18:17
The one who states his case first seems right,
until the other comes and examines him.

Introduction

For the last two years, people have been stating their case against me while I've remained silent. I've withheld comment for two reasons. First, I wanted to give all my friends from Grace Community Church more than sufficient time to transition to other churches without having to sort out the circumstances surrounding my resignation if I spoke openly. Second, I hoped men like C.J., Dave, Bob and Gene would come to repentance and set the record straight thereby rendering unnecessary any explanation from me. In particular I hoped C.J. would acknowledge his wrong doing and thereby have a godly impact upon the other leaders.

I have chronicled my concerns for C.J. and other leaders in Sovereign Grace Ministries in three major documents written over the last 18 months..

The Demand for My Resignation - Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Eric Kircher and I met regularly for personal fellowship and conversation about the church. On this particular day, we had lunch at Toast Café in Davidson, NC. Eric was serving part time as a pastoral assistant in the church. More importantly, Eric and his wife, Anna, had become dear friends or so we thought. What happened next during our lunch has no comparison in my 32 years of full time Christian service. I was about to be betrayed in a manner I've never observed elsewhere.

With little introduction, Eric presented me a letter demanding my immediately resignation as senior pastor of Grace Community Church (GCC) because I was "no longer qualified to preside as Pastor." The letter was signed by him, Ray Mulligan, Roger Layman and Jim Aldridge. Later, I discovered that Mike Lukavsky and Kenny Cook were also recruited and agreed to my immediate firing. All these men were dear friends. The letter read,

"It is with genuine remorse and regret that those who have signed below, members of the Board and Advisory Board of Grace Community Church request and require the willing resignation of Brent Detwiler from the Board of

Directors of Grace Community Church effective immediately. This request is based upon our uniform agreement that Brent Detwiler is no longer qualified to preside as Pastor due to historical and current issues regarding pride in the form of independence and a resistance to receiving and acting upon the concerns and observation brought by those [Ray & Eric] closely involved in his pastoral care.”

These men had come to a firm conclusion even though none of them had talked to me about being disqualified from ministry as a group or as individuals. In fact all of these men spoke highly of me for many years. Now, these men had determined I must be fired and forced out immediately. I was uniformly declared unfit for ministry. They were dead serious in their demand.

At the end of Eric’s presentation at our lunch, he firmly reiterated the absolutely necessity of me giving him an answer to their demand. He said I had 72 hours to sign the resignation document. I must return it to him by 12 noon on Saturday. He was not playing around. He was not faking it. This was not a hoax or a ploy. These men were demanding my resignation for real. The last line in the letter read, “I, Brent Detwiler do willingly resign as Pastor of Grace Community Church and President of the Board of Directors effective immediately, June ____, 2009.” Two months later, I found out Eric, Ray, Roger and Jim were following the directives of Gene Emerson in taking this course of action.

I had no idea any of this was in the works. I cannot begin to explain how utterly unexpected it was. The Kircher’s never even alluded to the need for such action - nor had anyone else. It came without warning and it came contrary to everything Eric and Anna were communicating to us, to everyone else in the church and to Sovereign Grace Ministries. Never have I experienced such betrayal or felt such pain. Eric and Anna had repeatedly spoken so highly of me in public and in private.

During his presentation, Eric expressed no concern for the impact of this action upon me and Jenny. There was no care, appreciation, empathy or offers of assistance; just the demand to resign. I was being forced out with no process, no appeals and no mention of restoration. Just a harsh, “I want an answer by Saturday.” In a few days, I was looking at no job and no income. Most significantly, I was looking at no church which I loved and deeply cared about. And most painful of all, six of my friends conspired against me without ever talking to me. More on this later.

Time and again, Eric and Anna told us “You can be honest with us. We are loyal. We understand. We’ve behind you 100%. We’ve got your back.” Now, in an act of betrayal we were left with nothing but broken hearts.

Seeing Things in a Very Different Light?

Just two months earlier Eric was in a completely different place. On March 24, 2009, he wrote a 9 page letter to Gene Emerson and the leadership team of Sovereign Grace Ministries including C.J. Mahaney and Dave Harvey. This action resulted from a three hour conversation he and Anna had with Gene a couple of weeks earlier. Eric and Anna were profoundly troubled by Gene's biased and judgmental attitudes toward me. This first-hand experience prompted Eric to write the letter. Here is an abridged quotation that summarizes the essence of his concerns for Gene and Sovereign Grace Ministries.

"SGM has become uncharitable and impatient in its approach and response to concerns with Brent and GCC [Grace Community Church]. This is evidenced by SGM listening and acting primarily upon the claims and accusation of offended parties without soliciting and patiently hearing the perspective of Brent or the leadership of GCC.... Brent has not asked me to write this letter. It was not his idea and he did not proof read it.... His progress in some areas has been remarkable. Other areas have progressed more slowly than some may have wished. Overall Brent has responded with incredible humility while shepherding his flock during a most difficult season.... I am asking that SGM be as entreatable as they are asking Brent to be. The examples and concerns I have brought, and this is only a sampling, are not issues of practicality. They are issues concerning the glory of God in the church.... 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."

The treatment by SGM and in particular Gene was so bad, we were thinking about the possibility of departing the movement. Here is an email from Anna representing her thoughts about leaving SGM just before Eric sent his letter to Gene and the Sovereign Grace leadership team.

From: Anna Kircher
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2009 10:36 AM
To: Eric Kircher; Jenny Detwiler; Brent Detwiler
Subject: Some Thoughts for Your Consideration

Out of respect for SGM and the leadership God has put in place, it doesn't seem appropriate to leave SGM without first going to that leadership and presenting the hugely erroneous, biased and slanderous way in which all the events of this past year have occurred. Eric, Ray and John [Schaaf] can request a meeting with Gene and Dave. They can present their concerns in detail - the way in which this whole thing has been handled, the facts about all the people deeply

concerned about CrossWay and how Mickey and Larry handled the plant, the slanderous build up of false information that fueled an already biased, bitter group, the complete lack of seeking truth on both sides not just one, the misrepresentation of how Brent handled all the situations (e.g., Rob Shedore, Andy & Lani George, Stephen Detwiler).

Will they listen - who knows? Will they care? - who knows? But... that really doesn't matter.

Could God move on Dave's heart and cause great concern and alarm that this has been terribly mishandled? Yes - but that won't be an expectation.

However, we will all know that the truth has been presented in a way that honors God. We are not responsible for the outcome.

I believe that if the above can be accomplished, all involved in choosing to part ways with SGM (Detwilers, Kirchers, Mulligans and Schaafs) can do so knowing that we did all we can to walk through the necessary steps with integrity, with a commitment to truth, with humble hearts, and with as pure motives as possible.

Jonathan also provided his perspective to Eric and Anna, Ray and Jenny, and me on Sovereign Grace Ministries. Anna appreciated his counsel.

From: Jonathan Detwiler

Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2009 8:32 PM

To: Jonathan M. Detwiler

Cc: Brent Detwiler; Ray Mulligan; Jenny Mulligan; Eric Kircher; Anna Kircher

Subject: Re: Recommendation

Here are my thoughts on the matter...

I'd say that if Sovereign Grace holds its current positions and approaches we'd need to leave Sovereign Grace and that there'd have to be a fairly significant change.

With that said, I think it is important that we don't hold them to coming back with instant repentance and a fully positive response. As I would say they have been in a pattern of sin, it is not typical, as with any of us to see it quickly based off a limited discussion. Even if they said, "well we don't really see what you are talking about but are willing to meet," I think that'd be a step worth taking. We need to patiently but clearly portray our perspectives and seek to bring them along. We want to be postured to forgive and demonstrate patience and

grace as Christ has shown us. However, it is reasonable to expect that if we did meet with them that we'd begin to see a progressive work in them and an increased willingness to listen. Their acceptable response should not be simply based on treating us "well" from this point forward, but that there would have to be some seeing of past sins and repentance...otherwise we are still setup for the same issues.

From: Anna Kircher

Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2009 10:01 PM

To: Jonathan M. Detwiler

Cc: Brent Detwiler; Ray Mulligan; Jenny Mulligan; Eric Kircher, Anna Kircher

Subject: Re: Recommendation

If I may add my comments... Jonathan - I think there is a lot of wisdom in your comments. We would want to respond to them with the same grace and mercy we want others to respond to us.

Thank you for this perspective!!

Less than five months after writing his letter to the SGM leadership team, Eric recanted all he said and drastically reversed course. On August 13, he wrote Grace Community Church and said, "Subsequent to writing the letter in March, I began to see things in a very different light. I realized I had many misconceptions about the entire situation." This gives the impression that Eric's opinion of me began to change for the worse, while his opinion of SGM changed for the better, immediately after March 24. That was not the case. This was a misleading statement by Eric. Two questions must be asked. When did Eric begin to see things differently? And, what changed his perspective? Keep in mind, I was told to resign on June 3. He wrote SGM the nine page letter on March 24.

From March 24 to May 20, Eric and Anna continued to commend me and express very serious concerns for SGM regarding "the hugely erroneous, biased and slanderous way in which all the events of this past year have occurred." Here is a response to Susie DiGiacomo and Jessica Diehl about the possibility of leaving SGM. It was written on April 1.

From: Eric Kircher

Date: April 1, 2009 11:36:09 PM EDT

To: Susie DiGiacomo; Jessie Diehl

Cc: Anna Kircher

Subject: Re: Checking In

Dear Susie and Jessica,

Thanks for getting back to us so soon. My heart goes out to you as you walk through this. It is extremely disheartening to see this unfold before our eyes. I guess I sort of thought that this could never happen in SG. How could the men we have put our trust in for so long be influenced by something, somehow to the point where it gets like this? I guess I felt so safe from all this stuff. It's just so ugly! It's [SGM] disgusting and deplorable. It seems incomprehensible. It's so sad.

Anna and I have had a significant head start on processing this stuff. It's my desire to share the following thoughts cautiously and with care as much as possible by email. I do not expect you guys to see it our way. We all must be Bereans (Acts 17:11) and go to the Lord and the Scriptures for ourselves when at a crossroads like this. I just thought I could share what we've learned so far on our journey through this issue.

The Lord has already patiently been pointing out things or structures I have misplaced my trust in. Much more trust than I ever imagined. Too often my security and Christian identity have been found in an organization as opposed to His church. I have also attributed to myself the positive qualities I've come to love about SGM. I felt like I was part of a big club that was safe somehow from the very stuff we're facing. The Lord's also pointing out subtle areas of pride that I harbored in my heart as I have favorably compared SG with other organizations and attributed myself to be informed and insightful for being here in SG for so long. No doubt, it has been great and we have enjoyed it so much, but our spiritual growth doesn't have to hinge on membership in SG. That sounds obvious, but that's not what came out of my heart when the actuality of this possibility started to become real.

It's also been a bit startling to see the humanity of these guys I've called my 'leaders'. I'm asking myself, "Why?" They are just as human as I am. They are just men. I don't say this to be cynical, but my perspective is being adjusted. I still have great affection, respect and esteem for the guys involved, I just see that they have the proverbial "plank" in the eye. That plank doesn't have to ruin how I see myself woven into Christ's Bride. It may be too soon to say this, but my day to day life won't change a bit. I'll still have great relationships in my church, great SG and other publishers of worship, great SG, CCEF and other conferences. We'll be in relationship with churches, with men who have known Brent for 25 years, most of whom are in SG. We'll also have a lot more visiting pastors.

Your question about the "stand-alone" thing was the first thing on my radar too. Four months after Anna and I were married the precious church we were

in crashed and folded just like yours. I told Brent this is the first rule of church membership for me, "Don't fly solo." "Don't follow a man." I asked him these things before I sent the letter to SG. He said to me that affiliation and relationship is what he's after. Objective, loving, supportive affiliation and relationship with men of like mind and hearts are things we all want. I believe Brent when he says he would pursue this (It does take time) if SGM doesn't work out.

I also know what I have seen being on the inside of this whole thing. Brent has conducted himself with amazing integrity. He has not been perfection. However, he has displayed his warts before all others. He has subjected himself to humiliating scrutiny and challenges of his character. He has sought forgiveness from all as his conscience and Scripture has directed him while only some have granted it. He has opened his life to Anna and I and others whom have known him for 25 years (I'm referring to guys in Florida). After all this I must say, and this is just a part of our story, I have faith to trust him and follow him should the relationship with SG is concluded. None of this stuff is disqualifying in the least. Practically, in my head, it's not like the guy's going to go off the deep end. He's in his mid-fifties. His doctrine, the doctrine I've come to so love, is not going to change. It's not like it's going to be the "Brent Show!" He doesn't do that. And, like you, I love all the people of this great church of ours. Sure it's been hard getting out of the gate to start GCC, but at least we now know why it's been so hard. I want to start reaching out!

Should our relationship with SGM go south, Anna and I have decided to move forward and stay in the church. The Lord moved us up here for this church and He has not ever, not even in the toughest of times and there have been some doozies, He has not ever given us even an inkling of leaving and returning to Florida. In the big picture it's just like you know in your heart; God alone has all the answers. When the heat gets really intense and the *adversary* is working overtime to get me fearing and anxious and angry, I have to look upward and outward. You're in the heat now. Anna and I love you and Jess and want to stand with you in any way we can. We'd love to get together and talk this stuff out, no strings attached. All we can do though is speak from our hearts. It's much harder for many people than or us because we don't have any connection to CrossWay. We also know the guys Brent is talking with in Florida. You don't. Big difference, but the Lord will guide you. (Phil 2:13).

So thanks. We'll keep dialoguing. We are going out of town on Monday with Brent and Jenny to Gaithersburg for the Pastors Conference. Should be great. However I know the Lord will be speaking to us up there too. He is good! See ya'll Saturday. Oops! Hey Susie, please come to the [1st anniversary] picnic. Almost no one knows what you know. Please, let's stick together through this.

Besides there's gonna be lots of BBQ and fun in the sun! Think it over and let us know. God bless ya'll, E & A

This email will self-destruct in 10 seconds, so delete it first!

I provided Eric's e-mail response to Susie and Jessica to the Assessment Team. Here is what I said to Bob Kauflin, Phil Sasser and Wayne Brooks.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2009 10:36 AM
To: Bob Kauflin; Phil Sasser; Wayne Brooks
Subject: Commendation to Susie

Would you mind reading this? I know Eric has changed his perspective but this is another example of his commendation [of me]. That continued up to June 3. That's why June 3 [demanding my resignation] was such a shock.

Eric also wrote me about their perspective on the slander occurring at CrossWay Community Church.

From: Eric Kircher
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 10:14 AM
To: Brent Detwiler; Jenny Detwiler; Anna Kircher
Subject: Thoughts on the Susie Issue and Our Response

Hey Brent,

Maybe it's time to stand up to all the slander and gossip going on at CrossWay. It has been and continues to be destructive to our church and to the members of our church. When it gets to this level where people are approaching GC [Grace Community] members and saying directly or intimating "Brent has character issues", "Brent is on the 'outs' with SGM", "Grace Church is leaving SGM", "Grace Church is being asked to leave SGM", something needs to be done! Many appeals have been made to stop the slander but nothing has been done.

Why don't you send an email to Mickey (cc - Gene and Dave) and ask Mickey to address the church publicly to stop the slander and gossip? Whether they do it or not we have no control over. At least they will be aware it is occurring, and that you know.

It is unacceptable! Time to fight (says Anna!) :!!!!

Eric

Two weeks later on April 14 at our monthly meeting with all the Grace Community Church leaders and wives (a group of 25 people), Anna said they were “fully supportive of me without any reservations.” She compared what I was walking through with Dave Harvey and Gene Emerson to the Salem Witch trials. Her children were studying the trials in school. She was referencing the way innocents were found guilty of witchcraft and put to death. While not an appropriate analogy, she and Eric felt strongly about how badly I was being treated.

That same evening, Eric and Anna told everyone they knew a SGM pastor (this was a reference to Wayne Brooks - more later), who was a friend, who said it was inappropriate for Eric to be sharing concerns and asking questions about his personal life and the church. In contrast, Eric said “but Brent has been totally open about his life and welcomed any questions or concerns I’ve shared.” This included input for the church but especially input for my life. Eric meant I was humble and teachable, open and honest. In fact, he told all the leaders and wives that night, I was the most teachable pastor they’d ever known next to Danny Jones.

A week a later on April 22, Eric wrote Dave Harvey. Eric affirmed my godly character and growth in grace on behalf of Ray, Jonathan, and himself; expressed his lack of confidence in Gene, addressed Dave’s total lack of response to his March 24 letter, and pointed out everyone’s lack of willingness to hear and understand our perspective.

From: Eric Kircher
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2009 11:18 AM
To: Dave Harvey
Subject: Follow up

Dave,

Thanks for getting back to me about my [March 24] letter to the SG leadership team. I wanted to wait until after the Pastors Conference to respond to you as I knew our time at Covenant Life would be an encouragement and update me about SGM’s perspective on many relevant issues.

First, thanks for rejoicing in our affirmation of Brent’s character and expressing the benefit of leaving to us his care and growth in grace.

Secondly, in my letter to you, I raised the concerns I have for Gene’s handling of things and why, even with charitable judgments, it has undermined my confidence in him. However, you didn’t respond to these concerns in any way. I wondered why? Because of C.J.’s message at the [Pastors] conference [on April 6-8] on how SGM is responding to “stumbles” and “offended parties,”

I have trust we'll sit down and discuss these issues face-to-face in a reasonable time frame or in 6 to 12 months.

One other thing. In your email to Brent dated April 11th you said, "Eric suggested in a recent letter that we [SGM] are not being patient with you and that this omission may say more about us [SGM]." I think you misunderstood my point. This has been a long process and it has required endurance by everyone. I/ we are grateful for your perseverance. In my letter, however, this was not my meaning. What I was saying was that we do not feel anyone has at any time sought to patiently hear and understand our perspective on the details of the last twelve months. None the less, I am confident we will have that opportunity with you.

I look forward to hearing from when you get a chance.

Sincerely,

Eric

Three weeks later on May 18, Eric was supposed to have a phone call with Gene Emerson about his March 24 letter to SGM. Eric did not want to talk with Gene. This was his rough draft response to Gene. Eric sent it to me for feedback (cf. "Subject: Follow up w Gene / How's this?"). I didn't change anything. He sent it as is. In addition to the stated reasons, Eric was so upset with and distrustful of Gene from previous experiences and conversations, he would not talk to him alone on the phone. Eric's concerns were not limited to Gene however. He continued to struggle with SGM in a major way. This letter to Gene was written on May 13. In his e-mail to Gene, he retracts nothing and asks again for the opportunity to discuss his March 24 letter and concerns.

From: Eric Kircher
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 7:27 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Follow up w Gene / How's this?

Dear Gene,

First I want to apologize for my response to you taking so long. I've had a death and cancer diagnosis in my family and extended family that required me to travel to Philadelphia and Florida where I am now. Thanks for your patience.

I'd like to postpone talking about my [March 24] letter and related matters until scheduling permits Dave to join you and me, Brent and Jonathan, and possibly our wives, in a face to face meeting. We think it is most important to discuss our concerns as a group and in person. That is why I requested a meeting with you and Dave in my letter. Because the issues are not specific or limited to you and me, a phone call between us is not the most suitable way to proceed.

Again, as we work together to move forward, personal, face to face dialogue with you and Dave to discuss my [March 24] letter and our concerns is the most beneficial and relational way to proceed. For this reason we are happy to wait until Dave's schedule allows for this time together.

Thanks again Gene for your understanding and patience in receiving this email.

-Eric

Eric's Newfound Anger at Me

On Saturday morning, May 16, Jenny and I went over and spent time with Eric and Anna in their home. We were casually hanging out and getting caught up on the latest. Eric had previously asked me if the church could pay for his health insurance on the group policy. I graciously explained that wasn't possible by law for part time employees. That led to talk about the Kircher's budget.

In that context, Eric brought up some issues with Anna. He proceeded to make four very harsh and categorical comments about her. They were all unkind and of a personal nature. I won't repeat them. It caused Anna to cry and she responded with "understandable" anger. At that point, I intervened. I gently corrected Eric and appealed he not make such broad accusations in such a belittling manner. He did not take kindly to this and became angry at me. He asked Anna's "forgiveness" for making her cry but didn't address the real issues in his heart. Things "cooled down" but Eric was not pleased with Anna or me.

Four days later on Wednesday, May 20, Jenny and I had dinner with the Kirchers at 131 Main, a restaurant in Cornelius. At the beginning of our conversation, Eric mentioned the idea of Anna teaching a course on hospitality. Then he talked about the need for more "adult education" in the church. He continued his course and made several harsh, categorical and sweeping statements about me and the church just like he did with Anna days before.

First he said "No one in the church feels connected to you [Brent]." By no one, he seriously meant that not a single person felt any sense of relational connectedness with

me. He went on to say that the church was “not doing any outreach” and “all we do is have Care Groups and Sunday morning.” He also claimed Jenny and I had “pulled back from them relationally.”

This was a repeat of four days earlier with Anna. With tears in her eyes, Jenny interrupted him and challenged his assertion that no one in the church felt connected to me (which was contrary to all the times Eric commended me for my care of people). At that point, Eric’s anger intensified as did Jenny’s in response. I tried to intervene and told Eric I was glad to hear his critique.

I also gently appealed that he avoid using such sweeping generalizations in conversations like these. I referenced a few of the things we just did to give him perspective (e.g. the recent 1st Anniversary picnic at the Schaaf’s, the Easter Sunday outreach, and the Women’s Retreat at Camp Caraway) and reminded him that all the Care Group leaders were supposed to be doing a May evangelistic outreach. He immediately got very angry at me and said “now you are turning it back on me” and told me “it is stupid to do Care Group outreaches.” He was not open to my mild correction. I was gracious, calm and careful in my response. I finished the conversation by reiterating my interest in all his observations. I told him I’d like to hear more and draw him out further. I asked for his patience because I was behind in my work due to major surgery I had on my shoulder a week earlier.

Here is what Jenny wrote them two days after the conflict which was the first and only conflict in our history with the Kirchers.

From: Jenny Detwiler
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2009 12:41 PM
To: Eric Kircher, Anna Kircher
Subject: Checking In!

Dear Eric and Anna,

I do want to also do this in person but I did want to ask your forgiveness for interrupting you and Eric as you were bringing your thoughts at dinner the other night. I should have just listened. I know you were only seeking to serve the church and serve Brent by bringing your ideas and perceptions. I understand how I could have made you feel like I didn’t want to hear your thoughts and I regret that. Please forgive me.

I don’t want you to feel like you have to bring your thoughts perfectly, but I do have to say that it does matter and affects me how you bring them. Maybe the ultimate, ideal mature Christian should be able to receive anything, from anyone at any time but I’m not there. I do see friendship as a context for two-

way honest discussion but I also would see it as an opportunity to serve and love each other with thoughtful communication. I was stumbled and pained by how you shared some of your thoughts and where you went with the conversation after that [i.e., accusing Brent of turning it back on Eric]. I reacted by pressing for clarity. It wasn't that I didn't want to hear what you had to say. I did. I wanted to hear it all but I wanted to try to clear away the point of stumbling before moving forward. I want us to be able to talk about things fruitfully and in a way that brings faith and encourages our friendship. I know you want that as well. I want to seek by God's grace to handle things differently in the future.

Thanks for your friendship and grace,
Jenny

Two days later I met with Eric on Friday, May 22. At the time, he told me he "felt the conversation was fine" at the restaurant. In other words, he didn't think anyone had sinned. But clearly the conflict involved sinful anger. He also said he was concerned for Jenny "trying to figure out how she sinned" because "the gospel is bigger than all of that." This was in reference to our conversation with the Kirchers in their driveway when we dropped them off from the restaurant. Jenny told Eric and Anna in the car that she knew she sinned against them but needed a little time to examine her heart before asking forgiveness.

The Friday meeting between Eric and me was different than all previous meetings over many months. He was pressing and aggravated and made some strange remarks about Jenny. He was not pleased with her. For instance, he corrected me for times when Jenny supposedly "walked out of the Sunday morning meeting" in recent months and "went home on four occasions" and told me "people were watching her." That was bizarre. Jenny often excused herself before the end of the meeting to use the ladies room. She never went home. She stayed in back of the room so as not to disturb anyone. Eric was grasping at straws. He appeared to be looking for things to confront in us. Here is what I wrote them.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2009 8:06 AM
To: Eric Kircher; Kircher, Anna
Subject: Wine / Meeting

FYI - I asked Jenny about leaving the meeting. She's never left the Sunday meeting. Maybe you could clear [this] up with the persons who [were] concerned. She will get up and use the ladies room...then remain in back of gym so as not to be a distraction.

Thanks
Brent

At our Friday meeting, we also talked a little more about Eric's statement that no one in the church felt any relational connection to me and the effect it had upon Jenny. In that context, Eric again angrily interrupted me and said I "should fly to Philadelphia and acknowledge how much more [of my pride] I've seen and say to Dave [Harvey] I've been reduced to a pile of dust." He went on to say, "I don't think C.J. is being the mastermind behind it all." I had confidentially, but only limitedly, shared with Eric the difficulties with C.J. (cf. "Response Regarding Friendship and Doctrine," "A Final Appeal," and "Concluding Remarks"). I never referred to C.J. as "the mastermind." These comments were the very first indication that Eric's perspective on me was changing.

The next day, Saturday, May 23, I stopped by the Kirchers. I wanted to reach out to them and thank Anna for all her help on the recent ladies retreat. I gave her a copy of *The God I Love* by Joni Eareckson Tada. It was a pleasant time of casual interaction with one humorous note. We were talking about caffeine when Eric blurted out that Anna "drank 20 cokes a day when we first met." Anna was embarrassed and immediately protested the exaggeration as absurd. Eric held his ground and insisted it was true. We all laughed. A conflict did not ensue but it was another example of how entrenched and extreme Eric can be in his criticisms. In that context, Anna referred to Eric's moods and how he just gets "ugly" with her and others.

Four days later on Wednesday, May 27, I met with Eric again. His perspective had deteriorated. Whereas he had said no one sinned at the dinner, now he said in no uncertain terms that I sinned against him. He said I should not have "adjusted [his] perspective and tone" during the conflict at 131 Main. He said "I took it personally" and became angry. I asked him how he came to that conclusion. He said "based upon [my] body language and appearance" not anything I said or did. He told me he "should not need to parse words and include encouragement." In other words, Eric justified his conflict with Jenny and his sinful response to me. He was clearly resentful for the mild, but necessary, correction I brought him. Nor was I quick to address him. I waited at the dinner as long as possible. That is until the conflict became intense and had to be addressed.

He also said "I should say to headquarters [Sovereign Grace Ministries] how badly I respond to people" (like him in this situation) and stop "resisting Gene." This was a massive turnabout. I reminded Eric that two weeks earlier, he insisted Gene be replaced (we were trying to get Danny Jones and Wayne Brooks involved with Grace Community Church) and emphatically stated "we cannot move ahead with Sovereign Grace and work with Gene."

He went on to say “we have a fundamental difference now” about leaving Sovereign Grace Ministries, meaning he no longer wanted to leave while claiming I did. This wasn’t the case. I was doing all I could to remain with Sovereign Grace. I told Eric I didn’t want to leave either. Lastly he said “we must subjugate our concerns and set them aside” including his 9 page letter from March 24.

Two days later on Friday, May 29, we met again with Eric and Anna in the afternoon. Jenny wanted to ask for their forgiveness in person and not simply by e-mail. She confessed to being “offended and angry and allowing her emotions to rule.” She said she “should not have pressed Eric and been contentious” and “though struggling should have exercised self-control and humbly asked questions.” She went on to say “she was the one responsible for the conflict not Brent. Brent was trying to help us. Please don’t judge him. He did not respond the way I did.” Anna expressed her agreement with Jenny’s comments about me. I so respected the humility my dear wife modeled for all of us. I assumed Eric would follow her example with a similar confession. Regrettably, he acknowledged no wrong doing.

More on the “Resignation” Lunch with Eric

This brings us back to my resignation lunch with Eric which occurred five days later on a Wednesday, June 3. He started by saying he was “grateful for Jenny’s confession” but “discouraged I did not confess also.” He said “I was also very upset [angry] at him at 131 Main” and reiterated that I took his “input personally,” “immediately turned it around on him” and made him “the focus of attention.” He told me I should have said, “You know what Eric, you’re right!” At this point he told me he “can’t accept responsibility for your personal care any longer.” I was saddened and disheartened to hear this because we loved Eric and Anna. With sincerity, I expressed my appreciation for the ways they had cared for us and served us.

I was also fearful. Without Eric’s support, I didn’t know what the future held. Seconds later I found out when Eric demanded I resign within 72 hours and presented me the letter. In part it said, “Those who have signed below...request and require the willing resignation of Brent Detwiler...effective immediately. This request is based upon our uniform agreement that Brent Detwiler is no longer qualified to preside as Pastor.”

In addition to the four signatories (i.e., Eric, Ray, Roger, Jim), Eric forcefully impressed upon me how all the leaders in the church, which included John Schaaf, Jonathan Paul, Brian Lloyd, Kenny Cook and Mike Lukavsky, were fully aware of this action and in complete agreement with the need to fire me. He mentioned the only two exceptions – Andy Elseman and John Sutton – both of whom he tried to contact but unsuccessfully.

He also told me he “had been meeting with people every day and all day for last 4 days” and that “Ray, Roger, and Jim’s concerns for me skyrocketed after talking to him” having “told them all about things.” He then accused me of excluding him from leadership decisions by “acting independently,” “flying solo” and sinfully “controlling the flow of information.” This was an irrational assertion. It was the only statement I gently contested. I affectionately reminded Eric that I had always shared everything with him, involved him in every decision and there was nothing he did not know about. Time and again, Eric had commended me for these very things. I appealed to his integrity and self-knowledge but Eric was not in his right mind. Clearly, his anger, bitterness and resentment from 131 Main played a huge part in his betrayal of me. He denied this to the Assessment Team but it was his stated reason at our lunch for why I was no longer fit to be a pastor. It was also his main point during our last meeting on Wednesday, May 27. Eric was bitter for the correction he received and that bitterness poisoned his heart and mind.

Sometime after the Friday, May 29 meeting as couples, Eric went to Ray and then, they went to Roger and Jim. At some point in this process, Ray talked to Gene Emerson to get his counsel. Gene told Ray the only way Sovereign Grace Ministries could get involved and help the leaders and the church, was if they first “fired me” (Ray’s exact description of Gene’s counsel). The four men chose to follow Gene’s directive in order to get Sovereign Grace Ministries involved. I was totally unaware any of this was going on behind my back.

My son, Jonathan, called Eric almost immediately after my lunch with him on June 3 and then wrote all the leaders.

From: Jonathan Detwiler
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2009 5:00 PM
To: Jonathan M. Detwiler
Subject:

Dear Everyone,

I just go off the phone with Eric and found out that he has been meeting with some of the Care Group leaders, has contacted you all, and has asked Dad to step down as pastor. This news comes as a shock to me, and I am very disappointed and troubled to hear this news! I believe it is important that I write you this brief note.

First, I am saddened that this has never been discussed in any fashion with mom or dad or with myself as a member of the leadership team. It is very disappointing because something like this should not be decided “behind closed doors” but should minimally be a progressive discussion first with mom

and dad, then amongst the leadership team, and then if needed the care group leaders. This has come quickly and without any warning and is a quick turnaround from what was being said [i.e., Eric's many commendations of me].

Additionally, from what I know of the various "issues" mentioned, and I need to have more conversations, I have very serious concerns with the interpretation of things being presented. I believe that they are in many ways inaccurate and come from clouded perspectives. E-mail is not a good medium to go into the details of my concerns, but I would certainly ask that you be careful of processing without the proper information.

I am sorry that you all have to wade through all of this, as I know these are not pleasant things to deal with. I know that God is at work and will sovereignly be working out his good plan.

Jonathan

Jonathan also wrote Danny Jones and Wayne Brooks the following note.

From: Jonathan M. Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2009 1:51 AM
To: Danny Jones, Wayne Brooks
Subject: FW:

Gentlemen,

I hope you are well tonight!

As I am guessing you have probably now heard, Eric Kircher working in conjunction with Ray Mulligan (after having apparently already informed the care group leaders) and talking to some other guys, totally out of the blue asked Dad step down as pastor of the church today. As you have been somewhat kept abreast of the various developments here, and are guys that are friends, I wanted to briefly update you.

From my perspective, this has not been walked out in any sort of a biblical manner. It is also perplexing and concerning because just the other week Eric was praising Dad for his unbelievable humility and then after a few disagreements (about which I think some serious questions should be raised to Eric) he has spun around to this. Much could be said, but at the moment just wanted to give you a brief update. Glad to talk more if you have any desire or questions.

Either way, if you would be praying for the situation both for Dad and for the sake of the people in the church. It is our desire that God would be glorified and things would be walked out by everyone in a manner that would please him. Also, I'm sure Dad would appreciate hearing from you, even if you weren't trying to help arbitrate the situation.

FYI, below is an email [the one included above], I sent to the care group leaders (who according to Eric had already all been contacted...and Sovereign Grace notified, before he ever talked to me).

God bless,
Jonathan

The morning after my "resignation" lunch with Eric, I wrote all the leaders and their wives the following letter.

From: Brent Detwiler

Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2009 10:30 AM

To: Aldridge, Jim; Cook, Kenny; Detwiler, Brent; Detwiler, Jonathan; Elseman, Andy; Kircher, Eric; Layman, Roger; Lloyd, Brian; Lukavsky, Mike; Mulligan, Ray; Mulligan, Ray; Paul, Jonathan; Schaaf, John; Sutton, John; Cook, Sherri; Detwiler, Jenny; Elseman, Chasity; Kircher, Anna; Layman, Rhonda; Lloyd, Mary Beth; Lukavsky, Julie; Mulligan, Jenny; Schaaf, Amy; Sutton, Kim

Subject: Resignation

Hello Everyone,

Yesterday Eric gave me a letter signed by himself, Ray, Roger and Jim requiring me to step down as sr. pastor within three days. It was firmly and cordially presented as an ultimatum. Eric stated his reasons. I asked a few questions. There was no conversation regarding the impact on Jenny and me, our friendships, my livelihood, or the church.

Eric also said all of you had been contacted and fully agreed with this action implemented in this way (except for John Sutton and Andy since they had not been contacted yet). Jenny and I don't assume this report about each of you is true [and it turned out it was not true].

I am reminded of Margie Stroup's prophetic reading of Scripture at the end of the message on Sunday about sinful judging (Matt 7:1-2) and how to treat others.

Matt 7:12 "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

This action came as a complete surprise - no hint or warning. I realize a case for this action is being made to each of you. Jenny and I are glad to talk to you in private and answer any questions. Proverbs 18:17 says, "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him."

At this point, we are praying for God to guide and help us. We love you all. He will direct each of our paths.

Grace, mercy and peace be multiplied to you in Christ Jesus!

Brent & Jenny

Jonathan Paul wrote me that morning saying he was misrepresented by Eric and did not agree with the action taken.

From: Jonathan Paul
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2009 6:50 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: from JP

Brent,

I was not aware that Eric was going to ask you to step down yesterday. I knew that Eric, Jim and Roger were going to confront you on certain issues. I didn't ask what those issues were but I did give them my support to confront you. If my name was used yesterday in this I want to be clear what my understanding was. I am sure this is devastating to you and I am concerned for you. If you would like to get together on Saturday to talk, please let me know. I appreciate your humility in walking through this tough time and so appreciate your service to God's people.

JP

At the "resignation" lunch, Eric told me John Schaaf, Jonathan Paul, and Brian Lloyd were fully informed and in complete agreement with firing me. That was a lie. The first of many. All three men told me they knew nothing about the plan to fire me. Eric purposely misrepresented them in order to put added pressure on me to resign. Later, Eric tried to cover his tracks and told the Assessment Team (i.e., Bob Kauflin, Phil Sasser, Wayne Brooks) that he unintentionally misrepresented them due to "miscommunications" between the parties. This was a fallacious explanation.

Eric's statement that he met "with people every day and all day for the last 4 days" (i.e., Saturday-Tuesday) was likewise intended to pressure me. It also proved to be a lie. This came to light on July 23 at a meeting between me, Jenny, Jonathan, Eric, Ray, Roger, Jim and the Assessment Team. I brought the statement up to the Assessment Team to show the extent to which Eric attempted to turn people against me. Roger disagreed with my statement and laid out a corrected chronology. Jim and Ray contributed also. It turned out nothing about Eric's statement was true. He met with people but not "every day and all day for the last 4 days." At that point, Eric acknowledged his "categorical statement" but no wrong doing and he did not ask forgiveness. This sinful exaggeration was also intentional and purposeful to pressure my resignation.

Lastly, I felt Eric's pressuring to resign at the lunch when he said "Roger, Ray and Jim's concerns skyrocketed after talking to [him]." He was sending me a message that Roger and Jim were solidly in his court. I didn't know if it was true, but I felt the intended effect.

Jenny's Response to Anna (Eric, Roger and Jim)

On Wednesday evening, Anna wrote Jenny the following. "I want you to know that I love you and Brent deeply. You are my friend and I am committed to that friendship. This has been a very difficult decision and I cannot begin to imagine the struggle you both are experiencing." Jenny responded to Anna a few days later after a fuller picture of things had emerged. It was strongly worded and appropriately so. She copied Roger and Jim's wives.

From: Jenny Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 06, 2009 8:30 PM
To: Anna Kircher
Cc: Rhonda Layman; Tracie Aldridge
Subject: Reply

Anna,

I can't reconcile going behind our backs and seeking to turn our friends against us with friendship as an expression of love. You have not been honest with us and others. You have not dealt with us with integrity or loyalty. There is nothing about this that even remotely resembles a biblical response to conflict or concerns. I'm deeply saddened by how all of this has been handled.

When the four of us sat together in our living room the other day [May 29] and I asked forgiveness again for my sin against you and Eric at the 131 Main dinner, I expressed that I wouldn't want my sin to be held against Brent. I communicated that I knew Brent was not [sinfully] struggling with how you communicated and that if I hadn't started to ask questions he would have been content to hear all you said and probably would have agreed with it [I did want to hear Eric's concerns and there were some things I partially agreed with.] (Which is what he communicated to me after the dinner.) I confessed that he was trying to get me to stop and that his concern in what he said was to help Eric and I resolve the conflict. You completely agreed and said that you did not feel Brent was where I was and that he was always open to hear your perspective. You said you were not concerned for his part in the conversation.

Brent went on to tell both of you that he would love to hear any remaining thoughts you hadn't been able to express that evening the next time we or he and Eric were together. I had also already communicated to you even at dinner, I wanted to hear your perspectives as I have many, many times before but that I was stumbled by how you were communicating and I was trying to work through that before we moved on. On the other hand, I was surprised that neither you nor Eric asked my forgiveness for your responses at the dinner. I don't think I was the only one sinning. I would submit for your consideration that you both were angry. I felt attacked for struggling with your words rather than a loving concern for how they affected me. All of a sudden it didn't seem like we were 4 friends honestly communicating through a conflict but that we were being charged with an unwillingness to hear. Eric appeared extremely offended that Brent asked him to consider the categorical way he was speaking. That afternoon [May 29] at our house you gave no indication that this conflict wasn't resolved or that you had remaining concerns. We feel blind-sided.

And now I hear that you are communicating your grave concerns for Brent in part due to the dinner. It seems from the things we are hearing that you are twisting all of this and many other things to manipulate others to your new perspective. While you and Eric have spent hours and hours with people promoting your side we have not been given even one opportunity to respond. How can this be right or honor the Lord?

Brent and I have bared our souls to you and Eric over the last many months. We have been completely vulnerable to you. We have trusted you. You even said that we have allowed you over and over to ask any question and bring any concerns and that we have responded humbly and honestly. We drew you close. We opened everything about our lives to you. How can you treat us like this? How can you suddenly be making such charges and coming to these conclusions. You guys have been involved in everything! Every decision -

every move. You know how hard it's been. You know how Brent and I have sought to honor the Lord. You know how often Brent has suffered his reputation to protect others. You know how he allowed Ray [Mulligan] to sin against him [without correcting him] - time and time again in an effort to be open and humble. I know of no other man who would have let himself be treated like that. You know how we have been seeking to apprehend grace to move forward. Putting together a new leadership team - working to get Wayne involved - putting together a strategy to move forward as a church. We were right there - right on the edge of seeing it happen. We felt new faith budding in our hearts...

I am heartbroken that after all these months and all the time we have spent together that you have turned your back on us. How many times have you said to us "we've got your back" and "you don't ever have to have any concern, Eric is a loyal man and Brent is one of the most humble pastors you have ever related too?"

I can't believe that you have re-involved Ray in all of this knowing where is at. Even though in love for Ray and Jenny we protected their reputation you know very well where Ray has been at spiritually. You know of the grave concerns Wayne expressed for his soul - for his bitterness toward God and his lack of humility and hardness. How can I not think that in your offense toward us you went to recruit the man you knew would join with you. Just a few weeks ago you and Eric were expressing your ongoing concerns to the point of questioning the genuineness of Ray's spiritual experience [i.e., whether he was a true Christian] and now you have placed him back in the middle of this? ...and you're saying that his previous involvement qualifies for Matthew 18?

I wonder if you and Eric have been tempted over the last month or so and rather than believing the best and asking questions - you've come to critical judgments and that on top of your offense from the dinner the other night propelled you to put all of this into motion. If you had remaining questions or other concerns why didn't you simply ask us to meet with Roger or with Roger and Jim and you two? We would have been so happy and willing to do that. Were you afraid that if they heard the truth of Brent's motives, perspectives and decisions they would not concur with you?

It's easy for others to say that the process doesn't matter [e.g., Gene Emerson] but it does. We were close friends and I feel you have betrayed us. You have demonstrated the opposite of love - especially to someone who has trusted you and so deeply shared their lives with you.

I so wish these past few weeks could be erased. I so want the church to be built and people to enjoy the grace of God and each other. I long for our friendship to be restored and fellowship we shared to resume. I am so sorry for any way I have provoked you or tempted you or added to this situation.

May the Lord have mercy on us all, Anna.
Jenny

P.S. Rhonda and Tracie, I have copied you in hope that you would consider and somewhat understand my limited perspective.

Conference Call with Dave and Gene - Thursday, June 4, 2009

The following evening on Thursday, June 4, all the leaders from Grace Community Church had a conference call with Dave Harvey and Gene Emerson. I was not invited to participate in the call or even told about it. My son, Jonathan, knew about the phone call and asked to participate since he was a board of director and on the leadership team. He was forbidden by Dave to do so. It was a closed door session for Dave, Gene, Eric and Ray to tell all the leaders about my "sins" and "answer questions." A case was effectively made against me. My guilt was only confirmed in the minds of Jim, Roger, Mike and Kenny by Dave and Gene.

Here is what Eric and Ray said two days later in their June 6 letter to Sovereign Grace Ministries. "We do not assume that our findings or even our process for delivering them to Brent were flawless. Given the extent of the concerns but also an awareness of our own fallenness, we discussed these issues with the Care Group leaders, who unanimously agreed to invite Sovereign Grace Ministries in - to evaluate our findings."

Here's the point, Ray and Eric never shared their "findings" and "extent of concerns" with me, but they were happy to discuss them with all the leaders from Grace. Over the previous six months, I only had one conversation in March when Ray shared any concerns with me. Eric only shared concerns with me very recently. In violation of Scripture, I did not know what Ray and Eric were saying about me and I was not present to share my perspective if I differed.

In a vacuous nod to humility, they allowed for the possibility that their "findings" and the "process for delivering them" may not have been "flawless" or perfect. Eric and Ray also wrote, "Given the extent of the concerns but also an awareness of our own fallenness, we discussed these issues with the Care Group leaders." This is misleading in two ways. First, they had already discussed their concerns with Roger, Jim, Mike and Kenny. Days earlier these four men had been convinced I should be fired. They didn't share with them out of a concern for their "fallenness." They shared to make a

case against me. Second, Eric and Ray claimed to have discussed their “findings” with Andy Elseman, John Sutton, Jonathan Paul, John Schaaf, and Brian Lloyd for the same reason. That is, a concern for their sinfulness. I find that doubtful.

Having heard the “extent of concerns” for me, and before a decision was made to involve SGM, I wish someone had requested a meeting so I could share the “extent of [my] concerns” for Eric and Ray. This never happened. There was no regard for biblical justice and fair mindedness throughout the process. Actually, if Eric and Ray were equitable and really believed their findings might be flawed and their conduct fallen, they could have set up a “closed door” meeting between me and the leaders from Grace without them or Dave and Gene in attendance. Of course, that was not about to happen.

Needless to say, it was important to find out what Dave, Gene, Eric and Ray covered at this closed meeting so I wrote Dave and Gene asking for their notes.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, June 08, 2009 6:50 PM
To: Dave Harvey; Gene Emerson
Subject: Notes
Importance: High

Would you please send me as soon as possible your unedited/unabridged notes from the Thursday night phone meeting with the leaders from Grace Community Church.

Thank you
Brent

Here is Dave’s initial response.

From: Dave Harvey
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2009 9:44 AM
To: Brent Detwiler; Gene Emerson
Subject: RE: Notes

Brent,

Hope you are well. I’ve been praying for you. I did not take notes since most of the time was spent with Gene and I simply answering questions the men had about you and about how they should proceed.

I suppose you could contact the men that were present to see who took notes, but you should carefully consider how that will appear before you take that step.

Why is it important to get the notes?

Dave

I don't know if it is true that Dave and Gene "were simply answering questions" "most of the time." I guess it doesn't matter since they used the questions to make a case against me.

Dave went on to say I could contact the men who took notes but "should carefully consider how that will appear before you take that step." That was an ominous note. It deterred me from making contact with the men. I felt manipulated.

Lastly, Dave asked "Why is it important to get the notes?" The answer was obvious. I felt demeaned and manipulated by his answer. Dave should have said, "Brent, I understand how important it is for you to know what we covered. I don't want to keep any of that information from you. I want full disclosure. In the interest of justice, I'd be glad to ask the men to provide their notes for you. And Gene and I would be glad to write down our recollections from the meeting for you. Once that is completed, I want you to meet with all the men to share your perspective and answer any questions they might have. It is only right for them to ask you the same questions they were asking us about you."

Here is a second request to Gene. He also claimed to have no notes from the meeting. I took the occasion to explain the obvious and copied Dave.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2009 8:02 PM
To: Dave Harvey; Gene Emerson
Subject: RE: Notes

Would you [Gene] please send me your notes since Dave has no recorded minutes or talking points from the phone meeting?

I was not made aware of this critical meeting nor was I asked if I'd like to participate. Since my future and livelihood are at stake, I think it is reasonable to request the unedited/unabridged notes. Otherwise, I have no have no idea what is being said or covered in reference to me.

Thanks for your kind consideration of this request.

Brent

I sent all the e-mails above to the Assessment Team with the following note.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2009 3:57 PM
To: Bob Kauflin; Phil Sasser; Wayne Brooks
Subject: FW: Phone Mtg. with Gene and Dave

I am sure you noticed, but Dave's comment that "I suppose you could contact the men that were present to see who took notes, but you should carefully consider how that will appear before you take that step." That statement put a real chill or fear in me about contacting them or even talking to them.

The Assessment Team never talked to me about this intimidating example and never got back to me on the appropriateness of Dave's response. So far as I know, they never raised any of these issues with Dave either.

The only snippets of information on the closed meeting came from John Schaaf when I met with him the next day. Here is what John said according to my notes.

- "That the four men [Dave, Gene, Eric and Ray] made a very convincing case against [you]."
- That "no one else has seen it except them." Meaning none of the other leaders saw in my life the things I was accused of by the four men.
- That "the Sovereign Grace polity document says the only way to get help from Sovereign Grace was to take this drastic step [i.e., firing me] and that's what led up to this drastic action" [i.e., calling for my immediate resignation].
- That Eric said the "church is floundering" which Jonathan Paul protested.
- That Ray claimed "they had followed Matthew 18" when asked by John Schaaf. John asked this question because it did not line up with Ray's commendation of me in April and especially Eric's unqualified endorsement of me at the April 14 leaders and wives meeting.
- That I "didn't sign the Sovereign Grace membership agreement because I intended to leave" the movement. This was completely untrue.
- John told me he saw "no way out" and that "any defense" by me would be viewed by Dave, Gene, Eric and Ray as "proof of my guilt" that I am proud and unteachable.
- That a few men like "Brian Lloyd were angry [profoundly troubled] with Ray and Eric."
- That Brian said he was "only receiving 'code' from Ray and 'pieces' from Eric." By this he meant he had no idea they would fire me even though Eric told me Brian was fully informed and totally supportive of this action. He was not.

Reversing Course - Rescinding the Resignation

After the Thursday evening conference call with Dave and Gene; Jonathan Paul wrote me the following e-mail late that night.

From: Jonathan Paul
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2009 10:21 PM
To: Brent Detwiler; Roger Layman
Subject: from JP

Brent,

We had a very productive meeting tonight. [John Schaaf] and I have been assigned to meet with you and discuss the content of the meeting and the thoughts of the rest of the leaders. We would like to rescind the resignation letter at this time. We need you to give your planned [home school] graduation talk [on Saturday] and to preach this Sunday. Let's carve out time on Saturday to meet.

In Christ

JP

John Schaaf also wrote me that night about withdrawing the demand for my resignation. The Grace leaders would withdrawal the demand for my resignation if I agreed to an evaluation by Sovereign Grace Ministries.

From: John Schaaf
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2009 10:56 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Tonight's meeting

Brent,

As we concluded the meeting the guys asked Jonathan Paul and me to communicate the group's plan to you. I called ahead, and we came by the house to talk in person, but at 10 PM all the lights were out so we did not knock...

The conclusion after a long conference with Dave and Gene is as follows. The leaders here would like to withdraw the request for your immediate resignation if you agree to allow the Sovereign Grace guys to come alongside us to evaluate

you, the leadership team, and the situation.... They are willing to do this in a quick enough fashion to be humane to all involved. We would request your continued leadership of the church, please, until the conclusion of the review process (including preaching this Sunday and your Guest Speakership at the home school graduation!)..

I am at the clinic tomorrow and very available to talk through about noon. Then I will be swamped until 6, then at your service if needed.

I love you, and so does everyone else,

John

The next day, Gene told me I must continuing leading the church. Though I didn't know it at the time, several days earlier he instructed Ray to make me resign if they wanted any help from Sovereign Grace Ministries. Now, forty eight hours after my resignation was required because I didn't qualify to be a pastor, Gene was telling me I must lead the church. It wasn't a request. It was an assignment. I admit to feeling used and abused. Gene signed off "with care" but that certainly was not the case.

From: Gene Emerson

Sent: Friday, June 05, 2009 10:25 AM

To: Brent Detwiler

Cc: Dave Harvey

Subject: Moving Forward

Hi Brent,

I understand that Jonathan Paul and John Schaaf met with you last night to explain that the formal request from the leaders that SGM assemble a team of men to evaluate your qualification for leadership. Part of this agreement is that a public statement will be made in the next week or two (on Sunday morning or at a family meeting) acknowledging that this process will be moving forward in the next few weeks. We will attempt to expedite this review for everyone's benefit so that it will be concluded within 4 to 6 weeks.

In the meantime, you will need to continue to provide leadership for the church. I know this is a challenging season, Brent, and I'll be glad to serve you in any way I can. I am praying for you, Jenny, and all those involved.

With care,
Gene

Sovereign Grace Ministries Covers Up the Forced Resignation

Dave Harvey was concerned for Gene's reckless counsel and the public relations nightmare on his hands. Rightly so. I could have refused to speak at the home school graduation and the Sunday meeting and then told everyone in the church what happened on Wednesday with Eric. Or, I could have spoken on both occasions and removed Grace Community Church from Sovereign Grace Ministries for what they instigated and condoned. Instead, I decided to serve the many dear people in the church and not force a split or expose Eric and others. I hoped good would come out of this travesty.

Very quickly, however, Sovereign Grace Ministries was being "informed from many parties that there is growing speculation over these issues from within and outside the church." That included the SGM Refuge blog. Therefore C.J., Dave, Jeff, Pat, and Joshua "recommended" the church not be told anything about the demand (not a simple "request" as Dave implies) for me to resign, let alone be told about the events preceding and following my June 3 lunch with Eric.

Dave said "this step will serve the church by framing...and reinforcing the desire of all parties to walk through this process with integrity." This was double speak. You cannot conceal vital information and then claim to be framing the process with integrity. This did not serve the church. I believe this action deceived the church. I communicated this concern to everyone. Here is Dave's e-mail to all the leaders in the church and on the Sovereign Grace Ministries leadership team.

From: Dave Harvey

Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2009 1:33 PM

To: Ray Mulligan, Eric Kircher, Jim Aldridge, Roger Layman,

Cc: Brian Lloyd; Jonathan Detwiler; Mike Lukavsky; Jonathan Paul; John Schaaf; John Sutton; Brent Detwiler; C.J. Mahaney; Jeff Purswell; Gene Emerson; Pat Ennis; Joshua Harris

Subject: RE: Confidential

Gentleman, an additional point of clarification related to the public announcement to the church. We would not recommend that the church be informed of the request for Brent's 'resignation', but only of the request to SGM from the local team for an 'evaluation of Brent's leadership'. Since we are being informed from many parties that there is growing speculation over these issues from within and outside the church. We believe this step will serve the church by framing the issue carefully and respectfully, quelling speculation, inviting prayer and reinforcing the desire of all parties to walk through this process with integrity.

Hope this point of clarification helps.

Dave

I wrote Dave immediately and appealed that he be “open and honest” with the church. That he not withhold this information from everyone and be accused of a cover up later. I never heard back from Dave. A non-response was typical of Dave whenever I asked questions that involved answers for which he could be held accountable. He didn’t want to leave a paper trail. I copied all the leaders.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2009 1:57 PM
To: Dave Harvey; Gene Emerson
Cc: Jim Aldridge; Kenny Cook; Brent Detwiler; Andy Elseman; Eric Kircher; Roger Layman; Brian Lloyd; Mike Lukavsky; Ray Mulligan; Jonathan Paul; John Schaaf; John Sutton,
Subject: FW: Confidential

I’d suggest you be open and honest about what has happen less you be accused of a “cover up” and indicate that the leadership team also asked to be evaluated by SGM per the statement below which says you desire “an open and outside evaluation of us all.”

The next day, Friday, Dave wrote the following to all the Grace Community Church and SGM leaders.

From: Dave Harvey
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2009 6:06 PM
Cc: Jim Aldridge; Kenny Cook; Brent Detwiler; Andy Elseman; Eric Kircher; Roger Layman; Brian Lloyd; Mike Lukavsky; Ray Mulligan; Jonathan Paul; John Schaaf; John Sutton,
Cc: CJ Mahaney; Jeff Purswell; Gene Emerson
Subject: Confidential

Guys,

Hope you are enjoying God’s grace today.

I want to alert you to an unfortunate development. While we have not yet been able to verify the details (although we are aggressively attempting to do so), it appears as if there is a direct link regarding the details of this situation to one of the anti-SGM blogs [SGM Refuge]. The information has not yet been posted, but we have been informed that it may soon appear.

Needless to say, the circulation of this private information [that Eric, Ray, Roger and Jim demanded my immediate resignation without any process] could ultimately hinder, if not entirely undermine the important process in which we are engaged. Blogging over local church matters is an unhelpful and unbiblical way to stir uninformed critique without the benefit of context or accurate information. It sows suspicion into everyone's heart so that we are unable to maintain the unity of the Spirit and hopefully resolve this matter.

If you happen to know who might be doing this, please contact them immediately and appeal that they stop circulating the information. You can also assure them that there are a number of trustworthy men involved in this assessment and that no information will be inappropriately withheld from the church at the conclusion of this evaluation process.

Also, while I have your attention, I just want to clarify that the role of Sovereign Grace in this matter is merely advisory. This means that the recommendations - resulting from the evaluation of Brent, the local leaders and Gene - are not binding. I mention this because there may have been some confusion on whether Brent needed to agree 'up front' to submit to the recommendations as a pre-condition in moving forward. We would not require that...and we would not recommend you do that either.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. And thanks for your patience in this important process.

Dave was extremely concerned "the circulation of this private information" might "ultimately hinder, if not entirely undermine the important process" by "sowing suspicion into everyone's heart." First, this was not private information. The church deserved to know what was happening to their senior pastor. Second, Dave and Gene were not acting in "trustworthy" manner. Third, withholding this "private information" until the conclusion of the evaluation process did the church no good. As a result, people were kept in the dark and couldn't comment on what was happening from the beginning. They had no voice. Fourth, Dave said information could be withheld from the church if deemed "inappropriate." Indeed, a lot of information was deemed inappropriate and withheld from the church. Thereby, the need for this paper and the previous ones to C.J. This was all part of a cover-up.

The Signatories Never Wanted Me to Resign

Soon after the resignation was “rescinded,” Eric began telling people that he (and Ray, Roger, Jim) never intended for me to resign in the first place. For example, here is what he told my son, Bryan, on June 14 at the “Concert on the Lawn” in Davidson. He also told Jonathan the same thing.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 6:43 AM
To: Bryan Detwiler
Subject: Resignation

Hey Bryan,

I need to be sure Eric really told you [on June 14] he never really wanted me to resign or expected me to resign. I need to be able to quote you on this.

Thanks for your help.
Dad

From: Bryan Detwiler
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 8:40 AM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: RE: Resignation

Yes, that is what he said.

Now that the resignation was rescinded, Eric began to distance himself and cover his tracks. He told others that it was never his intention for me to resign. In other words, the resignation letter requiring my signature, all the secret meetings, the signatures from Ray, Roger and Jim, the pressuring, the embellishing was just a hoax or ploy. If true, as I told the Assessment Team, it was crueler and more wicked to fake the demand for my resignation then to sincerely require it.

But there was no kidding in Eric’s ultimatum to me on June 3. It was real. He was lying again and in the most blatant way possible. That is, telling people he never intended for me to resign. That was pure deception. Eric would have been extremely angry if I said, “Come on Eric. You’re just kidding. No, I am not going to resign. Get over it. Stop joking around.” Eric, Ray, Roger and Jim were all serious and determined in demanding my actual resignation.

I brought this matter up to Roger and Jim for clarification. In other words, I tried to ascertain from them, whether or not their demand to resign was sincere or whether it was a sham. Their answers were elusive and confusing but clear enough - they genuinely intended for me to resign.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 12:47 PM
To: Roger Layman; Jim Aldridge
Subject: Resignation - True or False
Importance: High

Eric has told different people he never wanted me to resign or expected me to resign even though he demanded my resignation within 72 hours on June 3 at Toast Café.

When you signed the letter stating "those who have signed below...request and require the willing resignation of Brent Detwiler based upon our uniform agreement that [he] is no longer qualified to preside as Pastor" did you think the request was for real? Were you really asking for my resignation in 72 hours? Or were you, like Eric has claimed, just acting pretentiously?

Here is Roger's response to my "Resignation - True or False" e-mail.

From: Roger Layman
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 6:25 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Rhonda Layman; Jim & Tracie Aldridge
Subject: RE: Resignation - True or False

Not sure what happened to the first email. I did get this one.

As I explained on Sunday, I felt we had no other option in how we could ask for SGM to get involved.

Roger didn't answer my question so I asked again.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 9:35 PM
To: Roger Layman
Cc: Jim Aldridge; Rhonda Layman
Subject: RE: Resignation - True or False

That does not really answer my question. Was it a pretense or a feigned request? Or did you really intend for me to resign?

After sending this to Roger, I began to wonder if they were instructed to demand my resignation. I wrote Roger again and copied the Assessment Team.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 9:37 PM
To: Roger Layman; Bob Kauflin; Phil Sasser; Wayne Brooks
Cc: Rhonda Layman; Jim Aldridge
Subject: RE: Resignation - True or False

Were you counseled to do this by Gene or someone?

Roger did not respond to this question nor did anyone on the Assessment Team. After sending this question, Jim wrote me the following. He didn't answer the question either.

From: Jim Aldridge
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 9:55 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Phil Sasser; Wayne Brooks; Roger Layman; Bob Kauflin
Subject: RE: Resignation - True or False

Brent,

Signing the letter requesting your resignation was what I understood to be the necessary course of action in order for Sovereign Grace to step in and provide assistance. I was not acting pretentiously.

I realized everyone was being evasive and eluding my questions. I didn't know why however.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2009 1:43 PM
To: Roger Layman; Jim Aldridge
Cc: Bob Kauflin; Phil Sasser; Wayne Brooks
Subject: RE: Resignation - True or False

I don't understand but certainly want to understand. I look forward to hearing more of your perspective [tomorrow night].

Thanks

Brent

The next night, Jenny, Jonathan and I met with Eric, Ray, Roger, Jim, and the Assessment Team (i.e., Bob, Phil, Wayne). Finally, seven weeks after the “resignation lunch” on June 3, and two days before I resigned at the Family Meeting on July 25, I had my answer. As I probed, Ray told me that Gene Emerson was the one who had instructed them to require my resignation if Sovereign Grace was “to step in and provide assistance.” I was floored and felt so deceived.

This information was covered up for over seven weeks. Dave knew about it but never divulged it. The Assessment Team knew about it but never told me. Roger and Jim knew about it but failed to be honest when I questioned them. This is one of many deceitful actions.

To this day, I don’t think the remaining leaders: Andy Elseman, Jonathan Paul, John Schaaf, Brian Lloyd, or John Sutton, have ever been told about Gene’s counsel. This information was deep-sixed. The church was certainly never told. And to this day, people are still being told that Eric, Ray, Roger and Jim didn’t want me to resign. They were simply doing what was necessary for Sovereign Grace Ministries to get involved. All this is untrue.

After this came to the surface at the July 23 meeting, Ray also said, “No one’s told me what I did was wrong [i.e., firing me]. I guess I’ll be hearing from someone.” I guess not. The Assessment Team said nothing about Gene’s counsel being immoral and heavy handed. Nor was there ever any follow up with Gene that I was told about. Neither were Gene’s actions recorded in any written reports, either to the church or the letter sent to SGM pastors. The Assessment Team acted in a biased fashion. They were not equitable. Finally, Gene has never responded to me about his deplorable actions though I have brought them to his attention.

Roger was the only one who made a moral distinction at the meeting. He said Gene’s counsel was “bad counsel” but he still felt obligated to follow it. True, Gene’s directives were bad in many respects, let me highlight two. The rationale Gene used for demanding my immediate resignation was abhorrent. First of all, Sovereign Grace polity nowhere requires a sr. pastor be removed before they will come in to assist or do an evaluation. That assertion was absurd. Sovereign Grace has always done just the opposite.

Second, I would have asked Sovereign Grace to get involved if that was necessary. Gene should have counseled Eric and Ray to talk to me. Something they never did. If we made no progress, we could have involved others like Roger and Jim and Jonathan D. If that didn’t result in resolution, I or they, could have asked Sovereign Grace or others to help us out.

Deceitful Claim to Have Followed Matthew 18:15-17

During the conference call on June 4 with Dave and Gene, Ray Mulligan, when questioned by John Schaaf, told all the local leaders that he and Eric had follow the teaching of Matthew 18. He also told my son, Bryan, when questioned by him, the same thing on June 14 at the Concert on the Lawn (in addition he told Bryan he had "no choice" but to fire me based on Gene's counsel).

This too was bogus. What Eric and Ray did had no parallel to the principles of that passage. They did not follow Matthew 18 in any regard. Let me explain. On January 2, 2009; Ray, Eric, Jonathan Detwiler, and I met with Dave and Gene. During that meeting, Ray repeatedly commended my character to them. Ray told me he resigned from the Grace Community Church leadership team the day before the meeting because he was fed up with Gene and SGM, Mickey Connolly and CrossWay Community Church not because he thought I was unfit to be a pastor. He also told me he was stepping down because he did not have the gifts or character to care for Jenny and me. In a moment of vulnerability, Ray told me he had been "a terrible friend." I don't enjoy saying so, but that was true. More on this later. Here is what I wrote Eric regarding Ray's reasons for stepping down.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 12:23 PM
To: Eric Kircher
Subject: Change with Ray

Here are the reasons Ray has given me for not continuing to provide care for us.

1. Demands of work - not able to do so
2. Needs to give attention to wife and family
3. Not called and gifted - feels has done a poor job caring for us
4. Feels Eric and Anna are more effective
5. Disillusionment with Dave and Gene

Thanks
Brent

The next time I talked with Ray about issues related to me was a couple months later in March. He called me by phone. By this time, however, Ray had become even more angry at everyone including SGM, CrossWay and me. All of us were extremely concerned for him. It was not well with his soul. More on this later.

During the call, Ray wanted me to know, contrary to what he told everyone previously, that he did not resign on January 1 because of SGM and CrossWay alone. His story had dramatically changed. He was extremely agitated and made it clear he also resigned because of concerns for me. With no exaggeration, Ray was yelling at me so loudly over the phone that Jenny could hear him in the next room. He was angry, demanding, condemning and categorical throughout the call. This was not because I provoked him. When I got off the phone, Jenny asked me how I could allow Ray to act that way without addressing him. She claims, I said "it was a great opportunity to just listen and be humble." This is the only action Ray can point to as a fulfillment of step 1 in Matthew 18. There was, however, no mention of me being unfit for pastoral ministry or that this was the beginning of a disciplinary process.

The next time I talked to Ray about issues related to SGM, CrossWay or me was in April. Ray had filled Susie DiGiacomo and Jessica Diehl in on the things with SGM in a very unhelpful way. I got back to Ray and he acknowledged he handle things poorly. He got back to Susie. When I followed up with Susie she was doing much better because Ray told her "he had no concerns for my doctrine or character." Around the same time, at the monthly leaders meeting on April 14, he also told everyone he had no serious or substantial concerns for me or the possibility of us leaving SGM. It was not a ringing endorsement like Eric and Anna's, but there was no note of alarm.

At no point in time did Eric and Ray ever approach me together to raise serious concerns for my character as directed in the second step of Matthew 18. That does not mean we hadn't talked about issues over the past year related to my sanctification. We did since that's what fellowship, plurality and friendship are about.

When Ray stepped down from the leadership team in January, he adamantly requested all parties cease having any contact with him regarding SGM, CrossWay, or Grace Community Church. He removed himself and was out of the loop. I regularly reached out to Ray but never to involve him in matters related to these things. I simply sought to encourage him, take an interest in him, and love him. Though he was difficult, he was my friend. I had benefited from his gifts and service, and I determined not to avoid him or walk away from him. For instance the following e-mail from Ray after I called him.

From: Ray Mulligan
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2009 8:54 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Tonight's Call

Thank you so much for the call tonight, it was very meaningful to me, and encouraged my heart. My desire is to be able to serve alongside of you to serve the saints and reach the people that God had called to the church, without all of

the distraction that we have had to deal with over the past months. Jenny and I continue to pray that God's work be done and the focus be on bringing joy to others through the wonderful truth of the gospel.

Thank you again,

Ray and Jenny

On March 25, Jenny and I had Ray and Jenny, Eric and Anna over to our house for dinner. Here is a follow up e-mail I sent him two days later.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2009 1:37 PM
To: Ray Mulligan
Subject: Care Group Ldr.

Hey Ray,

Good afternoon my friend. I tried to reach you this morning but got your voice mail. I'm sure you're slammed with back to back meetings. After you left on Wednesday night, my heart was moved with compassion and concern for you. I hate to see you doing so poorly. I want to position you to recoup and receive help. I've been reconsidering your request to be relieved of Care Group leadership. I think it is a good idea. So does Eric. Now is a good time to make the change with the reconfiguration and all that is going on with your work.

This afternoon, I let Jonathan Paul know he'd be leading the Care Group again (I saw him for my shoulder). He thought it was a good development. He has such a heart to help you. This change is not an attempt to side line you but to serve you. This will at least allow you to walk in openness and honesty with friends about your weariness, exhaustion, and need to focus on your marriage relationship and walk with the Lord.

If I remember correctly, you're in San Francisco next week. Maybe you should send out an email and let the group know before Wednesday. What do you think? I'll probably head over to the Care Group on Wednesday and express my heart of support for you, commend Jonathan P. and encourage the group.

Love you my friend,
Brent

When Ray, Eric and Jonathan D. served together on the leadership team for five months (Sep 08-Dec 08), no disqualifying sins were ever brought to my attention. Over the nine

months (Sep 08-May 09) that Eric served on the leadership team he repeatedly told me and others he had no serious concerns for me. In fact, he communicated just the opposite - he always spoke highly of me. In April, Eric wrote Susie and Jessica saying, "None of this stuff is disqualifying in the least." The same month, Ray told them he "had no concerns for my character or doctrine."

You can imagine my shock then, when given the resignation letter saying I was "unfit to be a pastor." First, Ray and Eric never said anything to me about not qualifying as a pastor. They never came to me as individuals in private (the first step) to make their case. Second, they never came together to meet with me (the second step) and restate their case. Assuming my sins were of a disqualifying nature, I was given no opportunity to repent. Instead of following Matthew 18, they disobeyed Matthew 18 and sinfully recruited others and turned them against me.

Third, they demanded my resignation (comparable to the fourth step) before following the third step (getting others involved to appeal). In this regard they should have talked to Wayne Brooks (senior pastor in Winter Gardens, FL) and Benny Phillips (executive pastor in Orlando). Both of these men were involved with us and aware of all that was going on with SGM/CrossWay. They had also provided us personal counsel. Wayne, for instance, spent time counseling Ray and Jenny in April. Instead of turning to these men, who would have stopped them, Ray and Eric turned to men they could potentially manipulate. Every step of Matthew 18 was disregarded and transgressed. Matthew 18 is redemptive, progressive and kind. This was not. Matthew 18 appeals. It is not a license to intimidate and coerce a resignation.

Ray, Eric, Roger, Jim, Kenny and Mike are all responsible for their actions. They know what the Bible teaches about peacemaking. They can't blame others for their disobedience to Scripture. But having said that, Gene was a tremendous stone of stumbling to them. Ray and Eric should have rejected Gene's evil counsel (see James 3:15-18). Here is what Bryan said about the situation. Of course, he did not know at the time that Gene was the one advising Ray and Eric to remove me.

From: Bryan Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 06, 2009 11:24 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: RE: Brent

Of course Gene is oblivious to the fact that their very method undercuts the "issues" that they are citing. If Eric had been raising these concerns for the past 6 months, referencing your resignation as a possible outcome if you didn't change, and then now, decided with the input of others that things just weren't working out, that would be one thing; but the fact that his tune has changed so dramatically in the past two weeks renders nearly all observations of his null

and void. He comes across, and is, a man who has been offended, a man who has hastened into rash judgments that have little to no basis.

Here is what the Assessment Team wrote and read to the church at the Family Meeting on July 29, 2009 when I step down.

“We found that the original request [the demand to resign] for Brent’s resignation lacked the consideration and care that should be part of any request as significant as this. Prior to asking for his resignation, the leaders should have gone to Brent and communicated that their ongoing concerns had reached the point that they had lost faith in his leadership.... We also commend Ray, Eric, Jim Aldridge, and Roger Layman for making the bold, though ill-informed, decision to do what they thought was necessary to best serve Grace Community Church.”

I’d submit this statement is woefully inadequate and represents the bias of the Assessment Team, especially Bob who headed up the team under C.J. and Dave’s oversight. The hearer or reader has no idea what actually transpired and what is met by “original request.” The church was never told. This was deceitful. One is left to think there was simply a lack of consideration and care when in fact there was no consideration or care. The only criticism noted was “the leaders should have gone to Brent.” Otherwise they are commended for their “bold, though ill-informed [a vague reference to Gene], decision” to pressure and demand my immediate resignation. It should also be noted that Roger, Jim, Kenny, and Mike had no concerns for my character or qualifications based upon their own personal experiences or observations. They concluded I was disqualified for ministry based solely on what they were told by Eric and Ray. They never talked to me. More on this later.

I make much of this in regard to Gene and the other men for a reason. It goes to motive and not just wisdom. Ray and Eric deceptively claimed to have followed Matthew 18 while they intentionally disregarded it. This was not due to inexperience or a lack of knowledge. It was purposeful. Ray and Eric never asked forgiveness for telling others they followed Matthew 18. Eric, Ray, Roger and Jim never asked forgiveness for demanding my resignation in the underhanded way they did. These men were never corrected for violating the clear teaching of Scripture except for this minor adjustment by the Assessment Team - “the leaders should have gone to Brent.”

At the beginning of my assessment on June 21, Bob asked me what was necessary to remedy the events of the last three weeks and move the church forward. I said it would be necessary for Eric and Ray to openly and truthfully tell the church about their actions and ask forgiveness. This was the not only thing I said to Bob and Phil but it was important. No public (or private) acknowledgement of wrong doing for these deceitful actions has ever occurred.

Brent Defiant and Resistant - Saturday, June 6, 2009

Eric continued to lie and intentional misrepresent the truth. Gene was all too happy to believe everything Eric told him with no verification. Three days after the "resignation lunch," Gene wrote this scathing indictment of me to all the leaders in Grace Community Church on Saturday morning.

From: Gene Emerson

Date: Saturday, June 6, 2009 7:42 AM

To: Eric Kircher

Cc: John Schaaf, Kenny Cook, Andy Elseman, Jonathan Paul, Jim Aldridge, Ray Mulligan, Mike Lukavsky, John Sutton, Brian Lloyd

Subject: Re: Brent

Gentlemen,

You - particularly those of you [Roger, Eric, Jim, Mike, Andy] on the [newly appointed] leadership [advisory] team--are responsible before God for Grace Church. You have asked for Brent's resignation and, because of his resistance, have requested SGM assemble a team to provide an objective evaluation of the concerns and charges you have brought. Brent's refusal on both counts simply underscores the issues you raised: "pride in the form of independence and a resistance to receiving and acting upon the concerns and observations of [two] board members [Ray and Eric]." It is unacceptable for Brent to refuse to submit to you on these matters.

I'm not sure it's fruitful for you to continue to debate the methodology with Brent. Our attention should not be on how these issues were raised but whether your observations are correct. My recommendation is that you sign and send the agreement [the request for SGM involvement] from Friday night today and allow us to begin a formal process so that the issue does not remain "you against Brent." You men have been courageous and gracious, but I don't want you to carry this burden alone.

If there's anything else I can do, please let me know.

With care,

Gene

First, Gene accused me of resisting the call to resign. He said this was why it was necessary to do an "objective evaluation." Therefore, he "recommends" they

immediately “sign and send the agreement from Friday night, today [Saturday], and allow us to begin a formal process.” The leaders from Grace Community Church must have felt considerable pressure from Gene to proceed.

The truth is I did not resist Eric’s ultimatum in any way, shape or form. Gene assertion was entirely untrue. In reality, I told Eric at the resignation lunch that I would seriously consider his demand and give him an answer within 72 hours as requested. I communicated absolutely nothing that would give him the impression I was going to resist or defy his ultimatum. Gene characterized my supposed defiance as “you against Brent.” In other words, I was fighting against all the leaders. That was manifestly not the case. I was not fighting against anyone. In fact, Jenny and I were composing a resignation letter in case we decided I should just step down. It was a serious consideration to do so.

Second, Gene referred to “Brent’s refusal on both counts.” The second count was my supposed resistance to an “objective evaluation.” This too was entirely untrue. From the outset, I told Jonathan Paul and John Schaaf, I was willing to be evaluated. My only request was to be evaluated by persons who would in fact be “objective.” This was not resistance. This was an appeal for biblical justice.

Third, Gene emphatically declared, “It is unacceptable for Brent to refuse to submit to you on these matters.” This kind of statement was typical of Gene’s heavy handedness in dealing with me. He recklessly cited both counts “as pride in the form of independence and a resistance to receiving and acting upon the concerns and observations.” These were terribly sinful judgments.

Fourth, Gene charged me with continuing to debate the leaders regarding methodology. This too was absurd. The only people I had spoken to were Jonathan Paul and John Schaaf. They approached me at the request of all the leaders. Amazingly, Gene refers to all the events of previous seven days as simple “methodology.” Methodologies can be diverse. They are neither right nor wrong. Gene used a morally neutral word to describe all the sinful things he and others had done.

Then he told all the leaders that “Our attention should not be on how these issues were raised but whether your observations are correct.” He categorically dismissed the need to evaluate anything that transpired including his “bad counsel” to demand my resignation. This amounted to a cover up in my opinion. Gene was unwilling to be held accountable. He demeaned the very possibility. He was sending a clear message to all the leaders not to raise concerns about “how these issues were raised.”

Fifth, he told the men they “have been courageous and gracious.” I beg to differ. Eric, Ray, Roger and Jim acted in a cowardly fashion. If they were “courageous” they would

have come to me rather than conspire behind my back. Nor were they gracious. They showed no care or consideration in how they went about things.

I forwarded Gene's e-mail to my family. Here is my son-in-law's appeal to all the Grace leaders who were his friends. Seth copied Dave Harvey because Dave incredulously wanted Gene to be on the Assessment Team.

From: Seth Honea
Sent: Saturday, June 06, 2009 11:50 PM
To: Jonathan M. Detwiler; Roger Layman; Andy Elseman; Ray Mulligan; Brent Detwiler; Kenny Cook; Jim Aldridge; John Sutton; Jonathan Paul; Eric Kircher; Brian Lloyd; John Schaaf; Mike Lukavsky; Jonathan Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey
Subject: RE: Brent

Good evening men,

I am compelled out of conscience to respond to Gene's e-mail below. I have been silent for too long on this matter. As a servant of Grace Community Church, a worship leader and a longtime member of Sovereign Grace, I too am responsible for our family's well-being and the integrity of the facts. I deeply care about the well-being of this church. I think it is very important that you hear another brother's perspective as well as my firsthand account of my observations of Brent hours after he received the resignation letter.

I am disturbed by this e-mail from Gene. I heartily second John's [Schaaf] motion below that this group [the Assessment Team] be made up of people who are not an offended party and/or have not already formed their own conclusions about Brent. Out of fairness and objectivity, this group should be comprised of people who have the trust of everyone involved. Gene is not a viable third party.

To make my point clear, here are a few examples of what I am talking about.

Gene states, "You have asked Brent's resignation and, because of his resistance, have requested SGM assemble a team to provide an objective evaluation of the concerns and charges you have brought."

I was with Brent shortly after he received the letter. He was not resistant nor was he defiant. He was broken hearted. He was shocked, hurt and dismayed because this letter came with no warning, no due process and very little concern expressed for him or his family's well-being. He was given three days to respond to the letter. He needed time to absorb what happened before he

responded to Eric. He was not given the time or opportunity to be resistant since the letter was rescinded the next day. He was praying and seeking counsel. It should be clearly evident that Gene has either been told slanderous, false information about Brent or he is making uncharitable judgments and then passing it on to you.

Another example:

“Brent’s refusal on both counts simply underscores the issues you raised: ‘pride in the form of independence and a resistance to receiving and acting upon the concerns and observations of board members.’ It is unacceptable for Brent to refuse to submit to you on these matters.”

Gene is miss-judging Brent in this statement. Brent never refused to resign or participate in a review and yet Gene ties an untrue statement (Brent’s refusal) as evidence of Brent’s sin issues. It seems as though Gene is trying to sway your opinion and affect the lens through which you evaluate Brent. Does that sound like an objective third party speaking to you? Furthermore, if Brent at this time does not completely agree with the charges brought against him, then how is he supposed to explain himself without people further chalking it up as proof of these issues?

Final example

“I’m not sure it’s fruitful for you to continue to debate the methodology with Brent. Our attention should not be on how these issues were raised but whether your observations are correct.”

From my perspective, the reason the way these issues were raised IS relevant because, as far as I know, most of the leaders here have not specifically discussed these issues with Brent beforehand. The request of his resignation did not follow the Matthew 18 pattern of speaking to him first privately before gathering others. The way this was conducted lacked both discernment and care for Brent, which naturally would cause him (and me) to be concerned about the way he will be evaluated going forward. It is understandable that Brent would want to have confidence in the process that will shape his livelihood and future.

Guys, I challenge you to be on your guard as you evaluate information from Gene or anyone else. Please be sure to gather all the facts as you weigh information from different sources. Ask Brent directly for his version of things and the reason why he did/did not do the things he is accused of. Please be on guard that both what you are hearing, and what you are interpreting, are based

upon facts and not uncharitable judgments of everything Brent has ever done through a lens that has already convicted him of pride or independence. Please think about your own life, and what kind of judgments could be made of your actions if someone had already concluded you were proud and then interpreted everything you did based on that assumption.

Please keep in mind the positive impact Brent has had on so many lives for so many years as he has relentlessly served the Church. Of course he's not perfect, and some of these areas in his life may need growth, but I have yet to see anything that calls for drastic action as I have witnessed his life up close. Thank you for being willing to serve Brent by caring for his soul in a humble, Gospel centered way as you help him grow in Godliness.

Gene, I call upon you to contact Brent immediately and ask for his forgiveness for your uncharitable judgments, as well as from all who have read your e-mail. Your e-mail has not the tone of a Gospel centered leader who has been entrusted with loving, serving and looking out for the soul of our senior pastor with all hope of seeing him restored with respect and honor. Instead, it comes across as one who is eager to convict him as charged without regard for caring for him through the process.

Sincerely,
Seth Honea

Gene never got back to me to ask forgiveness. He never responded to Seth. Dave Harvey never corrected Gene. So far as I know the Assessment Team never corrected Dave or Gene even though all this information was provided to them. Nor did anyone ever follow up with me on this matter. It was all passed over and brushed under the rug. On a personal note, it is hard to describe the sense of horror I felt when reading Gene's unfounded and brutal condemnation of me to all the leaders. Similarly, I could not believe Dave pronounced Gene "qualified" to graciously, justly and objectively assess me. In light of the facts, Dave's commendation of Gene showed the extent to which Dave was willing to "stack the deck" against me. It was shameful.

After reading Gene's e-mail, I decided to respond to the second count. That is, resisting an evaluation. I tried to be humble and gracious but also present my viewpoint. I realized every little thing I did was being interpreted through the "lens" of being "proud," "unteachable," "independent" and "refusing to submit."

From: Brent Detwiler

Sent: Sunday, June 07, 2009 9:59 PM

To: Gene Emerson; Dave Harvey

Cc: Aldridge, Jim; Cook, Kenny; Detwiler, Brent; Detwiler, Jonathan; Elseman, Andy; Kircher, Eric; Layman, Roger; Lloyd, Brian; Lukavsky, Mike; Mulligan, Ray; Paul, Jonathan; Schaaf, John; Sutton, John

Subject: Moving Forward

Hi Gene,

Greetings and love in the name of our Lord Jesus!

I can understand your added concern for my leadership based upon what I've heard Eric has conveyed to you.

I want to assure you that I am willing to be evaluated by a group of impartial peers that are mutually agreed upon by us. I have to appeal that this panel not include yourself or Mickey since there are unresolved issues between us. Instead, it would be comprised of men who have not been influenced or biased in their opinion of me [this excluded Bob, Mickey and Gene]. For example, I'd like to ask that the following mature senior pastors be seriously considered: Al Pino (Miami, FL), Phil Sasser (Apex, NC), Keith Collins (New Orleans, LA), and Wayne Brooks (Winter Garden, FL).

I would also appeal that this group of men address the outstanding issues between you/SGM and me and Mickey/CW and me. See Eric's attached [9 page] letter [from March 24] as representative of those issues.

On a personal note, I hope you can understand how important it is to me to be assessed by men I (we) trust in this current environment.

Thanks for your kind consideration.

Love in Christ,
Brent

Two days after I sent this to Gene and copied it to Dave Harvey, Dave wrote Seth back regarding Seth's e-mail appeal to all the Grace leaders regarding his critique of Gene. Astonishingly, Dave did not address any of Seth's points or express any concerns for Gene. He invited Seth to contact C.J. (who was not unbiased himself and Dave was presumably following his counsel) but expressed no agreement with Seth. He should have been alarmed by Seth's e-mail and immediately offered to look into the matter. Instead, Dave gave Gene a complete pass and commended him as qualified to be on the

Assessment Team. Dave's endorsement of Gene showed the extent of Dave's bias and prejudice which was not limited to this one example. Dave was not concerned about objectivity.

From: Dave Harvey
To: Seth Honea; Gene Emerson
Cc: Carolyn Honea; CJ Mahaney
Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2009 10:16 AM
Subject: RE: Confidential: Please Respond

Seth,

Thanks for taking the time to pass along your thoughts. I want to do all we can to wisely care for the Detwiler's, even while we are seeking to advise the local leaders in some of the decisions they are making.

Seth, I do not believe that Gene is unqualified to serve on the panel being assembled to consider the assumptions behind the call for Brent's resignation. However we are carefully looking at each team member being recommended for who might serve most effectively.

Please feel free to contact CJ and invite his evaluation of how I am seeking to serve in this situation. I want the best for your church and I welcome that evaluation. I will 'cc' him on my response toward that end.

Please pray that God would give us wisdom as we seek to serve the Detwiler's and the local leaders in this delicate process.

On behalf of Gene as well,

Dave

I provided all this information to the Assessment Team. I don't know if they ever followed up with Gene. They should have followed up on Eric's lies and Gene's sinful judgments. Maybe they did, I don't know. They never got back to me to provide their perspective. Eric never contacted me, neither did Gene. Here is what I wrote the Assessment Team.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2009 1:42 PM
To: Bob Kauflin; Phil Sasser; Wayne Brooks
Subject: Eric's Misrepresentation about Resignation & Evaluation

I don't think I've sent this to you yet. It is Gene's answer to my question about resisting and refusing to submit.

Only Eric would know if I resisted the resignation on June 3 which I certainly did not do. My family would confirm this. Likewise I embraced the evaluation. I only asked that it be done by impartial men and not include, Mickey, Jim and Gene. [I left out reference to Bob since he had already been appointed by Sovereign Grace Ministries to lead the assessment contrary to my request for impartiality.]

I asked Gene, Ray and Eric what sources Gene based his diatribe on. Not surprisingly, it was based on Eric's fabrications. Of course, I never heard back from Eric (or Ray).

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 5:50 PM
To: Gene Emerson
Cc: Ray Mulligan; Eric Kircher
Subject: Re: Refusal to Submit

Gene,

How did you conclude that I resisted and refused to submit to both resigning and being evaluated? Did you come to that conclusion on your own? Or did Ray or Eric or someone else tell you I refused?

Thanks
Brent

P.S. Ray and Eric - please help me out on this one.

From: Gene Emerson
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 5:50 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Re: Refusal to Submit

I based my assessment on reports from Eric who had been in contact with some of the men you met with following your lunch with him. If I remember correctly, that included John Schaaf and Jonathan Paul. Hope that's helpful.

Gene

I wrote Jonathan Paul and John Schaaf to find out what they communicated to Eric.

From: Brent Detwiler
To: John Schaaf; Jonathan Paul
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2009 7:37 am
Subject: RE: Refusal to Submit

I don't assume so in the least but did either of you indicate to Eric that I resisted and refused to submit? See below [I included Gene's e-mail].

Here is what Jonathan said. John agreed with him.

From: Jonathan Paul
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2009 4:04 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: John Schaaf
Subject: Re: Refusal to Submit

I don't remember communicating that to Eric...Regarding refusing to submit to resigning, the letter of request for resignation was rescinded so quickly, I am not sure where that charge is coming from. Also the way that the letter was impetuously presented necessitated a resistance. Regarding resisting being evaluated I did communicate your concerns about Gene, Bob [Kauflin] and Mickey [Connolly] being a part of the proposed evaluation team...

Both men affirmed I did not resist the resignation. Regarding the evaluation, Jonathan told Eric that I was concerned for Bob, Gene and Mickey's objectivity and did not think they should be on the Assessment Team. That was true. This, however, was presented to Gene by Eric as resisting an evaluation. It was not resistance. It was an appeal for impartiality. During my meetings with Jonathan and John, I clearly communicated my willingness to be evaluated by an impartial group of peers. Eric twisted their words. Gene eagerly believed Eric's evil report and then made his hateful statements to all the Grace leaders.

Eric's Deceitful Charges Continue

Eric continued to make bogus charges against me behind my back. I sought to humbly address them as they came to my attention. I brought all of these examples to the attention of Dave, Gene and, later on, the Assessment Team. None of these men took any action that I am aware of, to address Eric for his lying and scheming. No one ever got back to me on the following three examples.

Example 1: Telling Dave that Roger and Jim had Observations of Pride

I talked to Dave Harvey the day after my resignation was demanded. My wife, Jenny was by my side. This occurred on Thursday, June 4. Earlier in the day, Dave talked to Eric. During that conversation, Eric told Dave that Roger and Jim both had personal examples of me being proud and unteachable in relation to them. In other words, both Roger and Jim felt I had arrogantly sinned against them in the past and they had examples of the same.

During my phone call with Dave, he confidently asserted this false accusation as true. He said it was just more evidence against me and that Roger and Jim's experience with me was the same as Eric and Ray's. Dave fully believed everything Eric told him. I "sheepishly" responded (out of fear) to Dave by saying that neither of men had ever brought any concerns to my attention. In fact, I pointed out they had often commended me. At this point and I do not exaggerate in the least, Dave, in a scolding voice, interrupted me and said, "Brent, I fear for you!" In other words, I was so proud and arrogant in making a "defense" that I should fear what God will do to me in the future. This was spiritual abuse at its worse. Jenny heard the entire the conversation and would corroborate its accuracy. These kinds of encounters were not uncommon. Attempts to address lies or injustices were quickly labeled as evidences of pride, bitterness and self-pity. I asked the Assessment Team to follow up with Dave and include my observations of him in their written reports. They forgot to do so. More on this later.

Example 2: Flying Solo and Controlling the Flow of Information

I've already mentioned that Eric accused me at our "resignation lunch" of excluding him from leadership decisions by "acting independently," "flying solo" and sinfully "controlling the flow of information." I gently challenged these indictments at the time. I asked him for any examples. He shared none with me. The next day, however, I became aware of two things he was telling Dave, Gene, and the leaders from Grace Community Church. First, he told them I was independently putting together an expanded leadership team without his knowledge or involvement. Second, he told them I secretly withheld sending in the Sovereign Grace "Membership Agreement" because I already decided, on my own, to leave Sovereign Grace Ministries.

Here is what really happened. Soon after Ray resigned from the leadership team in January, I began talking with Eric and Jonathan D. about how and when to expand the leadership team or whether to put an advisory team together from which we could benefit as the leadership team. We were uncertain on how to proceed.

Finally, with Eric and Jonathan's knowledge and support, I began to make plans. Initially, I thought of adding two to four men to the leadership team. Later, I decided to add more men and make it less of a leadership team and more of an advisory team. That would give me exposure to larger group of men so I could observe their giftings. Under this arrangement, Eric and Jonathan would still have a prominent role and comprise the leadership team. It was my stated intention, however, to add men to the leadership team in six to 12 months but first I wanted to see who was most gifted by observing their contributions and also how they interacted in a team context.

Here is the e-mail I sent to Andy Elseman on May 7. I sent this identical e-mail to other men also.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Thursday, May 07, 2009 9:19 AM
To: Elseman, Andy
Subject: Leadership Team

I plan to add two to four men to the leadership team presently comprised of Jonathan, Eric and myself. We would meet once a month for 2-3 hours. Possibly on a week night or on a Saturday morning. I'd like to include men who are heading up areas of responsibility. That's one of the reasons I'd like for you to join us. During our times together, I'd gather ideas and feedback from the team. We'd talk about everything from children's ministry to follow up to youth to outreach to Care Group ministry, etc. We'd evaluate different aspects of the church and exchange ideas. I'd also run my strategic plans past the team and invite comment. I'd look forward to our meetings for the fellowship and benefit to be derived. I hope you can be a part. Please let me know your thoughts. Please keep this invitation confidential.

Thanks
Brent

It turned out that Eric used the last sentence as evidence of me "acting independently," "flying solo" and sinfully "controlling the flow of information." Nothing could have been further from the truth.

I stated my concerns to all the Grace leaders and wives in a "low keyed" fashion. I couldn't allow these lies to be propagated but I was being rebuked and judged by Dave and Gene for raising any objections. I was walking on "thin ice".

From: Brent Detwiler

Sent: Saturday, June 06, 2009 5:29 PM

To: Aldridge, Jim; Cook, Kenny; Detwiler, Brent; Detwiler, Jonathan; Elseman, Andy; Kircher, Eric; Layman, Roger; Lloyd, Brian; Lukavsky, Mike; Mulligan, Ray; Mulligan, Ray; Paul, Jonathan; Schaaf, John; Sutton, John; Cook, Sherri; Detwiler, Jenny; Elseman, Chasity; Kircher, Anna; Layman, Rhonda; Lloyd, Mary Beth; Lukavsky, Julie; Mulligan, Jenny; Schaaf, Amy; Sutton, Kim

Subject: Charitable Judgments - Clarification

I don't know if it is true [which it proved to be] but I've been told that the last statement in my invitation to be on the leadership team, "Please keep this initiation confidential" is being interpreted in an unfavorable light. I requested this because I did not want someone going to another person and saying "I've been invited to be on the leadership team, how about you?" leaving that person to struggle with why they were not invited. I wanted to see who responded to my invitation and then planned to convey it to all in a way that was gracious. At the time of the e-mail, I was also considering whether to expand the size of the team. There was no ulterior motivation behind this request except love.

I've also heard that independence may have been the reason I did not fill out the membership agreement Gene sent me on April 19th. That is not at all the case. We have been abiding with the contents of the agreement since the beginning of the church. Not sending it in was a mere oversight. No one brought it to my attention. But when Gene wrote in April we were in the midst of asking Dave Harvey for clarification on whether we were going to be removed from Sovereign Grace which we were hearing from several sources. Obviously, it was superfluous to fill out a membership agreement if we were about to be remove any day.

Example 3 - Independently Deciding to Leave Sovereign Grace Ministries

Eric knew the real reason (above) for withholding the Membership Agreement. Nevertheless he perverted the truth in order to further his case against me. Here is an accurate perspective. At my last meeting with Eric on May 27, he told me "we have a fundamental difference now." That is, he wanted to stay in SGM but I wanted to leave SGM. That was not the case, however, and I made it clear to Eric that I did not want to leave SGM and that I had made no decision to that end. My motivation for not sending in the Membership Agreement had nothing to do with a decision and determination on my part to leave SGM and be independent. This was another lie by Eric. I will say more about the "Membership Agreement" later in this paper.

Formally Asking for Involvement by Sovereign Grace Ministries
Saturday, June 6, 2009

Three days after the resignation lunch, Eric wrote Gene saying “the leaders of Grace Community Church formally request the involvement of Sovereign Grace Ministries” “desiring an open and outside evaluation of us all.” Of course, SGM was already involved and there was nothing “open” (i.e., transparent) or “outside” (i.e., impartial) about their involvement. Dave and Gene were not “fair and balanced” in their prosecution of me. I don’t believe Sovereign Grace Ministries was capable of providing an “outside evaluation” given their obvious bias and repudiation of due of process. To be honest, Sovereign Grace Ministries was the one in need of an evaluation.

This zealous and secretive prosecution by Dave, Gene, Eric and Ray provided me no opportunity to know what was being said about me. It also provided no opportunity to answer various charges being made against me. Understandably this affected the rest of my friends in leadership. Here is what Brian Lloyd wrote me.

From: Brian Lloyd
Sent: Monday, June 08, 2009 6:14 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: RE: Resignation

Hey Brent,

I’ve tried calling you a few times to no avail. I wasn’t aware of all these concerns until most recently, and have been having a hard time wrapping my head around all of this. I want you to know that at this time I am your friend and praying for you during this process. Mary Beth and I would like the opportunity to discuss with you and Jenny some of this.

With love and respect,
Brian

Here then is the official letter from Eric to Gene.

From: Eric Kircher
To: Gene Emerson
Cc: Kenny Cook; Andy Elseman; Jonathan Paul’ Jim Aldridge; Ray Mulligan; Mike Lukavsky; John Sutton; Brian Lloyd
Subject: Letter
Date: Saturday, June 6, 2009 2:41 PM

Over the past few months, a number of serious issues relating to Brent's leadership of Grace Community Church have become clear, which led two members of the board and two members of the Advisory Team to request and require Brent's resignation.

Brent has expressed disagreement with these issues and the means by which the leadership team arrived at this conclusion.

Believing that the evidence nevertheless raises questions and concerns about Brent's qualifications and desiring an open and outside evaluation of us all, the leaders of Grace Community Church formally request the involvement of Sovereign Grace Ministries in evaluating these issues and making recommendation for the appropriate way to move forward.

A public announcement will be made in the next week or two acknowledging that the local leaders have asked SGM to evaluate Brent.

Later when the Assessment Team was involved, I sent the following critique to Bob, Phil and Wayne addressing various misrepresentations by Eric in his letter above.

- No serious issues have been brought to my attention by these four men over the past few months.
- Eric and Anna have repeatedly stated in private and public that they don't have any serious concerns for my character. Just the opposite, they have repeatedly commended my character. This is a very new development.
- Roger and Jim (the two advisory team members referenced) have never expressed any concerns to me. From what I understand, they don't have any concerns based on personal observations. Their concerns were based on what they heard about me from Ray and Eric.
- The last time I had any interaction with Ray was on January 2 at the meeting with Dave and Gene when he spoke encouragingly of my character and responsiveness to input.
- I have not expressed disagreement with Eric's recent observations. In fact, I expressed an eagerness to hear his perspective on my leadership and also diligently sought to hear his recent thoughts on character.
- I expressed concerns to Jonathan Paul and John Schaaf on June 9 about how Eric and Ray and others have gone about things regarding the forced resignation.

I think it would be helpful to understand the leadership structure. There are three entities.

- The Board of Directors. This is comprised of Jonathan, Ray and me. [Ray wasn't legally removed when he resigned in January.] Eric was never added to this board. Our names are duly recorded in the articles of incorporation. The bylaws state the legal authority of the board as follows. "The government of the Church is vested in its Board of Directors, who shall provide oversight in the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church. The Board of Directors shall exercise all such powers of the Corporation and do all such lawful acts and things that are not prohibited by statute, the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws."
- The Leadership Team. This is comprised of Jonathan, Eric and me. Ray resigned from this group.
- The Advisory Team (as you are labeling it) – Jim Aldridge, Mike Lukavsky, John Schaaf, Andy Elseman, Roger Laymen, John Sutton (I also invited Jonathan Paul and Brian Lloyd but haven't heard back from them yet).

Telling the Church about My Sins – Sunday, June 14, 2009

Ray and Eric wrote the original version of the announcement and passed it on to the other leaders for comment. I believe the "our" below refers to Dave, Gene, Eric and Ray. Here is what Ray said to the leaders.

From: Ray Mulligan

Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 1:09 PM

To: Jim Aldridge; Kenny Cook; Jonathan Detwiler; Andy Elseman; Eric Kircher; Roger Layman; Brian Lloyd; Mike Lukavsky; Jonathan Paul; John Schaaf; John Sutton

Cc: Dave Harvey; Gene Emerson; Brent Detwiler

Subject: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

Our thought would be that this [the 1st edition below] would be read by me, after the announcements, release of the kids and the offering. I will then introduce Benny [Phillips]. I will read it as written. Let me know your thoughts.

I've included the original and final editions in parallel columns for comparison. The final (or 3rd) version, which was read to the church, came about as a result of my

appeals for honesty and accuracy. I comment on this later. I've underlined the most important changes below.

1 st Edition	3 rd Edition
<p>We as a church family believe strongly that a plurality of leadership is critical in order to bring about accountability and transparency for the leadership team. These safeguards serve both our leaders and the church by agreeing with the principles in scripture that we are all sinners and involving others helps us see ourselves more accurately. I would like to bring you up-to-date about how <u>we as a leadership team</u>, are pursuing working out this principle at Grace Community Church.</p>	<p>We as a church family believe strongly that a plurality of leadership is critical in order to bring about accountability and transparency for the leadership team. These safeguards serve both our leaders and the church by agreeing with the principles in scripture that we are all sinners and involving others help us see ourselves more accurately. I would like to bring you to up-to-date about how <u>we</u> are pursuing working out this principle at Grace Community Church.</p>
<p>Over the past months <u>some of the leadership team and care group leaders</u> have had observations and interactions with Brent that would cause us concern about Brent's commitment to listening and responding humbly to those that God has placed around him. While there is not total agreement on all areas, we became convinced that these concerns warranted further evaluation.</p>	<p>Over the past months, <u>Eric Kircher and I</u>, who had both been asked by Brent and Sovereign Grace Ministries to provide pastoral care for Brent, have had observations and interactions with Brent that would cause us concern about Brent's commitment to listening and responding humbly to those that God has placed around him. While there is not total agreement on all areas, we became convinced that these concerns warranted further evaluation.</p>
<p>We do not assume that our findings or even our process for delivering concerns to Brent was flawless. However, given the extent of the concerns and with an awareness of our own fallenness, Ray, Eric and the Care Group leaders unanimously elected to invite SGM into evaluate our findings.</p>	<p>We do not assume that our findings or even our process for delivering them to Brent were flawless. <u>Given the extent of the concerns</u> but also an awareness of our own fallenness, <u>we discussed these issues with the Care Group leaders</u>, who unanimously agreed to invite Sovereign Grace Ministries in - to evaluate our findings.</p>

SGM graciously responded to our appeal for help and determined that the evaluation should focus on the issues identified, but also include the actions of the local leaders – their conclusions and their course of action – as well as the quality of the extra-local care provided by Gene Emerson. In cooperation with the local leaders, SGM has appointed three men who have a history of friendship and care with the Detwilers, Grace Community Church and Gene. These are Bob Kauflin, Jim Britt, and Wayne Brooks.

During this four to six week process, the CGLs, Brent and Gene will provide a list of people for the team to contact. We understand that the team will endeavor to speak to as many as possible, but may not be able to get to everyone during this limited timeframe. This process will result in recommendations that will be shared with Brent and the leadership team.

[There is not an indication from Brent on the sabbatical idea yet, so it might be omitted] In an effort to care for Brent, Sovereign Grace recommends that Brent be offered a sabbatical during this evaluation for a time of prayer, reflection, rest and study. We will be asking a number of guest speakers to serve us during these weeks. Your care group leaders will be providing primary care for each of you during this time.

We are grateful for our partnership with Sovereign Grace Ministries and in particular the assessment team for their willingness to lay aside other responsibilities to serve us in such a

Sovereign Grace Ministries graciously responded to our appeal for help and determined that the evaluation should focus on the issues identified, but also include the actions of the local leaders – our conclusions and our course of action – as well as the quality of the extra-local care provided by Gene Emerson. In cooperation with the local leaders, Sovereign Grace Ministries has appointed three men who have a history of friendship and care with the Detwilers, Grace Community Church and Gene. These are Bob Kauflin, Phil Sasser, and Wayne Brooks.

During this four to six week process, we will be providing a list of people for the team to contact, understanding that the team will endeavor to speak to as many as possible, but may not be able to get to everyone during this limited timeframe. This process will result in recommendations that will be shared with Brent and the leadership team.

We are grateful to our partnership with Sovereign Grace Ministries and in particular the assessment team for their willingness to lay aside other responsibilities to serve us in such a

<p>sacrificial manner. We trust that God is at work during this process and in these men, to provide recommendations, care, and evaluation of our hearts.</p> <p>We believe that God will meet each of us during this process and provide comfort for our souls. By God's grace we should all use this time for prayer and humble assessment, applying what we've learned about gossip and idle speculation, and trust that God is at work in both the process and the outcome. We all are seeking God's help to put into practice what we have been taught and believe.</p>	<p>sacrificial manner. We trust that God is at work during this process, through these men, to provide recommendations, care, and evaluation of our hearts.</p> <p>We believe that God will meet each of us during this process and provide comfort for our souls. By God's grace, each of us can use this time for prayer and humble assessment, applying what we've learned about gossip and idle speculation, trusting that God is at work in both the process and the outcome. Let us ask God to help us apply what we have been taught and believe.</p>
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Here are some questions that were important to ask and consider in reading this statement to the church on June 14.

1. Should the announcement have made during the Sunday morning meeting or should it have been made after the Sunday meeting with just members or at a separate Family Meeting with just members?

Andy Elseman was the first to respond to Ray and raise questions about the appropriateness or rightness of making this announcement during the Sunday morning meeting out of concern for the negative impact upon unbelievers and non-members. His concerns were overruled by Dave Harvey contrary to Sovereign Grace polity.

From: Andy Elseman
 Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 2:45 PM
 To: Jim Aldridge; Kenny Cook; Jonathan Detwiler; Andy Elseman; Eric Kircher; Roger Layman; Brian Lloyd; Mike Lukavsky; Jonathan Paul; John Schaaf; John Sutton; Ray Mulligan
 Cc: Dave Harvey; Brent Detwiler; Gene Emerson
 Subject: Re: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

Men,

Should this be announced during a separate family meeting, or possibly after the service when the visitors are dismissed? I simply want to protect those who may be coming through the doors for the first time who may not

know the gospel and may be negatively influenced by this announcement. Then again, we do not want to “cover up” any of this, but bring it all to the light. Of course, if there happen to be no visitors, I think it would be appropriate to continue with the plan below. What are your thoughts? May our Lord be lifted up on high through this whole process.

His,
Andy

To the best of my knowledge, never before in its history had Sovereign Grace Ministries made an announcement like this on a Sunday morning with guests, unbelievers, non-members, and young adults (age 12 and up) in the meeting. That wise practice should have been upheld. Instead it was set aside and ignored.

2. What should have been said to the church? Should my specific “sins” and the charges against me been announced to everyone present before an “objective” evaluation was commenced?

Evaluations in SGM have always been done privately with no indicting announcement to the church in advance. This protects the person’s reputation, helps secure an unbiased process, and upholds the person’s innocence. Making a specific and indicting announcement about my supposed sins before the evaluation even began was unprecedented in the history of Sovereign Grace Ministries.

After the Sunday morning meeting was over, four different families approached me. All were deeply troubled by the announcement. Three of them were long time members in SGM churches where private evaluations of staff were sometimes necessary. They had all been in “Family Meetings” where private evaluations were discreetly shared with the church. Therefore, they immediately took note of the discrepancies and wanted to know why an announcement was made on a Sunday morning and why the details of the evaluation were shared before the evaluation began. One person said it appeared that SGM was on a witch hunt.

Jonathan McCollum, who was not a long time member of a SGM church, was also concerned. I appreciated his note below and agreed with his perspective. I served SGM for 27 years and always had the largest number of pastors and churches to care for and oversee. I did many private evaluations which sometimes resulted in public statements regarding changes in staff. In nearly three decades, I never revealed a man’s supposed sins to the church before an “objective” evaluation was commenced.

Early on in the evaluation process, and with considerable apprehension, I provided the perspective of these four families to the Assessment Team. I did not hear back

from them and we never discussed whether it was right for Dave to advocate this approach. That was typical.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2009 1:48 PM
To: Bob Kauflin; Wayne Brooks; Benny Phillips; Phil Sasser
Subject: FW: Word of Encouragement
Importance: High

Not sure whether I should send this but might be helpful so you have a feel for things. We have received three other responses like this from people. Of course, none of these folks know about the resignation request [i.e., the conspiracy to force my resignation], etc. This particular one is the strongest...

From: Jonathan McCollum
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2009 5:28 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Word of Encouragement
Importance: High

Dear Brent and Jenny,

We recently learned of the "announcement" made last Sunday and the evaluation process that is taking place across the church. I wanted to write you all and offer words of comfort and encouragement during this very difficult time in the life of Grace Community Church and your role as pastor. Regardless of the validity of the issues stated, Elena and I were deeply saddened and disturbed that these things would be discussed in a public Sunday service and further that your character would be the center of these comments and gossip within the church. This would certainly not demonstrate the "agape" love to a fellow brother and sister in Christ and is not grace-filled either.

We are very sorry that this is happening to you and your family. No pastor deserves to be treated this way. If you are ever interested in our perspective and feedback we would be happy to discuss.

Sincerely,
Jonathan and Elena

3. Should Dave have included my charges against Eric and Ray in the announcement since they were being evaluated also?

If Dave had acted justly, he would have included my charges against Eric and Ray in the announcement to the church (e.g. coercion, spiritual collusion, betrayal, lying). These too should have been read to the church. Instead, Eric and Ray's actions were concealed and covered up. If Dave believed the church needed to be told what I was being evaluated for, then the church needed to be told what Eric and Ray were being evaluated for. This is simple justice and evenhandedness.

4. Who should have made the announcement? Ray? Me? Someone else? Should the announcement have been general or specific in nature?

I thought it was best for me to make the announcement and recommended it not be so specific and prejudicial. There would have been no harm in me making the announcement. But I was also happy to see someone do it who was not part of the deceitful scheming. For instance, Bryan Lloyd, Andy Elseman, John Sutton, John Schaaf or Jonathan Paul.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 8:59 PM
To: Eric Kircher; Ray Mulligan; Benny Phillips
Subject: Announcement

I think it would be best for me to make the announcement and generalize it.

Basically, say Eric and Ray have raised concerns, I would not share their perspective, but am I willing to have a group of men come in and evaluate all of us.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 9:15 PM
To: Benny Phillips; Ray Mulligan; Eric Kircher
Cc: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Announcements
Importance: High

Here is the general idea I have in mind:

"Ray and Eric recently have asked questions about whether or not I am adequately benefitting from the input of others. While we have

different perspectives on this matter, we have asked a group of men to come in and help us and provide us their perspective. Over the next 4-6 weeks, Bob K., Phil S., and Wayne B. will be visiting to help us work through this matter and make some suggestions. I'll be taking a break from preaching during this time but maintaining the leadership of the church during this time frame."

A few minutes before I wrote the e-mail above, Jonathan Detwiler wrote the following e-mail to all the Grace Community Church leaders. He addressed several issues.

From: Jonathan Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 9:11 PM
To: Jim Aldridge; Kenny Cook; Jonathan Detwiler; Andy Elseman; Eric Kircher; Roger Layman; Brian Lloyd; Mike Lukavsky; Jonathan Paul; John Schaaf; John Sutton; Ray Mulligan
Cc: Dave Harvey; Brent Detwiler; Gene Emerson
Subject: Re: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

Hi all,

This will have to be short as it is on my blackberry...however I would second Andy's thought of doing it at a family meeting...or even better just allowing Dad to make a short statement on the matter on a Sunday morning. Basically saying that some concerns have been raised as to if he is functioning with enough plurality of leadership...and that therefore he is glad to submit to a review of the things in question and that Sovereign Grace has been glad to help out by providing three Sovereign Grace pastors to come in and help evaluate and provide feedback.

I think Dad making the statement and keeping it shorter than what was written doesn't make it seem so alarming and scary to people while still being honest.

If something long needs to be shared, then for the good of the church, I would suggest a family meeting. There are several new folks that are not really church members that I think the news would have an even greater effect on and that they don't really need to know as right now it is a "family matter."

Within fifteen minutes, Eric wrote me the following. It was apparent Dave was the driving force behind the nature of the announcement and having Ray make the announcement.

From: Eric Kircher
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 9:30 PM
To: Brent Detwiler; Jonathan Detwiler
Cc: Dave Harvey; Gene Emerson
Subject: Re: Announcement

Brent - the last encouragement we had from Dave was for us to make the announcement (we're trying to be sensitive to your requests), and that that announcement will be followed with a statement from you. Unless we hear from Dave on this we'd like to stick to the original plan.

If you would like to appeal to Dave that is fine.

Forty-three minutes later at 10:13 PM, I received the following curt directive from Eric. The prospect of an appeal to Dave was cut off at the knees. I don't know how the decision was made (or how much input the other leaders from Grace were providing Dave) but the deal was sealed. This much was clear...Dave's "recommendation" was final! Ray and Eric were following in lock step. End of discussion.

From: Eric Kircher
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 10:13 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Re: Announcement

We believe the announcement is necessary. Ray will read the announcement. Please be prepared to follow it. Thanks.

Six minutes after Eric's e-mail, Dave weighed in. Dave had no interactions with me over whether or not the announcement "Ray was asked to read, is accurate, fair, and carefully articulated." He believed it to be inerrant based solely upon the testimony of Eric and Ray. He never talked to me about it but confidently commended it. Such a pronouncement must have carried a lot of weight with the Grace leaders. It certainly made it difficult for anyone to say they thought the announcement was inaccurate, unjust, and written with obvious bias.

Dave also called upon me to "submit" my "preferences to the wisdom of the local men that serve and love [Brent]." Let's just say, I wasn't feeling served or

loved by Eric, Ray, Roger or Jim. Dave makes no mention of the fact that he was advising and directing Ray and Eric throughout this process. He makes it appear as though they were in charge. Eric and Ray were committed to do what Dave counseled/told them to do.

Why did Dave advocate this unprecedented, and I believe unbiblical, approach? What were his reasons and his motivations? Here again is what he said.

“Guys, the speculation concerning what’s going on in the church is circulating both inside and outside. It is my opinion that the statement will serve the church (and anyone else) by honestly acknowledging that we are in the middle of an important process that is seeking to define and resolve important issues. I could be wrong but it seems to me that saying nothing creates more problems than making the statement.”

Here are some questions that Dave needed to be asked. What “speculation” was being circulating? I was never told. Jonathan, my son was never told. Was anybody told? Dave knew but did he fully inform all the leaders from Grace?

Who was circulating this information “inside and outside the church?” That’s a big circle. Dave knew. Did he tell the leaders who these people were? Did Dave make any attempts to approach these people in private and try to help them?

How did these people know something of this magnitude was going on? Who leaked the information to them? Obviously, it did not come from me or my family. It had to come from someone in the know. Dave or Gene? Eric or Ray? Someone else?

Why was this confidential information spread? To put me in a bad light? To begin “stacking the deck against me?” Or was this “speculation” damaging to Sovereign Grace Ministries? Obviously, Dave was very concerned about something. What was it?

Did people find out about Gene’s counsel to fire me? Did people hear about Eric and Ray’s recruitment and betrayal. Did people know about Eric’s lies? Or did people know about my serious concerns for C.J. and SGM? Did people think SGM was about to put me out of the movement for addressing issues of concern? Did Dave feel he had to publicize charges against me in order to protect SGM, undermine my credibility and invalid my concerns? I don’t know

the answers to these questions but someone should have been asking them. They still need to be answered honestly. I was never given answers.

Eric and Ray had already made their decision by 10:13 pm for Ray to read the announcement as Dave had directed them. It doesn't appear the other leaders from Grace knew about Eric and Ray's determined resolve. It appears Eric and Ray were operating independently in concert with Dave. After this at 10:19 pm., Dave wrote Jonathan and me. He didn't include any of the other leaders from Grace. Dave makes it an issue of submission to "the wisdom of the local men" though it appeared to be an issue of submission to Eric and Ray which was really submission to Dave. I'm sure any lack of submission on my part would have been viewed as another evidence of pride.

From: Dave Harvey

Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 10:19 PM

To: Brent Detwiler; Eric Kircher; Jonathan Detwiler; Mulligan, Ray; Benny Phillips

Cc: Gene Emerson

Subject: RE: Announcement

Guys, a few thoughts.

First, I know this is difficult on everyone and I appreciate the care you're employing in seeking to please God and serve the church.

Secondly, I believe the majority of the leadership team and the majority of the Care Group leaders are in agreement that the statement, as articulated in the [1st] edition that Ray was asked to read, is accurate, fair, and carefully articulated.

Thirdly, I believe we are all endeavoring to serve Brent's desires in the process [This was spin on Dave's part - putting himself, Ray and Eric in the best possible light. The first draft was deceitful. I was simply appealing for truth telling.] I believe this has been appropriate and a way to express genuine care for him. I believe this issue (the reading of the statement by Ray) provides an opportunity for Brent to submit his preferences to the wisdom of the local men that serve him and love him.

Guys, the speculation concerning what's going on in the church is circulating both inside and outside. It is my opinion that the statement will serve the church (and anyone else) by honestly acknowledging that we are in the middle of an important process that is seeking to define

and resolve important issues. I could be wrong but it seems to me that saying nothing creates more problems than making the statement.

So, that's my thoughts and I hope they are of service to you men. I will pray God gives you wisdom and blesses you in the process of resolving this.

Dave

Of course, there was middle ground between saying "nothing" or reading the announcement as written. No one recommended nothing be said. This was a straw man argument.

Evidently, Brian Lloyd had no idea things were already set in cement. He wrote the following at 10:25 pm.

From: Brian Lloyd
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 10:25 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: FW: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

Brent,

Will you be at church tomorrow? Would you be willing to make this announcement?

In Christ,
Brian

I responded to Brian.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 11:08 PM
To: Brian Lloyd
Subject: RE: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

I will. I would be willing to make the announcement but Eric and Ray have decided Ray should make it.

Of course, the decision to read the statement had already been decided on by Dave, Ray and Eric.

5. Was Ray qualified to make the announcement or did he act hypocritically?

Ray should not have made the announcement for several reasons. First, he resigned, and was about to be removed, from the leadership team six months earlier. He was also relieved of his Care Group leadership responsibilities three months earlier. He had no leadership responsibilities in the church.

Second, Ray acted with hypocrisy. He was the most unaccountable leader and the most difficult leader to work with in the church. He was also concealing sin and not asking for any help. He was guilty of the things he so ardently claimed to affirm in the announcement. This was extremely misleading and hypocritical. More on this later.

Third, since Ray was being evaluated also, should he be the one to announce the evaluation of me. Should the man making the charge be allowed to cite the charge even though he is also being evaluated?

It was hard listening to Ray present himself as one who strongly believed in accountability and pursued accountability. That was abject hypocrisy.

6. Was the original version written by Ray and Eric, and commended by Dave, true and accurate?

The simple answer is no. Ray and Eric intended to mislead the church by embellishing their claim and state that others had concerns for me. Only Ray and Eric had concerns. None of the other leaders had concerns based upon "observations and interactions with Brent." This was not an oversight on Ray and Eric's part. It was a deceitful exaggeration. It was also misleading to say that "some of the leadership team" had concerns. Only Eric had concerns since Jonathan D. and I were the other members of the leadership team. This was a misrepresentation of the facts also.

In the 1st edition, Ray planned to tell people he was still on the leadership team. In fact, he resigned on January 1, which was more than 5 months earlier. The announcement should have said that "one member of the leadership team had concerns" (i.e. Eric).

Here is how I sought to address these concerns. Changes were made to the announcement but no admissions of deception were ever acknowledged.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 3:09 PM
To: Ray Mulligan; Eric Kircher
Cc: Benny Phillips
Subject: RE: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

I'd like to suggest the following as a way to serve all involved.

"Over the past months some of the leadership team and care group leaders have had observations and interactions with Brent that would cause us concern..." I would request it be defined more precisely [i.e., honestly]. Only Eric and Ray have expressed concerns to me [Ray one time in March]. Eric has only expressed concerns in the past few weeks [not over the months].

I also think we need to define who is on the leadership team. Currently it is Eric, Jonathan and me. Ray asked to be off the team in January and has not been involved for the past five months.

Eric wrote me back and said he appreciated my suggestion - nothing more. I was hardly in a position to confront him more clearly or forcefully.

From: Eric Kircher
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 3:44 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Ray Mulligan
Subject: Re: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

I appreciate your suggestion. We'll amend it to say "Over the past months Eric and Ray, who were approved by SGM and Brent to provide primary care in the form of personal accountability, have had significant concerns regarding issues of character and leadership in Brent."

At the end of the third paragraph we'll also add that "Ray, Eric and the Care Group Leaders unanimously elected to invite SGM in to evaluate our finding."

This still was embellished and untruthful. I wrote Eric and Ray again.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 3:57 PM
To: Eric Kircher
Cc: Ray Mulligan
Subject: RE: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

I appreciate the amendment but I think it needs further clarification since you have told Jenny and me on numerous occasions you've had no "significant concerns" and in fact quite the opposite. Even in our most recent conversations you have not presented your observations in a fashion that expressed anywhere near this level of concern.

Eric avoided the issues of deceit I raised with him. He knew what I was saying was true. He had no defense except to lie which he continued to do.

From: Eric Kircher
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 4:01 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Re: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

Please provide what you would like to have communicated.

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 4:21 PM
To: Eric Kircher
Cc: Ray Mulligan
Subject: RE: Proposed Announcement for Tomorrow

I don't want to write it for you but ask that you please carefully choose your words as accurately as you can so they reflect what has happened. In other words, it would not be accurate to say you've had "significant concerns".

Here are the different editions.

1st Edition

Over the past months some of the leadership team and care group leaders have had observations and interactions with Brent that would cause us concern about Brent's commitment to listening and responding humbly to those that God has placed around him.

2nd Edition

“Over the past months, Eric and Ray, who were approved by SGM and Brent to provide primary care in the form of personal accountability, have had significant concerns regarding issues of character and leadership in Brent.”

3rd Edition

Over the past months, Eric Kircher and I, who had both been asked by Brent and Sovereign Grace Ministries to provide pastoral care for Brent, have had observations and interactions with Brent that would cause us concern about Brent’s commitment to listening and responding humbly to those that God has placed around him.

7. Was it true that “SGM graciously responded to our appeal for help” or was it a misleading statement that effectively covered up what actually transpired and was already guaranteed by Gene?

It was terribly misleading. It makes it sound like the initiative came from the Grace leaders when Gene had already promised Ray, Eric, Roger, Jim, Kenny and Mike that SGM would get involved but not until after they removed me and declared me unfit for ministry.

Jonathan’s Long Letter – June 9

This is a lengthy letter composed by my oldest son less than a week after the resignation lunch for all the leaders in the church. He sent it to Jenny and me to read. We agreed with everything he wrote but I suggested it might be too direct under the circumstances. As a result, Jonathan withheld the letter and never sent it to the leaders. In retrospect, I wish he had done so. Too bad he listen to me. Everyone needed to hear the truth in the midst of so many lies.

From: Jonathan M. Detwiler
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2009 9:31 PM
To: Brent Detwiler; Jenny Detwiler
Subject: Letter to Grace Leaders

Men,

As I have considered this situation, I believe it is important I take a moment to write this note. This is something that I was not asked to write, but after hearing some of the slander and completely dishonest communication that is

being spread, it is something that I am compelled to write out of a desire to see the truth come to light and to serve all of you as you try to seek God.

One of my greatest concerns with this situation is that nothing in how this has been walked through resembles biblical relationships or even Matthew 18 for situations where someone needs to be confronted. In fact, it has been quite the opposite in many ways. Does it raise alarms in your mind that a biblical process has not been followed? I would suggest that there should be serious questions in your mind about how this is being carried out, and therefore what the motivations are behind it.

Let me lay out something that I believe would have represented a biblical framework. If Eric had some concerns for Dad, though I realize he may have had question about my relationship with Dad, as a member of the Board of Directors and church leadership team, he should have come to me and sought to involve me. I would have been glad to consider his thoughts and if necessary bring input to dad. This is part of the purpose of the leadership team. If I didn't share Eric's perspective, after sufficiently talking it through, we could have agreed to involve another guy with my dad's knowledge. Either way, if these concerns, after being thoroughly and humbly discussed with dad over a period of time (allowing for grace to work in his heart), were met with continued resistance/blindness to what seemed to be a significant and concerning level, then it would have been appropriate to pull in a few of the leaders in the church in as well. This would be in keeping with Matthew 18.

This larger group of men would meet with Dad, ask wise, godly, probing questions and then try to serve him with appropriate counsel and where necessary reproof. This larger group, particularly if not met with defiance from dad but some level of cooperation would continue to exercise patience until growth occurred or they felt that he was just resisting and not changing. This would likely take time. We are all sinners and none of us are typically quick to see things nor to change immediately. It takes the Holy Spirit bringing illumination to our hearts, and grace from God to change. And even after illumination, it still requires day by day taking one step at a time to put to death sin and to put on righteousness. Change is gradual. Then, if after this process has been walked through if progress wasn't being made, then it would be appropriate to begin saying that "if this level of pride/resistance doesn't change that we feel we cannot follow your leadership." If this still does not work, then it is appropriate to ask him to resign.

As all of you have observed this is completely the opposite of how this has taken place. This was not a process that has been walked through in a biblical manner and involved a group of guys speaking with dad. In fact, just the other

month at our care group leaders meeting on April 14, Eric and Anna were saying how unbelievably humble dad has been. They stated how graciously he has dealt with unjust attacks. They have raved that they have never had a pastor respond as humbly as Dad and be as open or willing to receive input or thoughts. At the Sovereign Grace Pastors Conference (April 7-9) they highly praised Dad to several other pastors they had meals with and even went up to CJ to plead with him to please get involved and to ask Dave and Gene to please follow the very teaching that CJ had just preached and to get back to us on the concerns that Eric had written in his nine page letter.

This kind of commendation was shared with the Brooks when they visited us last month [April] and it continued up until a conflict two weeks ago. Shortly after that they began having secret meetings and then this past Wednesday, two weeks later, Dad's resignation was requested within 72 hours. What happened? How is it that they have so rapidly changed their perspective? No major events happened since then...no immediately disqualifying sins like adultery had been committed, and the church is in many ways strengthening and beginning to grow...and yet out of the blue Eric is trying to kick Dad out of leadership? Something is very fishy. Eric did not present anything as a serious level of concern to Dad, and nothing was mentioned to me. And even if Eric had concerns that he sought to bring to Dad that were ignored, why was a small group of the church leaders not involved in walking through a process with Dad? Not only is this the right thing to do, but Dad has always welcomed everyone's thoughts and expressed a desire for input.

Instead Eric began meeting in secret with Ray, Jim, and Roger planning and discussing things and decided to force Dad into resigning, and give him only three days to do so. It is sad that Eric would form such a group without talking to Dad and there are some serious things to be concerned about it:

1. First, and I realize this will come as a surprise statement to many of you all...and I only share it because it is necessary information...but Ray is not someone who should be consulted or listened to in regards to any of this situation. Due to serious issues of sin that came to the surface in his life during his time on the leadership team, including severe anger/bitterness, being prideful and demanding, serious marital issues, and a seeming lack of a walk with the Lord; Dad, Eric and I realized that Ray was disqualified from participating on the leadership team. Furthermore, Eric repeatedly questioned whether Ray was even walking with the Lord and had a relationship with him. This concern for Ray was continued as recently as Wayne Brook's visit last month, and Wayne shared the same concern. If Ray had not voluntarily stepped down from the leadership team, we would have removed Ray from the leadership team (with the full support and

recommendation of Eric). These issues of bitterness and anger in Ray's life have corrupted his discernment and attitude towards Sovereign Grace, Dad, and others and therefore clouded his perspective with sin. Additionally since Ray stepped down off the leadership team several months ago he has not been meaningfully involved and would not have any recent experiences.

2. I realize that this is a surprise to most...this is because of Dad's humility and love for Ray and therefore because of Dad's great desire to not reveal unnecessary details about his dear friend who had served in so many ways. Thus when they announced Ray stepping down at the leadership team meeting, Dad simply and genuinely thanked Ray for all the hard work and serving he had done.
3. It is hard to understand how Eric could go back and pull in a man he knows has judgment clouded by bitterness and rage and team up with him to convince Jim and Roger of serious issues. Does this sound like an action that reveals a desire for seeking to serve Dad or instead to build a team against him?
4. Second, neither Roger, nor Jim has ever been involved in sharing any concerns or serious observations with Dad in the past. Furthermore, when I spoke with Jim he told me that he had not had any personal experience of any of the things being shared, but that he trusted Eric and Ray. I don't know if Roger had his own concerns, but if he did, he certainly didn't share them. And yet, even though they hadn't interacted with Dad in sharing any personal concerns, hadn't gone to him to ask about the things that Ray and Eric had shared, and hadn't sought to be an instrument of change for anything, they listened to what Ray and Eric shared, and then willingly followed to sign the document to try and force Dad out of leadership. This is wrong. If there ever comes a time to remove someone from pastoral leadership, a position that God has called them to, not to mention their livelihood, you have got to be absolutely sure what you are signing and you cannot go based off of the gossip and slander of others, regardless of how much you like/respect them. This is a matter of integrity and conscience.
5. Thirdly, I am concerned that four guys, with no real pastoral experience, and having not been taught how to evaluate whether a pastor is qualified, take it upon themselves to determine this, and then act so swiftly, quickly, and confidently. Certainly they should have the agreement of the other leaders in the church, and yet it is my understanding that several of you never even knew what was about to take place. And yet Eric lied to both

Dad and me when he talked to us and said that he had talked to every single care group leader with the exception of John Sutton and Andy (who he hadn't been able to get in touch with) and that all of you were in agreement with their actions. This lying is consistent with the deceit and spin that I am now becoming aware Eric has placed on many things in his communication with you all.

Since that time Eric has continued meeting with you all and spreading his one-sided viewpoints and seeking to get you all to join with him without giving Dad a chance and opportunity to share; but instead, seemingly seeking to build a coalition to support himself. I have now heard several things shared that are extremely concerning and inaccurate...some that were completely dishonest. To then bring in the guys in Sovereign Grace who Eric himself has said have been extremely one sided in the dealings with Dad that he has observed, who have listened to gossip and slander, believed it, and acted upon it without asking questions and hearing us out seems contradictory. Further to allow Sovereign Grace to pour out their list of issues without Dad being present and me being banned from attending is extremely wrong and concerning. Any argument portrayed by one side, particularly if they involve several people will sound convincing when not countered with balanced perspective. That is why gossip and slander are so wicked and evil. It plants all these thoughts in the minds of the hearers and then, if not countered with the truth, will blossom into nasty weeds of inaccurate beliefs and perspectives.

Do the issues that have been mentioned matter? Absolutely. It is extremely important that someone that is in leadership not be characterized by pride and independence. It is important that he be willing to listen to feedback and observations. Will the leader do it perfectly?...no (who does...and in fact this is typically a challenge for any leader because often the characteristics that make pride a temptation also are what makes one a successful leader). Will the leader follow all suggestions or agree with all the observations?...no, particularly if they are bad ones. Someone in leadership must seek to be humble and listen, but in the end they must also follow their conscience and fulfill their God given calling to lead.

If there were consistent issues of pride in Dad's life and an unwillingness to hear others thoughts and to sincerely consider them that would be an issue of concern. However, most of the time I have observed, this would be the farthest thing from the truth. In fact, sometimes I have even thought that Dad sought too hard to seek feedback and get consensus when he just needed to make a decision. Are there ways for Dad to grow in humility? Yes and he fully admits it but please think of all the humble leadership he has provided and how in the midst of oppression from several folks (people that have left the church, some

in Sov. Grace, Ray...). Think of how he has been so careful to speak well of them and to not defend himself when it would have been understandable and in some cases probably a good thing. That is humility.

If I had observed Dad relating in a manner characterized by a lack of humility it would have frightened me, and I would be the first to seek to initiate a biblical process of correction and if necessary involve other men. This would be serious and concerning. However this has not been the case at all. I have been involved in many discussions from the very beginning and have consistently observed a wonderful level of humility. And even in conversations that I have not been present for, I have been filled in on and had the opportunity to observe Dad's attitude about the discussions and how he was processing them. Though not perfect, my observations have consistently been that his attitude and posturing have been one of humility...humility that exceed that which I've have observed anywhere else.

Lastly, I think it is extremely instructive to look at the absolute lack of care and love that has been portrayed in how Eric and the others have carried out this process. I know Eric has expressed to others his love for Dad and desire to see him restored. But do the facts line up with this declaration? When demanding his resignation there was no mention of restoration. Has he walked through things in a loving, gracious, and patient manner as the Bible describes? No, he has acted ruthlessly, behind closed doors, and with lightning speed. Does a friend just walk in one day without ever having had serious conversations about the topic and force someone to resign? Does someone who cares for the soul and well-being of a man simply walk in and essentially tell a man he is fired, and not at a minimum, express very deep and profound appreciation for all the service that has taken place, and a sincere care for the man's well-being in the future?

This was not done at all when Dad was given the resignation letter. This is a man who has lived his whole life since college wholeheartedly serving the Lord and devoting essentially every waking moment towards God's purposes and caring for and reaching out to others. It is the only thing he has known, it is his profession, and his passion. And yet four guys make the decision over a series of a few meetings and decide to strip that away and don't even address it when his resignation is demanded. It was just "you're proud, you have three days to resign." Leaving dad to wonder how he is even going to make a living in the future, how he is going to find a job when all he has done is pastor, and all sorts of things along those lines. These are not the actions of men that are seeking to care and love.

These are all very concerning aspects with how this whole process has been carried out. I think each of these things should raise serious questions as to why these men have acted in this manner. So much slander and dishonest speech has now been spread to support these claims. It is shameful. And as we read in Scripture this morning, such talk flows from people who are angry and have not handled situations properly.

In addition to issues with the process, I have had increasing concerns with Eric's humility and also for his own personal submission to authority. It is my observation that Eric has increasingly applied pressure upon Dad for "Eric's vision" of how things should be and that he has not done so in a humble manner. His thoughts have often seemed to be demands or suggestions made in a very strong categorical and confident manner that did not welcome a different perspective and did not leave room for differences of thought and for personal consideration or discussion. Even in these times when I observed Eric unhelpfully bringing his thoughts, Dad has almost without exception listened humbly, thanked Eric for his thoughts, encouraged him for positive aspects of the thoughts, and seriously consider the things presented (not that he always did them).

Another concern is that though Eric certainly sought to encourage on many, many occasions, when he did bring correction it was often very blunt, direct, and authoritative sounding. It appeared that Eric was supremely confident in his ability to discern what was going on and sometimes not careful in how he presented things. These issues are of concern first of all because they seem to indicate a lack of humility...a valuing of his own thoughts, ideas, and discernment. They are also of concern because from what I have observed they seem to be at the root of his actions. It appears that Eric resented not having all his ideas acted upon, and in his timeframe, resented a perceived decrease in prominence in the church, and then also took offense at some feedback that was provided to him and therefore responded in anger. Based upon on all his actions these past two weeks, it is difficult to see how his actions could be one of a humble man that lacked anger and offense.

I realize that none of you desire to be pulled into situations like this and that because of the uncomfortableness and complicatedness that it is much easier to just sit back and get reports from a few. However, as leaders in the church, friends of Mom and Dad, partners in ministry, and folks that have been pulled into this situation, I believe there is not the luxury of being disengaged. Instead, you have a Christian obligation to individually explore what is being said so that you can, in an informed way, personally consider, weigh, and discuss these matters. I strongly implore everyone to make it a priority to no

longer stand by and remain silent but to stand up, and be willing to come talk to Mom and Dad and to hear the other side of the story.

It seems that you are all content to sit back and simply let Sovereign Grace judge Dad. First of all, Sovereign Grace Ministries and Gene in particular, has sinned against Grace Community Church in listening to gossip and slander in their biased, one sided approach to things pertaining to the church and Dad. These issues have been brought to their attention by Dad, Ray, Eric, and myself; and yet Sovereign Grace has not repented, expressed any hint of possible wrong doing, nor any real aggressiveness to draw us out about our thoughts and concerns that they may humbly benefit (as CJ taught was important at the Pastors Conference). They are not relationally reconciled because of their lack of repentance and are not trustworthy to come in and provide what is supposed to be unbiased counsel. Certainly the issues being raised need to be addressed because you need to have confidence in the person leading the church and in his humility. This can be done without formally involving Sovereign Grace. First of all, I propose that everyone should meet with Mom and Dad to discuss any questions and concerns. Then, with any outstanding concerns, we could involve one of the unbiased and godly pastors in Sovereign Grace to assist in asking questions and making sure that concerns are addressed.

In the meantime, regardless of any ongoing discussion of the issues about Dad, I would suggest that you ought to be confronting Eric and Ray for their role in leading this. It would be appropriate as well to confront Jim and Roger for blindly going along with such an evil and unbiblical approach without ever talking to Dad. Also, I'd rather not go into what I suspect may be going on in Eric's heart, but looking at the fruit of his actions (which reveal the condition of the heart), I believe it requires folks to actively challenge him, dig into his motives, and lovingly bring correction and adjustment. Finally, many slanderous and lying statements have been made to you and so as you become aware of them please seek to deal with them in a biblical manner and to ask Dad/Mom any question you have about them.

I am so sorry that this situation has turned into such a mess! I would so love to be able to be simply focused on joyfully serving the Lord together, and reaching the community around us. I know this is so tough to wade through relationally as you care for everyone involved.

Please respond to me with your thoughts.

God bless,
Jonathan