

Everything You Need to Know about “American Evangelicalism’s Biggest Sex Scandal to Date”

Friday, May 17, 2013 at 10:35AM

The 46 page [“Second Amended Class Action Complaint and Jury Demand”](#) against Sovereign Grace Ministries and other Defendants was filed on Tuesday. It contains 218 horrific complaints. I am currently working on a post that will cover the latest developments but before I post the new material, I want to encourage everyone to go back and review the old material.

It has been exactly seven months since the original complaint was filed. I’ve been covering developments every step of the way and doing all I can to alert leaders in the Body of Christ so they can benefit and take the action needed to stop pedophiles and protect families in their churches, institutions, and ministries.

I am constantly contacted for information. I’ve put together this overview so people can have a comprehensive knowledge of all that has transpired over the past seven months. It is a short book but one that needs reading. I agree with radio talk show host, Janet Mefferd, when she says this is “America Evangelicalism’s biggest sex scandal to date.”

The following is presented in chronological order.

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Lawsuit Claims Evangelical Church Group Concealed Sex Abuse Allegations in Maryland and Virginia

Wednesday, October 17, 2012 at 3:41 PM

Brent Detwiler

This article was carried by the Associated Press and published in newspapers throughout the US. I had no knowledge of these events while I was part of Sovereign Grace Ministries.

All cases of child abuse (or spousal abuse) should be reported to civil authorities as a necessary means to prevent future abuse and protect past victims. That

has always been my position. Perpetrators must face justice and pastors should never prevent this from happening.

I trust this lawsuit will bring out the truth and result in corrective and punitive measures where warranted. “Forgiveness” should never be used to pressure a victim into remaining silent or from taking legal action against the abuser. We are talking about serious crimes.

If that kind of manipulation occurred, then the responsible pastors are guilty of spiritual abuse and liable to whatever penalties the law prescribes. C.J. and SGM leaders have a history of protecting the guilty while mistreating the innocent.

John Loftness, Gary Ricucci and others will now have to give account in a court of law. Everything will be brought out into the open. There will be no hiding from prosecution like C.J. did the past 15 months. If it goes to trial, charges will be heard, depositions taken, a just judge appointed, an impartial jury empaneled, witnesses called, sworn testimony given under the threat of perjury, and cross examination allowed.

All of these were denied me. C.J. avoided “jail time” because there was no just proceeding or hearing. Everything was rigged by the Interim Board. Not so in this case. John has covered up for C.J. but C.J. won’t be able to cover up for John if he is guilty as allegedly charged in the lawsuit. Once more, God is intervening in the affairs of Sovereign Grace Ministries.

I was contacted by a national reporter today. I provided him this statement.

“C.J. was the President and Chairman of SGM when these incidences occurred. He was also senior pastor of Covenant Life Church – one of the churches cited. He had knowledge of these matters and certainly would have provided counsel to the CLC pastors. He has taken no responsibility for any defective handling of either situation. It is possible the details of these events were covered up to save face. I was one of five SGM Board Members during this time period and I was never told about any of these cases of sexual abuse. That information was withheld from me.

“At the SGM Pastors Conference in 2009, C.J. asked Mark Mullery, the sr. pastor in Fairfax, VA, to make a confession regarding his/the pastors mishandling of the victims. C.J. took no responsibility and said nothing about his own mishandling of victims in Maryland at Covenant Life Church. I don’t know the facts concerning these events but I do know C.J. has a history of covering up serious sins and taking no responsibility as the senior leader.

“C.J. may also have withheld information from me thinking I would advocate for the victims and encourage contact with the law. In so doing, he may have been trying to keep a lid on things in order to avoid a lawsuit and bad press for pastoral negligence.”

In this lawsuit, C.J. will certainly be questioned under oath. We’ll find out if my concerns are real or imaginary provided the court allows transcripts in the public domain. I don’t imagine the plaintiffs are willing to settle out of court unless there is a public confession of wrong doing and remedial steps assigned by the court are implemented in order to prevent further abuse.

Lawsuit claims evangelical church group concealed sex abuse allegations in Md., Va.

Eric Tucker, Associated Press

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

[Huffington Post Article About SGM](#)

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Copy of Lawsuit Brought Against Sovereign Grace Ministries and Eight Defendants

Thursday, October 18, 2012 at 3:39 PM

Brent Detwiler

Just a few introductory remarks before you read the lawsuit. No one should presume the guilt or innocence of any of these men. Each one will need to defend himself. Guilt or innocence will vary from man to man.

Furthermore, no one should presume these charges are true or false. Each one must be tried. Plaintiffs will prosecute - defendants will defend. Both will be cross examined under sworn testimony.

I pray all false charges are tossed out and all true charges upheld. I hope that pastors are vindicated per the evidence and victims are justified per the evidence. This is all very serious when you consider C.J. Mahaney, who is President of SGM, and John Loftness, who is Chairman of the Board, are both cited in the lawsuit.

Prov 12:17 A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies.

Here is the link to the "[Class Action Complaint and Jury Demand.](#)"

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Sexual Abuse and Spousal Abuse in Sovereign Grace Ministries

Monday, October 22, 2012 at 5:45 PM

Brent Detwiler

Last Wednesday, Associated Press reporter Eric Tucker broke the story. His article, "[Lawsuit claims evangelical church group concealed sex abuse allegations in Md., Va.](#)" appeared in The Washington Post and was immediately picked up by media outlets everywhere. The story went viral on the internet and became national news overnight.

The next day, Greta Kreuz interviewed Joshua Harris. Ms. Kreuz is a television reporter for WJLA-TV, channel 7 which is the [ABC](#) affiliated television station in [Washington, D.C.](#) and the [flagship station](#) of the [Allbritton Communications Company](#).

See [this link for the video](#). Here is an excerpt from the broadcast.

[Kreuz] "Joshua Harris...says the church has never tried to cover up abuse." [Harris] "There has never been a policy like that. We are very committed to involving the authorities. Our biggest concern is not our reputation

or what anyone thinks of us, it is caring for kids well.” [Kreuz] “But those now suing don’t buy it.”

Joshua has put himself in the middle of the lawsuit. He will have to defend his denials on three counts. One, the pastors have never covered up sexual abuse. Two, the pastors have a proven record of involving the police. Three, concern for their own reputation as pastors has never been put ahead of their concern for sexual molested children. That is a tall order to defend against since four of eight defendants were pastors from Covenant Life Church. If these pastors are found guilty, Joshua is found guilty of defending the guilty.

The most frequently cited defendant in the lawsuit is John Loftness. He is in the greatest legal jeopardy according to the charges listed. John was a pastor at Covenant Life Church until September 2007. At that time, he became senior pastor of Solid Rock Church in Riverdale, MD. Six months ago, John was appointed Chairman of the Board for Sovereign Grace Ministries.

Legally and spiritually, John is the most powerful man in all of Sovereign Grace Ministries. He is “the spiritual leader” of the entire movement. He has also covered up for C.J. more than anyone other leader in SGM since his installation. Now he is being charged with covering up sexual molestation. This description of his powers as Chairman comes directly from the SGM Bylaws.

“Section 6.3 The Chairman. The Chairman shall be a member of the Board of Directors. As the spiritual leader of the Corporation, the Chairman shall have principal responsibility to establish the Corporation’s vision, mission, and priorities. He shall preside at meetings of the Board of Directors. He shall make reports to the Board of Directors, and shall have such other rights, duties, and powers as are authorized by the Board of Directors from time to time.”

Gary Ricucci is the second most cited defendant in the lawsuit. John and Gary stand out as you read the charges. Gary pastors the men and their families attending the Sovereign Grace Pastors College. He is also a pastor in C.J.’s church – Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville. Like John, he has been a staunch defender of C.J.

And of course, C.J. is cited in the lawsuit. I am not personally familiar with the facts presented by the three plaintiffs except to say that C.J. never informed me of the sexual abuse occurring in Covenant Life Church or Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax. That information should have been made known to me as a Board of Director. I would have recommended prosecution of the child molesters. For whatever reasons, C.J. concealed that information from me. That much I do know for a certainty.

In addition to specific charges against specific individuals, charge number 18 is against an unidentified individual.

“18. As early as 1987, the Church was on notice that sexual predation of children was occurring under its auspices. In addition to the incidents described below, the Church learned in 1997 through non-ministerial means that the son of a high-ranking Church leader was engaged in the sexual predation of children under the Church’s care. Yet the Church did absolutely nothing to protect the children.”

The prosecuting attorneys don’t tell us who this “high-ranking Church [SGM] leader” is or the name of his son. I don’t know of any high ranking leader’s son who preyed upon children. C.J. must know and he will be forced to tell the court.

Last Thursday, Susan Burke, a co-counsel in the case, was interviewed on the Janet Mefford Show. Here is the link.

[Janet Mefford Show Featuring Susan Burke](#)

On the show, Ms. Burke made reference to “many other victims as well.” All of this information will come out during discovery. Only eight defendants are cited in the lawsuit but it appears additional pastors will be deposed in order to prove a wide spread pattern of wrong doing. According to Ms. Burke, the three plaintiffs are only the tip of the iceberg.

“The families have kind of stepped forward and are willing to serve as representative plaintiffs. I’ve heard from, and been in touch with, many other victims as well. So we decided this would be, because of the subject matter and how traumatic it is for people to come forward. We thought the most protective

device here would be a class action and even since we just filed we've had a few more folks reach out to us as well. So sadly, it is not just the three." (Susan Burke)

I can vouch for this myself. Since last Wednesday when the story broke, I've been contacted by women whose children were sexually abused or they were physically abused by their husbands. They don't know who to turn to for help. In their cases, the pastors did nothing to prosecute the abusers. These women experienced the same kind treatment by their pastors as alleged in the lawsuit

I fear there are many cases of spousal abuse in Sovereign Grace Churches that have been terribly mishandled by SGM pastors. This too must be investigated. I want to encourage any woman who has been battered to get help. If your pastor did more to protect your abuser than you, or counseled you against contacting the police, or confronted you for being unforgiving, or told you not to separate, then please speak up. Such abusive pastoring must stop. I am glad to help you, confront your pastors for you, and put you in touch with people who can uphold you.

Susan Burke went on to reference the cover up of sexual molestation at Penn State University motivated by concerns for its reputation and revenues. She cites the Louis Freeh report. I suspect Ms. Burke will adopt his investigative approach in his successful prosecuting of the university and its key leaders.

"And I think what we've seen sadly in like the Penn State and in the Catholic Church; I mean what you see is that institutions end up elevating their own reputational and financial interest over vulnerable children. I don't know whether or not you had a chance to look at the wonderful investigative report done by Louis Freeh on the Penn State thing, but the way he phrased it there, you know [there was] absolutely no empathy for the child victims." (Susan Burke)

I wrote a blog post in July comparing Sovereign Grace Ministries to Penn State University. At the time, I charged SGM leaders with concealing spiritual abuse. I will not be surprised if they are also found guilty of concealing sexual and spousal abuse.

Joshua Harris claims Sovereign Grace Ministries is devoid of debased motivations like those behind the Penn State University scandal. I have to challenge that contention. I think Joshua has failed to apply the doctrine of sin. Every church is tempted to cover up sexual molestation because no church wants to be cited by the Press for negligence. There are serious consequences for one's reputation and income if word gets out that sexual abuse is occurring due to lax policies, or lax enforcement of policies, or negligent pastors who do not prosecute abusers and identify them for the church. Every church should have a register of child molesters on their website. The well-being of children is far more important than protecting the reputation of abusers who return to their crimes at a high rate. Even in churches!

Here is that post.

[Sovereign Grace Leaders Conceal Spiritual Abuse Like Penn State Leaders Concealed Sexual Abuse](#)
[Friday, July 13, 2012 at 4:51 PM](#)

Brent Detwiler

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Random Thoughts on Recent Events
Friday, October 26, 2012 at 11:03 AM
Brent Detwiler

Church Polity: This Sunday the Board of Directors will send the polity proposal they adopted to the SGM pastors. I think it will be a combination of Presbyterian and independent. They probably hope it will serve as a distraction from the class action lawsuit.

Challies: I wonder if pro-C.J. blogger, Tim Challies, will tell his readers not to read the lawsuit like he did my documents.

Mohler & Duncan: I wonder if Al Mohler, President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) and Ligon Duncan, noted Presbyterian churchman,

will vilify the plaintiffs and call all the charges in the lawsuit slanderous? That's what they've done in the past with anyone who speaks against C.J.

SBTS Trustees: What does the Board of Trustees at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary think now about the cozy relationship between C.J., SGM and the seminary now? I doubt they'll make a 100k contribution like C.J. did in 2008 to help cover lawyer's fees.

C.J.'s Circle of Friends: Will men like John Piper, R.C. Sproul, D.A. Carson, Mark Dever, John MacArthur, Wayne Grudem, Kevin DeYoung, Carl Trueman, Matt Chandler, et al., continue to actively support C.J. by having him speak in their churches, participate in their conferences, endorse his books, etc. It will be interesting to see if any of these men grant an interview on the SGM website commending C.J. and SGM until the lawsuit is resolved.

Name of Church: Now would be a good time for any church with Sovereign Grace in their name to change it.

Molestation Policies: Churches need to have policies and procedures in place to protect against child abuse at all church functions (home groups, seminars, retreats), not just on Sunday morning.

Sex Offender Register: Every church should have a sex offender register on their website. Require this of your pastors.

Leave of Absence for President and Chairman: The SGM Board of Directors should relieve President Mahaney and Chairman Loftness of their responsibilities until the lawsuit is resolved - not as an admission of guilt but as a precaution.

Mahaney and Loftness Fired: If SGM, Mahaney, and Loftness are successfully sued for covering up child molestation they should be immediately fired by the Board of Directors.

Pastors Who Cover up Molestation: Every church needs to find out how their pastors have handled sexual and spousal abuse in their church in the past. Did they contact the police, etc. Demand an accounting. Church members must find out if sexual abuse was covered up.

Civil Versus Criminal Suit: Think of O.J. Simpson. He was not found guilty in a criminal court but he was found liable in a civil court. One article I read explained it this way. “The burden of proof in criminal matters is ‘beyond a reasonable doubt,’ which is much more difficult to achieve than the ‘preponderance of evidence’ standard used in most civil cases.... The civil justice system does not determine an offender’s guilt or innocence, but works to determine whether the offender is liable for the harm caused to the victim.... This burden of proof essentially means that one side’s evidence must be more persuasive than the other; this is far lower than the burden necessary in a criminal case.”

Monetary and Equitable Relief: “A plaintiff can either ask for monetary relief, or equitable relief. Monetary relief is when the plaintiff asks for a cash award to remedy the situation. Equitable relief is when the plaintiff asks for the court to order the other party to do or not to do something” (“The Difference between Civil Courts and Criminal Courts,” The Leadership Conference). If SGM or any of the defendants are liable, I hope the plaintiff’s ask for both kinds of relief. I assume they can require SGM to take action that prevents the cover up of child molestation in the future.

Liability Insurance: SGM has liability insurance but I don’t believe it covers the kind of malpractice alleged in the class action lawsuit. If I am correct, that means SGM will have to pay all lawyer fees and damages awarded by the court if found liable. That could bankrupt SGM. I assume individual defendants will also have to cover their own their own expenses and damages if found liable. May the innocent be vindicated and the guilty held accountable. I don’t want to see anyone harmed financially or otherwise who is not guilty.

Additional Defendants: More defendants should be named in the lawsuit. I can think of a few in light of recent revelations. I’m sure the attorneys are busy taking names and gathering information.

Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Ed Kober and Ed Keinath defended SGM in “Cases Involving Sexual Misconduct” on page 19 as found in their April 10, 2012, *Ambassadors of Reconciliation Report to the Sovereign Grace Ministries Board of Directors*. They said the following.

“Some raising their concerns alleged that SGM consistently handles such cases in irresponsible ways. While we did not complete detailed reviews of cases involving sexual misconduct, we were able to review documentation in some situations that demonstrated the SGM leadership understood the gravity of the situations. SGM leaders offered care and concern, they sought professional legal and counseling help for SGM and key leaders involved, and in some cases they helped connect parties to Christian mediators.”

This amounted to a complete vindication of Sovereign Grace Ministries. AoR should also be name as a defendant in the lawsuit. If the allegations in the lawsuit are true, then at least some of the plaintiffs made this clear to Ted and Ed. They did nothing but commend SGM in their report.

Stop Giving: How can anyone be donating money to Sovereign Grace Ministries? Last year they paid out over 400k to cover the cost for Ambassadors of Reconciliation and the corrupt Three Panel Review. This year they will pay out hundreds of thousands in attorney’s fees to fight the class action lawsuit. And fifteen months later, we still don’t know how much C.J. is compensated even though he promised to reveal it. Approach your pastors and find out if they are still giving your tithe money to SGM. Demand they stop. They should redirect the church’s giving to worthy individuals and organizations. _

Start New Churches: If your church doesn’t leave Sovereign Grace Ministries, you should consider starting a new church comprised of people who are devoted to love our Lord Jesus in humility, integrity, and truth.

God’s Opposition: I’m sure C.J. and John are telling all their friends and associates that the lawsuit is full of slander. That they are not guilty of covering up child molestation. This much is certain, God continues to oppose the proud in SGM and only the proud in SGM are foolish enough to deny it (Jam 4:6-10, 1 Pet 5:5-6). Being good Calvinists, they shouldn’t blame the devil or people as primary agents. Yet C.J. and the Board present C.J. as the suffering servant who has been victimized by evil doers. They continue to deny God’s sovereign opposition. Pray for C.J. *Proverbs 29:1 He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.*

My Bitterness: Eleven months out of the year I do okay dealing with temptations to bitterness. October is different. I should be 25 feet up a tree in my beloved deer stand dressed in camo. Instead, I'm on the ground before my computer screen addressing SGM. A bitter man with a bow is not a good combination. By the way, I desperately need some updated broad head arrows. Make a donation so I can put food on my table and overcome my resentment. Help the hungry and pray November allows for hunting. Remember the words of Jesus to Peter. *Acts 10:13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"*

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**Class Action Lawsuit Naming Sovereign Grace Ministries Is Expanded
Monday, January 14, 2013 at 7:22 PM
Brent Detwiler**

The original complaint against Sovereign Grace Ministries and eight defendants was filed on October 17, 2011. It has now been amended and expanded. It was re-filed on January 11, 2012.

When I posted the original complaint, I included the following introduction. I think it is still relevant though additional evidence has obvious come forth.

"Just a few introductory remarks before you read the lawsuit. No one should presume the guilt or innocence of any of these men. Each one will need to defend himself. Guilt or innocence will vary from man to man.

"Furthermore, no one should presume these charges are true or false. Each one must be tried. Plaintiffs will prosecute - defendants will defend. Both will be cross examined under sworn testimony.

"I pray all false charges are tossed out and all true charges upheld. I hope that pastors are vindicated per the evidence and victims are justified per the evidence. This is all very serious when you consider C.J. Mahaney, who is President of SGM, and John Loftness, who is Chairman of the Board, are both cited in the lawsuit." (Brent Detwiler, "Copy of Lawsuit Brought Against Sovereign Grace Ministries and Eight Defendants," October 18, 2012)

Here are some important takeaways from the amended and expanded complaint.

Five pseudonymous plaintiffs are added to the original three.

1. PAULA POE
2. CARLA COE
3. GRACE COE
4. KAREN KOE
5. KARL KOE

The judge assigned to the case has been named: the Hon. Sharon V. Burrell.

Three institutional defendants are added to Sovereign Grace Ministries.

1. Covenant Life Church, Inc.
2. Covenant Life School, Inc.
3. Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax

Two individual defendants are added to existing eight.

1. Mark Mullery
2. Vince Hinders

A net total 28 charges are added (goes from 115 to 143).

Material issues added to the lawsuit.

- The physical abuse of children
- Sexual abuse occurred on church premises and at church events
- Sexual predators were negligently hired as employees
- PAULA POE repeatedly sexually assaulted by a pastor/teacher and children's ministry worker
- A pedophilia ring operated at Covenant Life Church and Covenant Life School
- CARLA COE was repeatedly abused (not sexually) by Larry Tomczak and co-conspirators
- KARL COE repeatedly sexually molested by the male son of a Church pastor.

It is very difficult to read these charges. I served on the SGM Board of Directors when all these alleged incidences occurred. Not one of them was ever brought to my attention. That amounts to a cover-up in my opinion. I should have been told.

I have always taught and counseled those who are victims of sexual or physical abuse to contact the police. It is the most loving thing you can do for the abusers. They will not stop unless severe consequences are introduced but that is no easy decision in some circumstances. They need the support of pastors in making such tough decisions.

Why? It can be gutting wrenching to send off a husband, father, child or sibling to be incarcerated. That itself often brings additional trials upon the victims – e.g. the loss of income, shame, isolation, etc. In such cases, the church must provide extraordinary support.

Furthermore, I have counseled pastors to advise the church of known sex abusers in their midst. That is not a fun assignment but it is necessary in order to arm parents so they can protect their children from juvenile and adult predators.

Thankfully, I've only been involved in a couple of such cases over the years. The victimizers went to jail but were helped as a result. One wrote me for many years.

[Here is the link to the First Amended Class Action Complaint and Jury Demand.](#)

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Ominous Signs in Amended Lawsuit Portend Worse Things to Come for Sovereign Grace Ministries

Friday, January 18, 2013 at 1:31 PM

Brent Detwiler

The first complaint cited in the amended class action lawsuit gives a succinct overview of the charges being brought against the 14 Defendants by the eight Plaintiffs.

“Plaintiffs and the Class were seriously harmed by Sovereign Grace Ministries, Inc., Covenant Life Church, Inc., Covenant Life School, Inc. and the individual Defendants. The facts show that certain individual Defendants and other predators not named repeatedly physically and sexually abused children. Although these facts were known to Defendants, they cared more about protecting its financial and institutional standing than about protecting children, its most vulnerable members. Defendants failed to stop repeated and ongoing sexual predation occurring at SGM churches and organization, including Covent Life Church and Covenant Life School. Defendants failed to report known incidences of sexual predation to law enforcement, encouraged parents to refrain from reporting the assaults to law enforcement, and interposed themselves between the parents of the victims and law enforcement in order to mislead law enforcement into believing the parents had “forgiven” those who preyed on their children. Defendants’ acts and omissions were not isolated events. Defendants’ repeated acts and omissions created a culture in which sexual predators were protected from accountability, and victims were silenced.” (C1)

Repeated Sexual Assaults Alleged on Church Properties by Church Workers

The original lawsuit was filed on October 17, 2012. A couple weeks later, Joshua Harris accurately pointed out to Covenant Life Church some “saving graces” regarding the legal complaints it contained.

“Before we move on to the primary focus of our meeting I do want to say a few things about the issues surrounding the lawsuit. I hope you understand that because this is an open suit, we cannot discuss details of the case. But I think it’s helpful to make a few simple points:... Third, our church has not been sued and there are no allegations in the Complaint that any past or present pastor of CLC has committed child abuse. Neither is there an allegation in the Complaint that any other employee or agent of Covenant Life committed any child abuse. Fourth, there is no allegation in the Complaint that any act of child abuse occurred on Covenant Life property or under its supervision and control.” (Joshua Harris, CLC Members’ Meeting, Nov 4, 2012)

Tommy Hill, Director of Administration and Finances, put out the same kind of statement on two different occasions.

“Though not yet served, Sovereign Grace Ministries (SGM) leadership has obtained a copy of the civil lawsuit filed last week against SGM and several pastors of its associational churches.... It is important to note that it does not allege any act of child abuse by a pastor or staff member of SGM or of an associated church.” (Tommy Hill, SGM website, Oct 26, 2012)

“Sovereign Grace Ministries (SGM) leadership has obtained a copy of the civil lawsuit filed Oct. 17 against SGM and several pastors from its associational churches.... The suit does not allege child abuse by any current or former pastor of SGM or any church associated with SGM. The suit does not allege child abuse by any employee or staff of SGM or any church associated with SGM. The suit does not allege any child abuse occurred on any SGM property or any church associated with SGM.” (Tommy Hill, SGM website, Nov 14, 2012)

All of this has changed with the amended filing on January 11, 2013 and the addition of five new plaintiffs. The expanded complaint references a pastor/teacher, children’s ministry worker, and the male son of a church pastor being involved in repeated acts of sexual assault and abuse on church property and at church events.

In one place it says,

“There is a class of male and female persons harmed by Defendants’ negligent and intentional misconduct in hiring and failing to supervise sexual predators, concealing, tolerating, failing to report allegations of physical and sexual abuse.” (C96)

The Operation of a “Pedophilia Ring”

The amended suit also alleges a “pedophilia ring” operating in Covenant Life Church and Covenant Life School. There are four references in the complaint.

- “Upon information and belief, **Paula Poe** was not the only victim of this pedophilia ring operating with the School and Church.” (C41)

- “Upon information and belief, the pedophilia ring’s victims **included children** who subsequent went on to prey upon **other younger children.**” (C42)
- “Upon information and belief, the **juvenile perpetrator** [i.e., the male son of a church pastor in Fairfax, VA] may have been one of the victims of the pedophilia ring operating at the [Covenant Life] School [in Gaithersburg, MD] prior to sexually molesting **Karl Koe.**” (C57)
- “Upon information and belief, the **juvenile perpetrator** [a different person than the one mentioned above] who molested **Norma Noe** may have previously been a victim of the pedophilia ring operating at the [Covenant Life] School.” (C86)

In this regard and others, the lawyers asked the Judge to allow them to proceed to the discovery phase in order gather evidence that will help them quantify the number of juvenile and adult pedophiles operating in this alleged ring and also the number of victims who have been sexual abused and assaulted.

“Discovery is needed to ascertain the size of the class, but based on the number of persons contacting putative class counsel, a class is needed for efficient adjudication. Many of the victims are not willing to come forward in a public setting as a result of the nature of harms done to them.” (C99)

C.J. Mahaney and Steve Shank

C.J. was the senior pastor at Covenant Life Church (CLC) when the alleged sexual abuse occurred in relation to Norma Noe, Robin Roe, and Grace Goe. He was interacting with Defendants Loftness, Ricucci and Layman and providing them counsel.

Steve Shank had apostolic responsibility for Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax (SGCF) when the alleged sexual abuse occurred in relation to Jane Doe, Karen Coe, and Karl Coe. He was interacting with Defendants Ecelbarger, Phillips, D. Hinders, Gallo, Mullery, V. Hinders and providing them counsel. Steve was also in contact with C.J. regarding these matters.

The pastors at CLC and SGCF did not act on their own. C.J. and Steve played significant roles in providing them counsel and direction in these situations. This

should come out in the discovery phase and then in the court trial if the case proceeds. In my opinion, Steve Shank should be added as a Defendant.

Both C.J. and Steve were aware of difficulties regarding Carla Coe and Defendant Tomczak.

Condemnations of Plaintiffs and Lawyers by Sovereign Grace Board and Leadership Team

Tommy Hill is the spokesman for the nine member Board of Directors and the four man Leadership Team comprised of C.J., Dave Harvey, Jeff Purswell and himself. Recently Dave was removed from the Leadership Team by his local pastors for unspecified disciplinary reasons that have been concealed. He was replaced by Mark Prater.

Tommy is also the Director of Administration and Finances for SGM. He works the most closely with C.J., who is the President of SGM, and John Loftness, who is the Chairman of the Board for SGM. Both are named Defendants in the lawsuit. Tommy has issued four statements on their behalf regarding the lawsuit. Here are his comments regarding the complaints or allegations.

October 17, 2012

“To date, Sovereign Grace Ministries has not been served with any such lawsuit nor does it have a copy of the lawsuit. Sovereign Grace Ministries is not in a position to comment on the allegations of the reported lawsuit.”

October 26, 2012

“This recent complaint makes broad allegations that SGM pastors were negligent in providing spiritual counsel and pastoral care in situations involving persons who had previously suffered child sexual abuse.... SGM is not in a position to comment on the specific allegations at this time, but we are beginning a careful legal review of each allegation. Upon initial review it appears the complaint contains a number of untrue or misleading allegations, as well as considerable mischaracterizations of intent.”

November 14, 2012

“This complaint makes broad allegations that SGM pastors were negligent, resulting in errors and omissions in pastoral counseling and spiritual care, which was voluntarily sought and provided years ago to some families of child abuse victims.... SGM leaders provided biblical and spiritual direction to those who requested this guidance. This care was sought confidentially, as is a right under the First Amendment. We are saddened that lawyers are now, in essence, seeking to violate those rights by asking judges and juries, years after such pastoral assistance was sought, to dictate what sort of biblical counsel they think should have been provided. SGM believes that allowing courts to second guess pastoral guidance would represent a blow to the First Amendment, that would hinder, not help, families seeking spiritual direction among other resources in dealing with the trauma related to any sin including child sexual abuse. SGM is not in a position to comment on the specific allegations at this time, but upon review it appears the complaint contains a number of misleading allegations, as well as considerable mischaracterizations of intent. Legal counsel is preparing responsive pleadings.”

After demeaning the allegations, absolving the pastors, putting the onus on the counselees, implicating the lawyers, and hiding behind the First Amendment (the lawsuit is not about church doctrine, it alleges the cover up of criminal activity); SGM has suddenly dropped their braggadocio and self-righteous pronouncements. They are singing a completely different tune since the amended lawsuit was filed on January 11, 2013. The spin is nauseating! Here is Tommy’s recent statement. The axe is falling.

January 15, 2013

“SGM has been carefully reviewing each allegation since the initial claims first surfaced last October. We consider any allegation of harm to a child extremely serious and we have been working diligently in an effort to learn the truth. We ask for patience as we continue to investigate these new allegations. Please continue to pray with us for all those affected by this lawsuit.”

Ambassadors of Reconciliation

On my blog in “Random Thoughts on Recent Events” (October 26, 2012), I said the following about AoR’s exoneration of SGM.

“Ed Kober and Ed Keinath defended SGM in ‘Cases Involving Sexual Misconduct’ on page 19 as found in their April 10, 2012, *Ambassadors of Reconciliation Report to the Sovereign Grace Ministries Board of Directors*. They said the following.

‘Some raising their concerns alleged that SGM consistently handles such cases in irresponsible ways. While we did not complete detailed reviews of cases involving sexual misconduct, we were able to review documentation in some situations that demonstrated the SGM leadership understood the gravity of the situations. SGM leaders offered care and concern, they sought professional legal and counseling help for SGM and key leaders involved, and in some cases they helped connect parties to Christian mediators.’

“This amounted to a complete vindication of Sovereign Grace Ministries. AoR should also be name as a defendant in the lawsuit. If the allegations in the lawsuit are true, then at least some of the plaintiffs made this clear to Ted and Ed. They did nothing but commend SGM in their report.”

I assume Ted Kober, President of AoR, and Ed Keneith, his co-worker, will be deposed and subpoenaed on behalf of the Plaintiffs to find out everything they knew about “Cases Involving Sexual Misconduct” (to use their pathetic description of sexual assault and molestation). From my perspective, had Ted and Ed acted in a righteous manner, instead of an unrighteous manner, this class action lawsuit may have been avoided. Instead of reconciliation, they brought division, when they dismissed the Plaintiffs/victims and commended the Defendants in their report to the SGM Board of Directors. This must have crushed the Plaintiffs/victims and their loved ones.

More Amendments to Lawsuit in the Future

What has been alleged in the civil suit is ever so serious! I can’t imagine Judge Sharon V. Burrell dismissing the case on Constitutional grounds or for a lack of credible evidence which grows every week. That doesn’t mean I believe every

complaint. I still view them as allegations. They each have to be proven before a jury of peers.

But here's the point. No Plaintiff/victim would subject himself/herself to such adverse circumstances unless they felt compelled by justice and no Washington D.C. lawyer would accept the case unless they were confident it was legitimate and therefore winnable.

It is one thing to play the role of plaintiff on an internet blog where you can make all kinds of allegations under an anonymous name without presenting evidence. It is another thing to be subpoenaed, deposed while recorded, and cross examined under oath by competent lawyers. We are talking about the big leagues, not tee ball.

I don't think the Plaintiffs are in this for the money though they are entitled to reparations and restitution under biblical and civil law if the Defendants are found culpable. That is why I don't believe they will settle out of court for financial damages alone. They want "equitable relief" more than "monetary relief."

"A plaintiff can either ask for monetary relief, or equitable relief. Monetary relief is when the plaintiff asks for a cash award to remedy the situation. Equitable relief is when the plaintiff asks for the court to order the other party to do or not to do something.' If SGM or any of the defendants are liable, I hope the plaintiff's ask for both kinds of relief. I assume they can require SGM to take action that prevents the cover up of child molestation in the future." (Brent Detwiler, "Random Thoughts on Recent Events," October 26, 2012)

This recent amendment to the class action lawsuit could be the first of several over the coming months. The lawyers have now widened the field to include non-sexual abuse with the introduction of Plaintiff Carla Coe. I assume complaints regarding spousal abuse will also be added to the class action in the future. I said the following in October 2012.

"I fear there are many cases of spousal abuse in Sovereign Grace Churches that have been terribly mishandled by SGM pastors. This too must be investigated. I want to encourage any woman who has been battered to get help. If your pastor did more to protect your abuser than you, or counseled you against contacting

the police, or confronted you for being unforgiving, or told you not to separate, then please speak up. Such abusive pastoring must stop. I am glad to help you, confront your pastors for you, and put you in touch with people who can uphold you.” (Brent Detwiler, “Sexual Abuse and Spousal Abuse in Sovereign Grace Ministries,” October 22, 2012)

Law Enforcement and Criminal Charges

I believe the civil lawsuit will go to trial given the growing body of evidence. But that is not the end of it. This kind of filing “In Montgomery County Circuit Court, Maryland – Civil Division” does not go unnoticed by law enforcement agencies on the Federal, State, and Local level. One can assume there are criminal investigations going on of which we have no knowledge totally independent of the civil proceedings.

The plaintiffs in the civil case are not bringing criminal charges but that does not mean criminal charges will not be brought by law enforcement. If all the allegations in the civil lawsuit are true, then criminal acts have been committed and criminals have been protected. Of the 11 abusers referenced in the Complaint only two were prosecuted. The other nine were allegedly protected.

The lawsuit also alleges a “pedophilia ring” that may have operated across state lines. Whether that is true or not, I’m certain the Judge in this case has a legal obligation to alert the highest law enforcement agencies in the land to this and other allegations contained in the lawsuit.

In this regard, I’d recommend the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Baltimore, Maryland be contacted by anyone who knows of past or present criminal activity covered up by Sovereign Grace Ministries or their churches. Go to <http://www.fbi.gov/baltimore/contact-us/contact>. There is little doubt in my mind that criminal charges will be forthcoming. That could result in jail time, not only for perpetrators, but for those who unlawfully protected the perpetrators.

Financial Implications for Defendants

Four institutional Defendants are named: Sovereign Grace Ministries, Covenant Life Church, Covenant Life School, and Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax.

These 501(c3) non-profit corporations each carry liability insurance to indemnify (cover) the organization against lawsuits like the one being filed. Typically a church in SGM has coverage for about 1 million dollars in damages. The policies for SGM, CLC and SGCF may provide for greater payouts.

When a lawsuit is filed, the Insurance Company begins their own investigation. Regardless of findings, they will cover the expenses/damages for the institutional Defendant (i.e. church or ministry).

The same is not true for the individual Defendants. If they determine the Defendants are liable, then the Defendants will have to pay all legal fees and damages from their own financial resources. That could easily lead to personal bankruptcy and the garnishing of wages in the future.

In this regard, it is important to know whether or not Sovereign Grace Ministries is paying for legal representation for the individual Defendants if they are not being covered by the Insurance Company. For instance, is SGM paying the legal fees for C.J. Mahaney (President), John Loftness (Chairman) and Gary Ricucci (Pastor for the Pastors College).

Every leader and church member in SGM should demand an accounting. Are monies donated to the charitable cause of SGM being used to cover legal expenses because those expenses are not being covered by the liability insurance? This is a crucial question! No church or individual contributor should give another dime to SGM until these questions are openly answered in public.

Reputational Implications

If the lawsuit goes to trial, it will destroy the reputation of C.J. Mahaney and Sovereign Grace Ministries. Of that I am certain. C.J. is ultimately responsible having been the President of SGM for 22 years (1991 to present) and the senior pastor of CLC for 25 years (1980-2004). He has not been uninformed or uninvolved in most, if not all, of the alleged complaints.

There are ominous signs in the amended lawsuit that portend worse things to come.

The Legal Road Ahead

The legal defense team of Gammon and Grange will now file their responsive pleadings. They will argue for dismissal of the class action by the Judge on various grounds (e.g. the First Amendment). The lawyers for the Plaintiffs then provide the Judge their own response to these pleadings.

Sometime in the spring, the Judge Sharon V. Burrell will rule on the merits of the case and make a determination whether or not it may proceed to discovery.

“**Discovery** is the pre-trial phase in a [lawsuit](#) in which each party, through the law of [civil procedure](#), can obtain evidence from the opposing party by means of discovery devices including requests for answers to interrogatories, requests for production of documents, requests for admissions and depositions. Discovery can be obtained from non-parties using [subpoenas](#).”

The evidence gathered during the discovery phase will be presented to the Judge over the summer I assume. She will then make a ruling on whether or not the case may be tried by a jury based upon its merits.

If it goes to trial, I suspect a date will be set for the end of this year or early next year. I imagine the trial will last several weeks given the growing number of Plaintiffs and Defendants.

The jurors will have their hands full. It will be a ton of information to assimilate and evaluate. In the process, they must assess the liability of each individual Defendant and each institutional Defendant. Then they assign damages to be paid out by each Defendant if found liable. They will also rule on requests for equitable relief.

Of course, it is possible some or all of the Defendants may settle out of court. It is also possible the Judge will dismiss the case, or certain Complaints in the case, after the responsive pleadings. Or the Judge may rule that the case, or certain Complaints in the case, may not go to trial after discovery. It is not a done deal and innocent Defendants should not end up in trial court.

This is yet again another opportunity for C.J. and SGM to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God or experience even greater expressions of his holy opposition. There has been no grieving, mourning or wailing in SGM over the past 18 months.

The Leadership Team and Board of Directors refuse to submit to God and acknowledge their grave sins on different fronts while many SGM pastors tolerate and condone what should have been exposed and condemned through just means. The devil has encamped around SGM. He will not flee until there is widespread mourning and gloom. Instead of SGM being lifted up by God, it has been brought low by God in a short period of time.

James 4:4-10 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? [6] But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." [7] Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

I have summarized below the alleged activities of abuse that are contained in the amended lawsuit.

Three Original Plaintiffs

Jane Doe (C7, 62-73)

"A female high-school student residing in Virginia who was sexually assaulted when she was three." (C7)

"Between August 1998 and March 1999, a church member repeatedly sexually assaulted and sexually molested Jane Doe." (C62)

Charge: Repeated sexual assault and molestation

Timeframe: August 1998 – March 1999

Age: 3 years old

Parents: Church officials who ran a Home Group
Location: Not specified
Perpetrator: Church member
Defendants cited: Ecelbarger, Phillips, Hinders, D., Gallo

Norma Noe (C8, 74-86)

“A 22-year old female college student residing in Maryland who was sexually assaulted when she was two years old.” (C8)

“On or about March 17, 1993, a church member sexually molested Norma Noe. Norma Noe was two years old at the time of the sexual assault and living in Gaithersburg, MD.” (C74)

Charge: Sexual molestation
Timeframe: March 1993
Age: 2 years old
Location: Not specified
Perpetrator: Juvenile church member
Conviction: Parents of victim immediately called police and reported assault, convicted for sexual molestation.
Defendants cited: Loftness, Ricucci, Layman

Robin Roe (C9, 87-95)

“Is a young woman residing in Maryland who sister was sexually assaulted by a pedophilia stepfather.” (C9)

“Plaintiff Robin Roe’s adoptive father...is a sexual deviant who sexually abused her older sister for three and one-half years.” (C87)

Charge: Sexual assault and abuse for 3 ½ years
Timeframe: Discovered by mother in November 1987
Location: Not specified
Perpetrator: Stepfather and current member of Covenant Life Church
Defendants: Ricucci, Loftness

Five Additional Plaintiffs

Paula Poe (C3, 37-42)

“Female who was repeatedly sexually assaulted during her childhood at the School at CLC and at various church events.” (C3)

“Was repeatedly sexually assaulted by two men. The primary perpetrator was a pastor and teacher. The secondary perpetrator was a children’s ministry worker.” (C37)

Charge: Repeated sexual assault

Timeframe: Not specified

Location: Covenant Life school, Church premises and Church events

Perpetrator 1: Pastor/teacher

Perpetrator 2: Children’s ministry worker

Carla Coe (C4, 43-47)

“Female who was repeatedly abused by Defendant Tomczak, primarily in Maryland and Virginia.” (C4)

Charge: Non-sexual abuse

Time: 25-year period

Location: Maryland and Virginia

Defendants: Tomczak

Grace Goe (C5, 48-52)

“Female who, along with her siblings, was repeatedly abused.” (C5)

“Was physically and sexually abused by her father when she was a minor and living in Maryland.” (C48)

Charge: Repeated physical and sexual abuse

Age: Minor

Location: Maryland

Perpetrator: Father

Defendants cited: Covenant Life Church, Ricucci, Loftness

Karen Koe (C6, 58-61)

“Brother and sister, both of whom were sexually assaulted as children residing in Virginia.” (C6)

“Was sexually molested by a juvenile sexual predator when she was eight years old.” (C58)

Charge: Sexual assault and molestation

Victim: Age 8

Location: Virginia

Perpetrator: Juvenile sexual predator (who was previously charged with raping a minor and served time in juvenile detention); parents alerted police and was convicted on felony charges

Defendant: Gallo

Karl Koe (C6, 53-57)

“Brother and sister, both of whom were sexually assaulted as children.” (C6)

“Was seven years old when he was repeatedly sexually molested (approximately ten times) by the male son of a Church pastor.” (C53)

Charge: Repeated sexual molestation

Victim: Age 7

Perpetrator: Male son of a Church pastor (approximately age 12 or 13)

Location: Multiple locations including bathroom at Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax

Defendants: Ecelbarger, Gallo, Mullery, V. Hinders

Two Examples Not Included as Plaintiffs

Example 1 (C99-108)

“A young girl was repeatedly sexually abused by her father, a member of the SGM church located in Fairfax, Virginia. When the girl reached the age of ten, she told her mother about the ongoing and long-standing sexual abuse.” (C99)

Charge: Repeated incestuous sexual assaults

Victim: Reported to mother at age 10

Perpetrator: Father – a member of Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax

Location: Not specified

Example 2 (C109-111)

“A child was molested by a person of the same sex. The parents immediately advised Defendants of this attack. Defendants told the parents that the sexual predator had been caught molesting several other children on occasions in the past.”

Charge: Sexual molestation

Victim: A child

Perpetrator: A sexual predator of the same sex

Location: Not specified

#####

The First Amendment or the Welfare of Children

Saturday, January 19, 2013 at 2:55 PM

Brent Detwiler

I was recently asked this question by a national publication. “Is the First Amendment concern over the confidentiality of pastoral counseling legitimate? Or should the welfare of children be the primary issue?” The question was based upon this official statement from SGM on its website.

“SGM leaders provided biblical and spiritual direction to those who requested this guidance. This care was sought confidentially, as is a right under the First Amendment. We are saddened that lawyers are now, in essence, seeking to violate those rights by asking judges and juries, years after such pastoral assistance was sought, to dictate what sort of biblical counsel they think should have been provided. SGM believes that allowing courts to second guess pastoral guidance would represent a blow to the First Amendment, that would hinder, not help, families seeking spiritual direction among other resources

in dealing with the trauma related to any sin including child sexual abuse.”
(Tommy Hill, Director of Administration and Finance, Nov 14, 2012)

Here’s how I answered.

##

This class action lawsuit is not about the First Amendment or the confidentiality of pastoral counseling. It is about criminality. There is every reason to believe heinous crimes have been committed and perverse criminals have been protected. The Complaint references 10 victims, 11 juvenile or adult predators, a “pedophilic ring,” and the need for a pretrial “discovery...to ascertain the size of the class.” (i.e., find out how many other children have been sexually abused).

In this regard, the Complaint alleges C.J. Mahaney, Sovereign Grace Ministries, and 12 other Defendants “failed to report known incidences of sexual predation to law enforcement, encouraged parents to refrain from reporting the assaults to law enforcement, and interposed themselves between the parents of the victims and law enforcement in order to mislead law enforcement.” Such negligent and illegal actions are not protected by the establishment clause in the First Amendment.

When pastors become aware of sexual molestation they should immediately contact law enforcement in order to protect the victims and prosecute the sexual deviants. Instead the Complaint alleges, “Defendants provided sexual predators with free legal advice and counsel on how to evade accountability, and repeatedly worked with sexual predators to mislead law enforcement. Defendants were willing to, and did, make false statements to law enforcement officials and in courts of law in its efforts to protect sexual predators.”

On January 15, Tommy Hill, the official spokesman for SGM, released this statement on its website, “As we initially stated and continue to reiterate, SGM considers the mistreatment of any child reprehensible and evil.... We adhere to the biblical commands to pursue the protection and well-being of all people – especially children, who are precious gifts given by the Lord and the most vulnerable among us. These biblical commands include fully respecting civil

authority to help restrain evil and promote righteousness as Romans 13 instructs us.”

This press release is contradicted, however, by over 30 Complaints in the class action lawsuit. The lawyers for the Plaintiffs are not “prohibiting the free exercise of religion.” They are simply holding the leaders of Sovereign Grace Ministries accountable to “adhere to the biblical commands” and uphold the doctrine they espouse from Roman 13:1-7. *But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he [civil authority] does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.*

The hypocrisy of the press statement is breathtaking. There has been no *wrath on the wrongdoer* only on the Plaintiffs and other victims of sexual predation because SGM leaders refused to involve the civil authorities instituted by God to be servants in such criminal cases. In my opinion, it would be disgraceful for Sovereign Grace Ministries to hide behind the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights. The rights of victims, not child molesters, should be protected!

#####

**John Loftness Resigns as Chairman of the SGM Board
Monday, February 18, 2013 at 8:29 PM
Brent Detwiler**

John Loftness has resigned because “The time required in chairing the Sovereign Grace Board added to John’s already full schedule in both serving his church as well as caring for members of his extended family who are in poor health.” In stepping down, he plans to “give himself anew to serving those in his extended family and in his church” according to the announcement.

John is the foremost Defendant mentioned in the Class Action Lawsuit against Sovereign Grace Ministries. The press release makes no mention of this as a reason for stepping down.

Under John’s Chairmanship, C.J. was returned as President of SGM. John famously wrote,

“This comprehensive process has clearly confirmed C.J.’s fitness to lead and his exceptional character as he has graciously endured major trials. Through all of this he has been found to be a man and a minister of fundamental integrity. We know of no one who is better suited for the office of President.”
(June 28, 2012)

The process by which C.J. was evaluated was anything but comprehensive. Ninety five percent of my charges were never examined and no charges by anyone else were ever examined. It was a corrupt and unjust process from beginning to end.

Craig Cabaniss, senior pastor of Grace Church in Frisco, TX also stepped down from the Board of Directors two weeks ago in order “to focus on the church.” The SGM Board makes no mention of this in the announcement regarding John’s resignation.

These two resignations leave 7 men on the 9 man Board. Paul Buckley, the Vice Chairman, will assume the role of Chairman.

#####

John Piper’s Unqualified Endorsement of C.J. Mahaney Breaks Hearts
Friday, February 22, 2013 at 2:28 pm
Brent Detwiler

I first met John Piper in 1997 when C.J., Dave Harvey Steve Shank and I traveled to Minneapolis to spend time with him and his staff. In particular, I remember a wonderful evening of prayer and fellowship in his home over a meal.

Last Saturday night, I knew three things when I went to bed. One, John Piper was preaching at C.J.’s church in the morning. Two, John Loftness would be announcing his resignation in the coming week as Chairman of the SGM Board. Three, Craig Cabaniss had already resigned from the Board and was surveying his church about their future relationship with SGM.

I did not know why Piper was visiting however. Just before I fell off to sleep, I texted a friend saying I feared Piper would endorse C.J. but hoped he was there to announce C.J.'s resignation as President of SGM. I also went to bed hoping the SGM Board of Directors had requested Loftness' resignation (they did not) and that Cabaniss had resigned due to his reservations about SGM (I don't know if that was a factor).

The next day my fears regarding John Piper were realized. He desperately wanted to preach at Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville (SGCL) in order to express his thrill and excitement for all things Sovereign Grace. Here's how he began the message.

"Thank you C.J. I chose to be here. No body forced me. He is a pretty persuasive guy but I really, really wanted to be here. And therefore when the opportunity arose I snatched it. And I thankful for it.

"I wanted to be here because I am excited about what God is doing in this church plant. I've been following it from a distance. And I'm thrilled with what is in the offering here in the mix of this city. I'm excited to be here secondly because I love Sovereign Grace and what God is doing in it across the country and the world.

"And most emotionally significant, I'm glad to be here because C.J. is right, he is my friend and he has meant a lot to me over the years both at the encouragement level of preaching and professional life – though nobody in the ministry is a professional – but even more at the personal family level of caring. So it is real easy for me to stand here and be with you. It is what I want to do.

"And I said to him [C.J.] when I walked in, 'I'm pumped about this message.' I love the Word of God. I love to preach. And I love this Book and I am going to talk about this Book because it matters that this church plant relate to this Book in a certain way. Think about it in a certain way. Feel about it in a certain way."

John then proceeded to exposit 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and laid out six reasons for believing in the Bible. When it came time to talk about the profitability of the Bible he said the following.

“The world really cares about whether one of the evidences of the truth of the Bible is whether it makes Christians good. And they should. They should. It produces good works. May this church be devoted to doctrine, that is, all the truths of the Bible that are designed for what, to equip you to produce a life of godliness and beauty and goodness which will then circle back and authentic the doctrine and the Bible. So the Bible aims to make you godly and in that profitability of producing a new kind of loving, humble service; life very much like Jesus, the Bible will show itself to be true so don’t leave it.”

At the end of the last sentence, you can hear C.J. in the background saying “yes” and “excellent” (minute 52:07). Oh my, how I wish it were true! C.J.’s failure to practice the doctrine he preaches has produced godlessness, not godliness; desecration, not beauty; badness, not goodness in far too many ways.

John Piper should have preached on James 1:21-27 instead of 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

James 1:22 (NASU) But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

James 1:27 (NIV) Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Here is the Brent Detwiler “living translation” of verse 27.

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after the families and victims of sexual abuse in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by protecting pedophiles and covering up their crimes against humanity in your church.”

On Tuesday of this week (two days after Piper’s sermon), Vince Coakley, the former news anchor for WSOC (channel 9) in Charlotte, interviewed Susan Burke, co-counsel in the class action lawsuit filed against Sovereign Grace Ministries. The “class” continues to grow as more victims come forward. I’ve not included the entire interview due to length. Here are some important interchanges.

Q. What is the reason behind the lawsuit? What does it stem from?

A. Well, as it sets forth in the legal papers, there are a series of people that have been victimized by predators and by the churches covering up of those acts of sexual predation.

##

Q. What is also a mystery to people...why would human beings allow pedophiles to continue to interact with children because that is one of the allegations here? You're actually saying they knew this activity was taking place and still allowed that activity to continue.

A. Yes, that is the case. There [are] multiple occasions in which they were put on notice. They knew in fact, several of the predators have been convicted, and yet none the less the church covered it up, church members covered it up, put those pedophiles in situations in which they had unfettered access to children. It is quite troubling circumstances. Unfortunately, you say it is humanity, the reality is these things are not aberrational. We've see it in other settings. This is not the first time that you see this type of misconduct. Institutions tend to try and protect themselves. Hierarchies within institutions work to do that.

##

Q. And for a lot of these people, and the picture you are painting here is one where people, where victims and their family members, very much feel powerless here to be able to address this thing because they are going to experience the ire of their church leadership if they pursue this.

A. That's correct. There was a lot of intimidation. A lot of effort to stifle discussion. A lot of effort to prevent people from taking steps to inform others who had young children about the situation.

##

Q. How many victims are we talking about here?

A. At this point, I don't know the total but I can tell you is that we continue to receive people contacting us. The problem is widespread. It is for that reason we are actually seeking to have it certified as a class in order to protect everyone who has been harmed in this way.

##

Q. What does the law require in these situations?

A. You cannot participate in wrong doing regardless of your status as a pastor. They don't have the right to put people into harm's way. And they don't have the right to step in the middle and obstruct justice. So there are duties imposed by law that when you know that you have somebody who is harming people, you are not allowed to let that person keep harming people.

##

Q. What do you hope will come out of this? Obviously you are looking for some sort of remedy for the victims involved in this, but there's got to be a bigger message here too and hope in terms of issues of justice.... There's something broader at work here, is there not?

A. There definitely is and I would just encourage everyone when they are in circumstances where they've learned of information they should contact the police. They should contact secular authorities and not try to participate in any form of cover up. It is that type of activity that really harms everyone. Keeping it quiet. Keeping it silent. Keeping it in the dark. So we hope the lawsuit and speaking out begins to shine a light on what is really going on and as with many forms of wrong doing, shining a light is the best way to make it stop.

##

Q. Can you give us an idea of a likely time table of development in this case?

A. We will be going to trial on the case sometime between September of this year and February of next year. We'll get a precise trial date when we go to court on March 8.

##

Q. For those people who may be listening, maybe there are people still out there who have had something happen...connected to this case. If it is connected to this what should they do?

A. They should call me. My phone number is 202-386-9622. Or they can email me at sburke@burkepllc.com. They can also find it on the internet. And they should just give me a call and tell me what occurred.

##

Q. How has this affected you emotionally hearing these stories?

A. It is very depressing. It is just so sad. We all I think have a special place in our hearts for children and to hear what has happened to very young children. It is very heart breaking and certainly my co-counsel, Bill O'Neil and I are highly motivated to do everything we can to seek justice for these people.

[END]

This is one of many comments I received this week in response to John Piper's endorsement of C.J. and SGM. Thousands of believers throughout the world and in the United States feel the same way and are expressing the same sentiments.

Dear Brent,

Are you going to address John Piper speaking at SGCL [Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville] last Sunday?

I know you included him in your letter addressed to 70+ pastors/leaders of ministry but his recent remarks of support for both C.J. and SGM, well, frankly they make me want to cry.

I have listened to John Piper's sermons/podcasts for years and read most of his material.

I can speculate as to why he is supporting C.J. and SGM but honestly I cannot understand it in my spirit. It is so grieving.

Thank you for listening.

Your Sister in Christ

John's unqualified support of C.J. and SGM has made a lot of people cry and grieve. Especially the victims of sexual abuse that occurred in SGM churches under C.J.'s leadership. I sent John the lawsuit on February 6. Why did he express no concern for the victims' plight on February 17 at C.J.'s church? I find his abject silence incomprehensible.

There should be weeping and howling throughout Sovereign Grace Ministries. Instead, John Piper is telling everyone how thrilled and excited he is about C.J. (when so few trust him), the church plant (that was born out of division), and Sovereign Grace Ministries (which is being opposed by God). The imprimatur of John Piper is not the imprimatur of God.

John has always taught preachers their emotions should parallel the text they are expositing. If it is a joyous text, be joyous. If it is an intense text, be intense. Be happy, when God is happy. Be sad, when God is sad. John's emotions were way out of line with the "text" before him – C.J., the church and Sovereign Grace Ministries. He should have been weeping, instead he was exalting. It was grotesque.

John introduced his message thusly.

"And I said to him when I walked in, 'I'm pumped about this message.' I love the Word of God. I love to preach. And I love this Book and I am going to talk about this Book because it matters that this church plant relate to this Book in a certain way. Think about it in a certain way. Feel about it in a certain way."

Last week a senior pastor from SGM wrote me after receiving my "20 Hard Questions to Ask Your SGM Pastor." John Piper is not attacking me like this misguided pastor, but I would point out the same reality to John regarding the

application of Scripture – that is the proper way in which C.J., the church and SGM should “relate...think...feel... about this Book.”

From: Brent Detwiler

Sent: Friday, February 08, 2013 5:59 PM

To: Pat Sczebel

Subject: RE: 20 Hard Questions to Ask Your SGM Pastor

I am not harassing my friend. Nor am I trying to play God. I am simply following the instruction of Scripture. Oh, how I wish you and others would have insisted on the application of 1 Timothy 3, 5, Titus 1, Matthew 18 and host of other passages. You have not been submitted to the authority of Scripture. You can call me anything you want but that is not the real issue. As Luther said to the Papists, “Scripture, Scripture, Scripture!”

C.J. should have been publicly rebuked and removed. He is not above reproach by any standard. Serious patterns of sin have been repeatedly addressed in his life since 2000 and yet you make excuses for him. Lying, deceit, hypocrisy, partiality, favoritism, manipulation, cover up, injustice, lording, etc. have filled the last 19 months. So many lives have been devastated by these and other sins. And now we have the cover up of sexual predators and the silencing of victims and more. I tremble.

[When you say], “Let the Lord deal with it” [that] is not biblical. That is a complete abdication of responsibility. Worse, it is a transgression against the commands of Scripture. You are called to rebuke and reprove such flagrant sins! I should not be doing your work for you.

I agree, I am not your “ruler and judge” but Scripture is. I hope and pray you will begin to obey it. But no, you must call me “angry, bitter and sick” for holding you accountable to the clear teaching of God’s Word. You can despise me. It matters little. But oh how I pray you will stop despising the Holy One of Israel by rejecting His Word. Must God destroy SGM before you learn that He is not mocked?

C.J.’s love of reputation has led him to transgress hundreds of passages of Scripture. I am speaking in literal terms. For instance, C.J. said the following to

all the pastors and wives of Sovereign Grace Ministries on November 7, 2009 at the Pastors Conference.

“It is stunning when anyone in any modern American institution takes honest responsibility. I want you to know, it should not be stunning when pastors take responsibility. It should be the norm. And in Sovereign Grace we are not about damage control. It would be a complete contradiction of this passage [James 3:1-2] and what we believe about the doctrine of sin for us to engage in damage control. We do not engage in damage control. There will be no damage control in Sovereign Grace. We will seek to walk humbly before God and when we stumble we will not seek to engage in damage control. No, instead we will humbly acknowledge with sorrow that we stumbled – we stumbled. No damage control.”

C.J. made this bogus claim generally for all of SGM. Nothing could be further from the truth as has been proven time and again. C.J. has a long history of covering up sin that would make him look bad.

But what is worse, C.J. specifically made this claim in relation to how he and the pastors in Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax were dealing with the sexual predators operating in their midst. It was a boldfaced lie. One only needs to read the lawsuit to see how sexual predation has been covered up in SGM.

Since the amended lawsuit was filed on January 11, I've become aware of other churches in SGM not cited in the lawsuit who have conducted themselves in the same fashion. They too need to come clean, tell their congregations about their error, make amends with the victims, and clearly state their policy regarding the notification of members and the involvement of law enforcement. All evangelical churches need to stop putting people in harm's way. See GRACE (i.e., Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment) for helpful information at <http://netgrace.org/>.

Before you given someone an unqualified endorsement you better do your homework. The scholarly, John Piper has not done his homework in C.J.'s case. Or in the case of Sovereign Grace Ministries. He has talked to C.J. and his supporters but he has not studied the 2,500 pages of hard evidence

presented against C.J. and SGM. Nor has he talked to the 70 plus pastors who have severed ties with C.J. over the past 7 months due a lack of trust and serious concerns for the leadership culture he has created. Nor has he interviewed the devastated families and victims of sexual abuse in SGM. John said in his sermon he has never read the SGM Statement of Faith. I hope he has read the class action lawsuit with its 143 Complaints.

I appreciate John Piper and thank God for his theological contributions to the Body of Christ but he has blundered in this case. His personal affection for C.J. has exceeded his concern for the glory of God. God is disciplining SGM. Piper should be doing the same.

It is disillusioning but here is what we learn. Not even John Piper is immune from playing favorites or being partial in his judgments. I'm am extremely concerned for the celebrity culture that exists among elite preachers in this nation. Whether in ignorance or not, John is covering up for C.J. when he and other national leaders should be dealing with C.J. in a forthright manner.

It goes to show that godly men like Piper will disobey the Bible when idols in their hearts become more important than the righteousness of Christ and the truth of God. To be honest, it is hard to listen to some of these men preach any longer because of such hypocrisy. They protect their own, while their own harm others, and there are no consequences for their actions. In this way, they do not follow the Bible.

1 Tim 5:20-21 Those [elders] who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning. I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

Pastors and churches will continue to leave Sovereign Grace Ministries. More information will come out. The class action lawsuit will grow and further expose leaders in SGM. John could have intervened on Sunday. Instead he enabled C.J. by expressing no concerns whatsoever. He was there to singularly endorse C.J. without qualification. How disheartening!

SGM has been producing a new governing document called the *Book of Church Order*. This week, one of the 18 churches that have severed ties with SGM posted this explanation for leaving.

“The new [governing] polity proved to be a catalyst that caused us to reexamine the decisions and responses of SGM over the past 18 months. We realized that there was, as one pastor put it, ‘consistent divergence’ between our pastoral and leadership instincts, and those of SGM. After much consideration and prayer, the pastors of Grace Community shared with the congregation our perspective about these differences and our recommendation that we leave SGM.”

If John had just examined, not reexamined, “the decisions and responses of SGM over the past 18 months” he would be withdrawing his support of C.J. until things were corrected and confessed. John has tolerated in SGM what he would never tolerate at Bethlehem Baptist Church. He has made exceptions for C.J. that he would never make for a church member.

John is thrilled and excited when he should be terribly concerned and taking action to address a decade of lying, lording and cover up advanced by C.J. I suspect the Lord will one day put John in a position where he will have to admit his mistake in uncritically defending C.J. That may come after a court trial.

C.J. should not be a Council Member on the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, The Gospel Coalition, or The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. And John Piper should not be preaching at SGCL unless he is willing to publicly address the serious issues at hand and call C.J. to repentance. I’ve written 77 national recognized leaders in the Body of Christ regarding C.J. and the class action lawsuit against him. Will any of them speak out in public and take action?

My counsel to John Piper is the same as my counsel to Tim Challies from 1½ years ago when he defended C.J. and condemned me as a slanderer on his blog.

“I hope you will read all of my documents and also my posts at BrentDetwiler.com. That’s required reading if you are going to post about me. What you fail to realize is the pervasive and profound nature of problems in SGM. Hundreds, if not thousands of people have been mishandled and

mistreated. You don't have two anti-SGM blogs, SGM Survivors and SGM Refuge, because of disagreements between C.J. and me. You really must get educated about the depth and breadth of ungodly practices that have existed in the movement. You haven't done your homework. You also fail to recognize the long term and serious nature of C.J.'s sins. Many men have brought many charges for many years against C.J." (Brent Detwiler, A Brief Response to Tim Challies, August 17, 2011)

C.J. quotes himself on his church's website.

"The preaching event, being addressed by God through the reading and proclamation of His Word, is the most important event in the life of this church every week. - C.J. Mahaney"

That makes the preacher the most important person in the church according to C.J. I believe in preaching but less and less in celebrity preachers whose pride is so swelled they often act as though above the Word they preach (Matt 23:3).

Some of the greatest preachers in America have enabled C.J. is his sin when they should have been confronting his sin and taking action. These men continuously promote one other's books, conferences, ministries, and celebrity status. It looks like a mutual admiration society and it often leads to a double standard of living.

For example, I am concerned that Together for the Gospel is equally about together for Mohler, Mahaney, Dever and Duncan. Joel Osteen promotes "health and wealth." Too many Reformed leaders promote one another and thrive off the recognition (and money) they receive in return.

These are disillusioning times unless our affections are set upon the Perfect Savior who never deceives or disappoints. He plays no favorites and is wholly just. Jesus is our only firm foundation. All other ground is sinking sand. Therefore, fall in love with Him and build your life around a Person, not a personality with a preaching gift.

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Tim Challies on Thinking Biblically About C.J. Mahaney and SGM

Saturday, March 02, 2013 at 2:21 PM

Brent Detwiler

On Thursday, Tim Challies, noted blogger in the Reformed community, posted “Thinking Biblically about C.J. Mahaney and Sovereign Grace Ministries.” He should have written “Thinking Biblically about Pastors Who Protect Sexual Predators and Devastate Victims.” Tim always purports to think biblically for his readers but he often errs in his use of Scripture.

Over the past 18 months, Tim’s message has remained the same regarding C.J. Believe the best about him, remain ignorant, and don’t form an opinion about him or SGM. Tim reminds me of Neville Chamberlain.

Tim and C.J. are not buddies but Tim is buddies with C.J.’s Reformed friends. His claim of neutrality is bogus. He is a spokesman for C.J.’s friends which means he is effectively a spokesman for C.J.

I also wish Tim had written on the subject of “Thinking Biblically about the Nature of Love, Truth and Justice” with 1 Corinthians 13:6 in mind. *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*”

Lastly, I wish he were a bonafide journalist. From what he has written in his post, there is no reason to believe he even read the class action lawsuit against C.J. and SGM. Here is how he summarized it.

“A lawsuit that will soon go before the courts alleges that [SGM leaders] responded unwisely when [significant sexual abuse] was reported to them and that they failed to take sufficient action on behalf of victims.” (Tim Challies, Feb 28, 2013)

What a positive spin on the lawsuit. It is not about SGM leaders responding unwisely or taking insufficient action in relation to pedophiles, victims, law enforcement and church members. That is a total misrepresentation. Here are but a few excerpts from the lawsuit that contains 143 legal Complaints. C.J. and SGM are Defendants.

- “The facts show that certain individual Defendants and other predators not named repeatedly physically and sexually abused children.” (C1)
- “Defendants failed to stop repeated and ongoing sexual predation. (C1)
- “Defendants failed to report known incidences of sexual predation to law enforcement” (C1)
- “Created a culture in which sexual predators were protected from accountability and victims were silenced.” (C1)
- “Defendants negligently hired sexual predators.” (C25)
- “Defendants provided sexual predators with free legal advice and counsel on how to evade accountability, and repeatedly worked with sexual predators to mislead law enforcement.” (C30)
- “Defendants concealed the ongoing sexual predation in order to avoid any financial or reputational harms to the Church.” (C31)
- “Defendants refused to alert members to the presence of known and convicted pedophiles.” (C33)
- “Defendants permitted...known pedophiles to interact with children without advising the parents of these interactions.” (C33)
- “Defendants exacerbated the harm to the innocent victims of sexual predation by forcing them (some as young as 2 and 3 years old) to meet and “forgive” their sexual predators. These sessions re-traumatized the victims and their parents.” (C34)
- “Defendants have conspired repeatedly to permit sexual predators to evade detection and prosecution.” (C111)

If you want to know more of my thoughts on Tim Challies you can read a former post entitled “[A Brief Response to Tim Challies](#)” (August 17, 2011).

Here is a good article by Rachel Held Evans regarding Challies’ recent post on “Thinking Biblically About C.J. Mahaney and SGM.” I’d recommend it to you.

[Rachel Held Evans Article](#)

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SGM Board Covers Up Request for Resignation from C.J. Mahaney and John Loftness

Sunday, March 03, 2013 at 7:00 PM

Brent Detwiler

For the last three years, I have documented in 2,500 pages of evidence the deceit of C.J. Mahaney and Sovereign Grace Ministries over the last nine years. It continues unabated. The information in the following email comes from SGM pastors that talked directly to SGM Board Members. The letter I reference regarding C.J.'s resignation was slotted to go out this past Friday, March 1. The Board held off on its release since hearing from me. I received no reply.

From: Brent Detwiler

Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2013 10:40 AM

To: Al Pino; Craig Cabaniss; Ian McConnell; John Loftness; Ken Mellinger; Mickey Connolly; Paul Buckley; Phil Sasser; Ron Boomsma

Cc: C. J. Mahaney

Subject: C.J.'s Resignation

Importance: High

When will the lying stop? The letter you wrote the SGM pastors about John Loftness' resignation was not truthful and now you are doing the same with the letter regarding C.J.'s upcoming resignation. You need to stop dead in your tracks and start over! This time write an honest letter.

The only reason C.J. is resigning is because you asked him to resign. He was not happy about your decision but decided not to fight it. You should also make clear the Board was divided over his removal and spell out who was in favor and who was opposed (e.g., Mickey, Ken). The pastors in SGM deserve to know how each Board Member voted on something of such significance.

Even more importantly, you need to be transparent about the reasons for removing C.J. from the Leadership Team and as President of SGM – that is, the widespread loss of trust and erosion of confidence in him. For the sake of Christ, don't spin the explanation and try to make C.J. look good by deceitful means. Please don't manipulate the truth again. Every time you do so, you do not save face, you lose face because the Lord exposes you (e.g. the announcement regarding the relocation to Louisville on April 19, 2012, the

announcement regarding C.J.'s as President on June 28, 2012], the use of Philippians 2:1 on Sept 12, 2012; the "reasoned response to six questions" on Sept 14, 2012).

Furthermore, you know C.J. and John are in real trouble over the lawsuit. On January 11, you told everyone you were "carefully reviewing each allegation... working diligently in an effort to learn the truth." You've done your investigation. You realize both of them are culpable. Just be honest. Tell the pastors you are concerned for how they handled the victims and protected sexual predators and that is one of the reasons you think it is necessary to remove C.J. from all leadership in SGM.

Moreover, let the pastors know what you are really doing big picture. Why conceal it? You are cleaning house because few pastors trust C.J., Dave Harvey, John Loftness, Mickey Connolly, etc. al, any longer! If you shoot straight for a change the pastors that remain might actually begin to trust you more. Just tell them you are removing the old guard so they can be replaced by a new guard. Tell them you are trying to stop the bleeding for ethical and practical reasons before SGM hemorrhages' to death.

You've got 48 hours to turn the ship around and head to safe haven with truth and transparency. If you don't the ship will continue to sink as it takes on more water during yet another violent storm the Lord sends upon you for your duplicity. Please don't attempt to conceal what the Lord will certainly reveal. You must stop destroying the Body of Christ with your lies, cover-up and disinformation. Please be HONEST regarding C.J.'s removal for the glory of God, the good of the gospel and the well-being of God's people.

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

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**New Information Contained in Motions to Oppose Dismissal of Lawsuit
Saturday, March 30, 2013 at 9:35 AM
Brent Detwiler**

The class action lawsuit against C.J. Mahaney, Sovereign Grace Ministries and others was initially filed on October 17, 2012. It named eight Individual Defendants and one Institutional Defendant. Over the next three months more allegations came forward and more evidence came to light. An amended class action lawsuit was filed on January 11, 2013. It named ten Individual Defendants and four Institutional Defendants.

In response, the Defendants' lawyers filed motions for dismissal of the lawsuit with Judge Sharon Burrell on February 25 in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland. The Plaintiffs' lawyers filed their opposing arguments for continuance with the Judge on Wednesday of this week.

The three opposing arguments have the following titles.

1. Plaintiffs' Opposition to Defendants' Motions Alleging Pleading Failure
2. Plaintiffs' Opposition to Defendants' Motions to Dismiss Based on the First Amendment
3. Plaintiffs' Opposition to Defendants' Motion to Dismiss Based on Lack of Jurisdiction

Here are some highlights from each motion (*in italic letters*) with commentary.

Plaintiffs' Opposition to Defendants' Motions Alleging Pleading Failure

1. Conspiracy Caused the Sexual and Physical Abuse of Children

Here's is the introductory paragraph to the first opposition. It covers a lot of ground. Notice the reference to "the many others victimized by Defendants' conspiracy" who are not Plaintiffs at this time but are part of the class. There is so much information yet to be revealed. It is frightening.

"Plaintiffs' First Amended Complaint (hereinafter "FAC") alleges Defendants conspired together to cause the sexual and physical abuse of children in their care by (1) failing to stop and instead facilitating known ongoing predation...(2) permitting known sexual predators to access young children in physical settings under Defendants' control (e.g. churches, schools, home groups)...(3) obstructing justice by giving predators advance warning of arrest and

investigation...and (4) conspiring together to hide past and current misconduct... Plaintiffs discovered Defendants' conspiratorial misconduct after individual victims broke the silence and began to blog about their individual experiences. Plaintiffs brought this class action lawsuit to hold Defendants accountable for the harms perpetrated on themselves and the many others victimized by Defendants' conspiracy." (Pleading Failure, p. 1)

2. Approximately \$50 Million Sought in Punitive Damages for Class

If the Plaintiffs are successful on all Counts, it may mean the end of Sovereign Grace Ministries, Covenant Life Church, Covenant Life School and Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax and personal bankruptcy for all the Individual Defendants. From what I understand, the liability coverage carried by the Institutional Defendants does begin to cover damages of this size. The Institutional Defendants should explain possible outcomes so contributors can be informed with regard to how their money could be used to pay out damages in the future. Donors should also be told whether or not monies given to them are being used to pay the legal expenses for the Individual Defendants. Contributors have a right to know if their donations are being used in keeping with the mission of the church or ministry.

"Defendants quibble that the FAC does not identify the precise amount of damages sought, but Plaintiffs' Hearing Statement made quite clear that expert witnesses are quantifying the compensatory damages. The Statement also made clear that the punitive damages attributable to the class are approximately \$50 million.... The Defendants are on notice of the sizeable damages being sought in the lawsuit." (Pleading Failure, p. 4)

3. New Plaintiff Alleges John Loftness Physically and Sexually Abused Her as a Child

The First Amended Complaint (FAC) is about to become the Second Amended Complaint. It will add more parties and include this new allegation.

"Plaintiffs are going to be amending the FAC to add more parties, one of whom alleges Defendant John Loftness physically and sexually abused her as a child." (Pleading Failure, p. 5)

The Board of Directors purposely withheld this and other information when they announced John's resignation as Chairman of the SGM Board on February 18, 2013. I referenced these omissions several times on my blog as documented below.

"John Loftness has resigned because 'The time required in chairing the Sovereign Grace Board added to John's already full schedule in both serving his church as well as caring for members of his extended family who are in poor health.' In stepping down, he plans to 'give himself anew to serving those in his extended family and in his church' according to the announcement. John is the foremost Defendant mentioned in the Class Action Lawsuit against Sovereign Grace Ministries. The press release makes no mention of this as a reason for stepping down." ("John Loftness Resigns as Chairman of the SGM Board," February 18, 2013)

"You [the SGM Board of Directors] know C.J. and John are in real trouble over the lawsuit. On January 11, you told everyone you were 'carefully reviewing each allegation...working diligently in an effort to learn the truth.' You've done your investigation. You realize both of them are culpable. Just be honest. Tell the pastors you are concerned for how they handled the victims and protected sexual predators." ("SGM Board Covers Up Request for Resignation from C.J. Mahaney and John Loftness," March 3, 2013)

"The class action lawsuit continues to move forward. In the coming weeks, I suspect new information of an incriminating nature will be forthcoming. It will be injurious to C.J. and John. The Board had to remove them now before that information becomes public." ("C.J. Mahaney's 'Transition' Out of Sovereign Grace Ministries," March 15, 2013)

John is necessarily under criminal investigation. The alleged physical and sexual abuse of a child compels an investigation by law enforcement. The ramifications are far reaching if John is found liable in a civil court and guilty in a criminal court. As a Board Member and Chairman, no one has done more to enable and promote C.J. John has repeatedly lied, deceived, and covered up for C.J. over the past 21 months.

There are numerous investigations of a similar nature being conducted that are unrelated to John's alleged crimes. Arrests should follow and key leaders will be implicated in the cover up criminal activity. The arrest of Nate Morales on ten counts in December was the tip of the iceberg.

4. A Second Amendment to the Lawsuit Will Add Further Victims

More and more victims have come forth since the First Amended Complaint was filed on January 11. I thank God for that development. I'd encourage all the victims of physical and sexual abuse in Sovereign Grace churches to contact the Plaintiff's lawyers and also bring your situation to the attention of law enforcement officials. No one need be afraid to speak up at this point. You are not alone. You will be protected. Sex abusers and predators must be exposed and brought to justice. So too pastors who protect such criminals and thereby put children in harms' way.

"Plaintiffs labeled the conspiracy as a "conspiracy to obstruct justice." That label is too narrow, as Defendants conspired to inflict harm on children as well as to protect predators. Plaintiffs are amending the complaint to add further victims, and will amend that count to read "civil conspiracy." The conspiracy acted together to commit all torts alleged in the FAC, not merely the tort of obstruction of justice, which is a form of the tort of misrepresentation." (Pleading Failure, p. 8)

A tort is "a civil wrong or wrongful act, whether intentional or accidental, from which injury occurs to another. Torts include all negligence cases as well as intentional wrongs which result in harm. Therefore tort law is one of the major areas of law (along with contract, real property and criminal law) and results in more civil litigation than any other category. Some intentional torts may also be crimes, such as assault, battery, wrongful death, fraud, conversion (a euphemism for theft) and trespass on property and form the basis for a lawsuit for damages by the injured party." (Legal Dictionary)

5. Defendants Falsely Argue the Conspiracy Was Formed to Engage in Only Lawful Conduct

This is an absurd argument put forth by the Defendants' lawyers.

“Defendants seek to persuade the Court that the conspiracy was formed to engage in only lawful conduct, not tortious conduct [harmful conduct that subjects to liability].... This argument is again seeking dismissal based on Defendants characterization of the facts, not on the FAC allegations of the facts. Defendants can argue to the jury that beating and sexually abusing children, lying to law enforcement, and giving known sexual predators unfettered access to children in multiple settings, and other misconduct alleged in the FAC did not cause damage and need not be punished... But the FAC properly alleges tortious activity, and thus the conspiracy to commit such tortious activity is itself a separate tort under Maryland law.” (Pleading Failure, p. 8)

6. Pastor/Teacher and Church Employee Still Not Named

These two individuals have not yet been named in public. They are under criminal investigation.

“Defendants claim that the cause of action must be dismissed because Plaintiffs fail to allege an employment relationship. This is false. The FAC alleges repeatedly that the individual defendants were all employees of one or more of the corporate entities.... The FAC alleges Plaintiff Poe was sexually and physically abused by a Pastor and teacher employed by the Church...and Plaintiff Coe was sexually and physically abused by a Church employee.... Indeed, the FAC alleges all the Plaintiffs were harmed by misconduct of employees.” (Pleading Failure, p. 9)

We also know from the FAC that other individuals are under investigation including a “children’s ministry worker” and “the male son of a Church pastor.” Their names have not been made public either.

“Paula Poe attended the School and services at CLC beginning in kindergarten until her family moved away from Gaithersburg, Maryland. Paul Poe was repeatedly sexually assaulted by two men. The primary perpetrator was a pastor and teacher. The secondary perpetrator was a children’s ministry worker.” (FAC, p. 11)

“Karl Koe was seven years old when he was repeatedly sexually molested (approximately ten times) by the male son of a Church pastor.... Defendants,

including the pastor father of the predator, failed to take any steps whatsoever to prevent the juvenile sexual predator from preying upon other children. Defendants continued to permit the juvenile sexual predator to have unfettered access to child on Church premises and during Church activities, such as Home Group and Celebration.” (FAC, pp. 13-14)

These paragraphs reference four individuals under investigation. (1) “a Pastor and teacher,” (2) “a Church employee,” (3) “a children’s ministry worker” and (4) “the male son of a Church pastor.” The list is not exhaustive.

C.J. worked with “the juvenile sexual predator” and “the father of the predator” but took no action to “prevent...preying upon other children.” He shares responsibility for the molestation of children. The SGM Board of Directors knows this but did not include it in their explanation for C.J.’s “transition from his role as President on April 12.” The deception is sickening.

All of the above and more will come out in God’s timing. What C.J., John Loftness and others have sought to conceal will be revealed. “Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; though with patience stands He waiting, with exactness grinds He all.”

7. Defendants Continue to Conspire to Prevent Secular Authorities from Detecting and Incarcerating Predators

Individuals are under investigation including those connected to the alleged “pedophilic ring” operating at Covenant Life Church and School while C.J. was the senior pastor. Law enforcement officials are trying to detect all predators and put them in jail. It is only a matter of time before individuals are arrested. The news will be shocking. It is no wonder the Plaintiffs’ lawyers say these efforts are being blocked by “**all**” the Defendants working in concert with one another. If true, evidence of “**ongoing** conspiratorial misconduct” will prove damning when presented to a jury.

*“What all of the Defendants fail to address, however, is that the FAC alleges **ongoing** conspiratorial misconduct by **all** the Defendants, and alleges such misconduct is harming Plaintiffs.... To date, Defendants have not ended their conspiracy [footnote: One or more Defendants may be able to assert*

withdrawal from the conspiracy, but such a fact-based defense has not been made, and in any event is premature until discovery closes.]... Defendants continue to conspire to prevent secular authorities from detecting and incarcerating predators.” (Pleading Failure, p. 11)

8. Putting Children in Harms’ Way, Not Warning Parents, and Hiding Facts from Law Enforcement.

There have been so many victims of sexual abuse because predators were not exposed, parents were not informed, and law enforcement was not involved. Lives and families have been devastated as a result. This must change in every Sovereign Grace church. The Defendants could find themselves in criminal court for obstruction of justice.

“Defendants simply have not stopped their conspiratorial efforts to encourage and facilitate the sexual and physical abuse of children, and to prevent past sexual and physical abuse of children from being detected by law enforcement. As alleged in the FAC, Defendants continue to permit known predators to have direct and continuous access to children without providing any warnings to parents.... Defendants continue to hide facts about Plaintiffs’ predators from law enforcement.... Such ongoing conduct harms Plaintiffs and the class.... In short, the conspiracy continues to exist, and continues to engage in tortious conduct that is designed to and does harm Plaintiffs and the class.” (Pleading Failure, p. 12)

Plaintiffs’ Opposition to Defendants’ Motions to Dismiss Based on the First Amendment

1. Defendants’ Acts and Omissions Have Ruined So Many Lives; They Must Be Stopped

This is the introductory paragraph to the second opposition. The number of victims that have come forward in addition to the eight Plaintiffs is described as “the many others who were similarly victimized.” The evidence grows every week. I believe the Plaintiffs and their lawyers when they say this lawsuit is about stopping the abuse of children in Sovereign Grace Ministries and beyond.

“With one exception, Plaintiffs were physically and sexually abused when they were children. They brought a lawsuit on behalf of themselves and the many others who were similarly victimized in order to stop Defendants from continuing their active and ongoing support for sexual and physical abuse of children. Defendants created, fostered and maintained an environment that encouraged predation of children by their employees and members. They allowed and allow pedophilia and physical beatings to flourish at the church school, in church bathrooms and home groups. They protected predators from accountability, and forced innocent children to remain in place, subject to ongoing sexual and physical abuse. Defendants’ acts and omissions have ruined so many lives; they must be stopped.” (First Amendment, p. 1)

2. The Plaintiffs Do No Seek Redress for Clergy Malpractice (i.e., Poor Spiritual Counseling)

Clergy malpractice is protected by the First Amendment. I have in mind bad doctrine, practice, and counsel that does not facilitate crimes. This lawsuit is primarily about the sexual abuse of children by predators that should have been stopped. Instead, criminals were protected and their crimes were not prosecuted. This enabled ongoing criminal activity which resulted in the further abuse, assault and molestation of children. The devastation of many lives was avoidable. Such a “right” is not protected by the First Amendment.

“Yet now, Defendants continue as they have in the past, trying to evade accountability and hide the truth. They seek to hide behind the First Amendment, arguing that letting a jury hear about their misconduct would violated the First Amendment. Defendants try to shoehorn Plaintiffs’ claims into a box labeled “clergy malpractice.” But Plaintiffs do not seek redress for poor spiritual counseling or the like.” (First Amendment, pp. 1-2)

3. No Religious Belief Claimed that Gives Freedom to Sexually or Physically Abuse Children

I agree but with a caution. Religious belief can be claimed that protects one’s freedom to use corporal punishment in the discipline of children because it is a clearly elucidated doctrine found in Scripture. Therefore, it is protected under the

First Amendment. It should not be infringed upon. Spanking one's child as taught in the Bible is not a form of violence or physical abuse. It is a form of training and discipline. The Plaintiffs' lawyers will have to show that the physical abuse of children included vicious "beatings" designed to inflict injury or bodily harm. That is not protected by the First Amendment. Nor is spousal abuse.

"Thus, Defendants' various arguments about protection for religion and clergy lack any merit whatsoever for one very fundamental reason: Defendants have not—and cannot—cite to or rely upon any religious beliefs that they claim gives them the freedom to sexually and physically abuse children. That misconduct is what is an issue here; that misconduct is not protected by any religious tenet identified by Defendants in their moving papers [i.e. motions to dismiss]." (First Amendment, p. 2)

4. Most Courts Have Rejected the First Amendment Argument

This is not news for anyone who follows the news. For example, the Roman Catholic Church has repeatedly sought to cover up child molestation citing the First Amendment. Their legal arguments have been largely unsuccessful. They have been found liable and paid out billions in damages.

"The First Amendment prevents the courts from becoming entangled in religious doctrine; it does not bestow a "get of jail free" card on wrongdoers who happen to be cloaked in religious garb or who claim to operate with religious authority. Indeed, although not cited by Defendants, courts across the nation have rejected efforts comparable to Defendants to use the First Amendment to prevent adjudication of abuse claims. Most have found that the tort lawsuits may be adjudicated in a straightforward manner, using the same general standards of care commonly applied in tort lawsuits." (First Amendment, pp. 5-6)

5. No Religious Doctrine or Practice Will Be Burdened

While citing the First Amendments as grounds for dismissal, the Defendants' lawyers failed to show which doctrines or practices peculiar to Sovereign Grace Ministries or its churches would be violated if the lawsuit proceeds.

“Defendants failed to identify a specific religious doctrine or practice that will be burdened if Plaintiffs’ lawsuit goes forward. To the contrary, Defendants have made public statements to opposite effect, claiming their religious beliefs are inconsistent with abuse of children.... Yet as matter of black-letter law, to be protected under the Free Exercise Clause, the conduct that the state seeks to regulate must be ‘rooted in religious belief.’” (First Amendment, p. 7)

“The term black letter law is used to refer to the technical legal rules to be applied in a particular area, which are most often largely well-established and no longer subject to reasonable dispute.” (Wikipedia)

6. The Scope of the Defendants’ Duties

Let me illustrate. I cannot allow sex abusers to operate in my place of employment and then cover up their crimes and not notify law enforcement. It doesn’t matter if I work at a Lowes Home Improvement store or at Sovereign Grace Ministries. I have the same duties in both places that cannot be breached. The First Amendment does not absolve me of these common law duties and legal responsibilities. If I knowingly put people in harm’s way, I am culpable in a criminal court and liable in a civil court. This is not rocket science.

“The content of the religious doctrines have absolutely no bearing on this lawsuit because common law, not ecclesiastical principles or law, establishes the scope of the Defendants’ duties. Plaintiffs’ claims do not involve in any way the internal, ecclesiastical matters of religious institutions.” (First Amendment, p. 9)

Plaintiffs’ Opposition to Defendants’ Motion to Dismiss Based on Lack of Jurisdiction

1. He Who Does Not Punish Evil Commands It Be Done

Read the following statement carefully.

“This lawsuit is about a church network [Sovereign Grace Ministries] systematically protecting predators from accountability and instead conspiring to hide ongoing sexual and physical abuse of children by their employees and

members. As Leonardo Da Vinci so aptly noted many years ago, 'He who does not punish evil commands it be done.'" (Jurisdiction, p. 1)

What Sovereign Grace Ministries has done for sexual predators they have done for C.J., Dave Harvey, John Loftness, Mickey Connolly, Gene Emerson, et al. They have systematically protected these leaders from accountability and conspired to hide their spiritual abuse. They have commanded evil be done. SGM is corrupt.

2. The Virginia Defendants Were in Regular Contact with SGM Headquarters and SGM Agents Regarding the Physical and Sexual Abuse of Children

The Defendants in Virginia are asking the Judge to dismiss all Complaints against them because the class action was filed in Maryland. This third opposition establishes the link between Maryland and Virginia.

*"This Court should deny the Virginia Defendants' motion to dismiss because it lacks any merit. **First**, this [Maryland] Court clearly has jurisdiction over the Virginia Defendants, who voluntarily joined a Maryland-based church network, and thereafter engaged in routine and repeated contacts with the church headquarters located in Maryland. Indeed, the FAC alleges, and the appended Affidavit from Brent Detwiler (hereinafter "Detwiler Affidavit") establishes, that the Virginia Defendants met in person with, called and emailed Church management in Maryland about the physical and sexual abuse of children."* (Jurisdiction, pp. 1-2)

C.J. and his agents were vitally involved in providing counsel and direction to Mark Mullery and his agents. The Virginia Defendants did not act on their own in their handling of the Plaintiffs' referenced in the lawsuit.

"As Virginia Defendants well know, they all had extensive and routine contacts with Maryland, both general and specific to the allegations of this case.... Defendants cannot deny such extensive contacts with Maryland specific to the subject matter of this lawsuit." (Jurisdiction, p. 5)

Other Defendants will named in the Second Amended Complaint yet to be filed. I don't think these additional Defendants will be confined to Covenant Life Church

or Sovereign Grace Church of Fairfax. The network of churches will likely expand since more and more victims have come forward.

“The Virginia Defendants had repeated contacts with Maryland about the sexual molestation of the Coe and Doe Plaintiffs, as well as the molestation and abuse of other children under their care. The Virginia Defendants called and emailed SGM Executive Management, and traveled to Maryland for an in-person meeting.” (Jurisdiction, p. 7)

The “in-person meeting” was with C.J.

3. More Plaintiffs and More Detail in Second Amended Complaint

If Judge Sharon Burrell feels more details need to be added to the First Amended Complaint, the Plaintiffs lawyers are happy to comply. They will also add new Plaintiffs that have been harmed to the Second Amended Complaint. Is there no end?

“Plaintiffs are preparing an amended complaint to join the additional persons who have been harmed. If the Court believes plaintiffs need to plead additional fact, plaintiffs will add further detail in the Second Amended Complaint.” (Jurisdiction, p. 10)

Five months ago SGM put out this statement. “Upon initial review it appears the complaint contains a number of untrue or misleading allegations, as well as considerable mischaracterizations of intent” (Oct 26, 2012). You don’t hear SGM saying the Plaintiffs are liars any longer.

“Here the Plaintiffs have alleged an agreement or understanding among the defendants to breach their duty to report child abuse and neglect, over acts in furtherance of that agreement or understanding, such as interference with prosecutions, warnings to accused abusers, lying to victim about court proceedings, coercion and attempts coercion of victims to drop charges and many other acted detailed in the amended complaint.” (Jurisdiction, p. 10)

It angers me when noted Reformed blogger, Tim Challies, recently characterized the lawsuit as follows.

“A lawsuit that will soon go before the courts alleges that [SGM leaders] responded unwisely when [significant sexual abuse] was reported to them and that they failed to take sufficient action on behalf of victims.” (Feb 28, 2013)

Tim is obviously regurgitating the talking points provided him by friends of C.J. His characterization of the lawsuit has no resemblance to the lawsuit.

It further angers me (and it should anger you) when C.J. offered this measly acknowledgement in response to the April 2012 report published by Ambassadors of Reconciliation (AoR) that included a section on “Cases Involving Sexual Misconduct.”

“AoR identified the following areas of pastoral practice that reflect deficiencies in practice and, in some instances, sin against a brother or sister. Those areas [included]....inconsistent and/or insensitive handling of sexual misconduct cases.” (Response to AoR Group Reconciliation Report from C.J. Mahaney and the SGM Board of Directors, April 10, 2012)

If you believe Tim Challies and C.J. Mahaney, the ten Individual Defendants named in the lawsuit, including C.J., were simply unwise, took insufficient action, and were inconsistent and insensitive. These lies have been propagated among leaders throughout the nation. Many of them have been foolish enough to believe them and are even willing to give C.J. and SGM an unqualified endorsement as recently done by John Piper. Furthermore, I cannot understand how Don Carson and Tim Keller can allow C.J. to speak at the Gospel Coalition Conference on April 8-10 in Orlando. In so doing, they show no discernment or prudence. In my opinion, this is pure favoritism. I will be contacting the 77 National Leaders again next week. Their public silence regarding C.J./SGM is unacceptable. Their public support of C.J./SGM is outrageous.

4. It Is Premature for the Judge to Rule on Class Certification

Judge Sharon Burrell has yet to rule on whether or not to accept the lawsuit as a class action. The Plaintiff’s lawyers have yet to file a formal motion in that regard. They are asking the Judge to wait on making a ruling as they continue to gather evidence favorable to a class certification. The more victims, the more likely the Judge will certify as a class. Notice, “a substantial number of victims”

and “a substantial number of witnesses” have come forward since the FAC was filed on January 11, 2013. The witnesses have information about additional victims. Remember, there were only three victims when the original Complaint was filed on October 17, 2012. The number has greatly increased.

“Undersigned counsel [Susan L. Burke and William T. O’Neil] have been contacted by a substantial number of victims similarly-situated to Plaintiffs, as well as a substantial number of witnesses who are knowledgeable about other victims who have not come forward. Plaintiffs’ counsel will be filing a motion to certify the class and name certain Plaintiffs as class representatives. Until the Plaintiffs’ motion has been filed, it is premature for the Court to hear arguments on class certification.” (Jurisdiction, p. 12)

Conclusion

Nothing Sovereign Grace leaders say or do can be trusted. They have proven themselves untrustworthy time and again. There is no firm commitment to honesty by the current Board. There was none by the previous Board. The ends have justified the means for a long time. That is the reality. Covering up the requests and reasons for C.J.’s and John’s resignation comes as no surprise. Here’s what would surprise me – if they told us the whole truth and nothing but the truth for a change.

1) Plaintiffs’ Opposition to Defendants’ Motions Alleging Pleading Failure, 2) Plaintiffs’ Opposition to Defendants’ Motions to Dismiss Based on the First Amendment, and 3) Plaintiffs’ Opposition to Defendants’ Motion to Dismiss Based on Lack of Jurisdiction are available at the following link.

[Brent Detwiler's SGM Class Action Lawsuit Link](#)

#####

Follow Up with National Leaders Regarding C.J. Mahaney

Tuesday, April 02, 2013 at 12:05 PM

Brent Detwiler

Yesterday, I followed up with 77 nationally recognized leaders in the Body of Christ regarding C.J., the lawsuit, and other developments in Sovereign Grace Ministries. That correspondence follows.

April 1, 2013

Gentlemen,

I last wrote you on February 6. A lot has happened since then and I am sorry to report none of it is good. Here are few highlights.

- **C.J.** will “transition from his role as President” on April 12. That’s when he steps down from all leadership responsibilities in Sovereign Grace Ministries (SGM). This transition was necessary for two reasons. First, few pastors trust and believe in C.J. any longer. They can’t commend him in that role. Second, he is in legal jeopardy and appears morally culpability in relation to Complaints found in the class action lawsuit. Discovery is underway. Future arrests and revelations could make matters worse for him.
- **John Loftness** resigned as Chairman of the Board for SGM on February 18. He is the foremost mentioned Defendant in the lawsuit. Last week the following charge was added by the lawyers in their motion against dismissal. “Plaintiffs are going to be amending the FAC [First Amended Complaint] to add more parties [plaintiffs], one of whom alleges Defendant John Loftness physically and sexually abused her as a child.”
- **Dave Harvey**, C.J.’s number two man, abruptly resigned all his sizeable responsibilities with SGM on December 19, 2012. He was the Interim President during C.J.’s seven month leave of absence in 2011-2012. When Dave resigned from SGM, he assumed the role of a pastor in his church. That too has come to an end. More pastors and churches plan to leave SGM. In my last correspondence with you, I made my views concerning C.J. clear. Put succinctly, he should not be held up as an example to the Body of Christ.

This morning I wrote the following note to current and former leaders in SGM.

From: Brent Detwiler

Sent: Monday, April 01, 2013 10:20 AM

To: SGM Pastors

Subject: New Information Contained in Motions to Oppose Dismissal of Lawsuit

SGM Pastors, et al.

The lawyers for the Plaintiff's filed their motions to oppose the dismissal of the lawsuit last Wednesday. I posted about it on Saturday morning. I held off on sending the post so you would not be distracted over the Easter weekend. The news is discouraging. The motions raise even greater concerns regarding the extent of abuse in SGM and how things have been handled.

Policies must be put in place that enable law enforcement to detect and incarcerate juvenile and adult predators. And parents must be alerted to the presence of sex abusers in order to protect their children.

Brent

I've attached my post, "New Information Contained in Motions to Dismiss Lawsuit." It provides a summary. I've also attached the three motions for dismissal in case you are interested in more detail. Available at my website under the [class action lawsuit section](#).

I hope you will take the time to review this information so we can all stand against policies that enable and protect sexual predators in our churches, ministries and institutions.

For the good of the gospel and the cause of Christ.

Brent

Mailing List:

Danny Akin

Thabitti Anyabwile

Voddie Baucham

Alistair Begg

John F. Bettler
Jon Bloom
Ian Booth
Jerry Bridges
Mike Bullmore
Robert C. Cannada Jr.
Don Carson
Matt Chandler
Tim Challies
Bryan Chapell
Lane Dennis
Mark Dever
Kevin DeYoung
Mark Driscoll
Iain M. Duguid
Ligon Duncan
Sinclair Ferguson
John F. Frame
Richard B. Gaffin
Mark Galli
W. Robert Godfrey
Wayne Grudem
Michael A. G. Haykin
Dennis Hollinger
Michael S. Horton
Robert Jones
Douglas F. Kelly
Simon J. Kistemaker
Ted Kober
Andreas Johannes Kostenberger
Tim Keller
Edgar Keinath
Timothy S. Lane
John MacArthur

Michael Milton
R. Albert Mohler, Jr.
Russell D. Moore
Stephen Nichols
Moss Nplha
Marvin Olasky
Ray Ortlund, Jr.
Burk Parsons
Paige Patterson
Richard Phillips
John Piper
David Platt
David Powlison
Vern S. Poythress
Guy Richardson
Phil Ryken
Ken Sande
Pete Schemm
Thomas R. Schreiner
Alan Schuster
Scotty Smith
Winston T. Smith
R.C. Sproul
Ed Stetzer
Sam Storms
Justin Taylor
Tullian Tchivdjian
Bryce Thomas
Derek W. H. Thomas
Paul David Tripp
Carl L. Trueman
Gene Edward Veith, Jr.
Donald S. Whitney
Bruce A. Ware

Stephen J. Wellum
David Wells
Edward T. Welsh
Luder G. Whitlock
John D. Woodbridge

Post Script

From: Brent Detwiler
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2013 5:20 PM
To: National Leaders
Subject: Interview with Boz Tchividjian an Absolute Must Read!

Dear Sirs,

I have a great deal of appreciation for the demands upon your time but I felt it morally incumbent to forward you this interview with Boz Tchividjian. I just read it today and found it extremely profitable.

Grace to you!

Brent

Here is the [link to interview](#).

#####

The Tragic Lessons of Penn State — A Call to Action by Al Mohler
Friday, April 05, 2013 at 3:17 PM
Brent Detwiler

The tragic lessons of Penn State University are the tragic lessons of Sovereign Grace Ministries. C.J. has conducted himself like Graham B. Spanier and John Loftness has conducted himself like Joe Paterno. As Al Mohler points out, "When the facts became known, the firings of both Paterno and Spanier were inevitable and necessary. Both men had credible knowledge that young boys

were being sexually abused, and neither did anything effective to stop it. Most crucially, neither man did what they should have done within minutes of hearing the first report - contact law enforcement immediately.”

The SGM Board of Directors should have followed Mohler’s advice by firing C.J. and John as a moral necessity based upon their internal investigation. They know these men are guilty of allowing sexual predation to effectively continue. They know C.J. and John purposely chose to not contact law enforcement. They don’t need a jury trial. Instead they let C.J. “transition” as President and John “resign” as Chairman while providing bogus cover stories for them. I don’t know how they sleep at night.

Paul Buckley (the new Chairman) and Sovereign Grace Ministries must follow the example of President Mohler and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mohler took the following action the day after Paterno’s firing.

“We all need an immediate reality check. I discovered yesterday that the policy handbook of the institution I am proud to lead calls for any employee receiving a report of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, to contact his or her supervisor with that report. That changes today. The new policy statement will direct employees receiving such a report to contact law enforcement authorities without delay.”

A policy like this one must be included in the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order. It should require every church leader (e.g. pastors, support staff, small group leaders) to immediately alert law enforcement upon suspicion of child abuse. It is a horrific fact that children, spouses and families have been victimized because SGM leaders failed to stop sexual predators from continuing their wicked trade. This is a moral outrage. As Dr. Mohler says, “Any failure to report and to stop the sexual abuse of children must be made inconceivable.”

Will C.J. make it inconceivable? Will John Loftness make it inconceivable? Will Paul Buckley make it inconceivable? Will the Board of Directors make it inconceivable? Will anyone make it inconceivable?

Dr. Mohler did and I hope he makes his good friend C.J. do the same! And if Mohler is consistent, he will also call for C.J.’s resignation as senior pastor of

Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville like he approvingly agreed with Paterno's removal as head football coach. The same "crimes" deserve the same consequences. No favorites. No partiality. No excuses for C.J. And should not a prominent church leader be held to a higher standard than a prominent football coach?

Here now are two outstanding statements issued by Dr. Mohler. He is to be commended. Both have extraordinary relevance for Sovereign Grace Ministries and the Body of Christ at large.

##

The Tragic Lessons of Penn State — A Call to Action

Thursday, November 10, 2011

R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

<http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/11/10/the-tragic-lessons-of-penn-state-a-call-to-action/>

What would prevent this scandal at your school or church?

No one thought it would end this way. Joe Paterno, the legendary head football coach at Penn State University heard of his firing by the school's board of trustees by phone last night. Just two weeks after achieving the most wins of any NCAA Division One football coach in history, Paterno was fired. His firing — a necessary action by the Penn State board of trustees — holds lessons for us all.

Almost a decade ago, a graduate assistant told Coach Paterno that an assistant coach, Jerry Sandusky, had been observed forcing a young boy into a sexual act in the school's football locker room showers. Sandusky was himself a big name in Penn State football, and he was considered a likely successor to Paterno if the head coach had retired. Sandusky also ran a non-profit organization for boys, and he brought the boys onto the Penn State campus. He continued to do so even after his own retirement from Penn State's coaching staff.

After hearing the report, Paterno informed university officials of the accusation. At that point, little or nothing seems to have happened. The scandal broke into public view last Saturday, when Sandusky was arrested and charged with 40 felony counts of sexual abuse involving young boys. Penn State had been harboring a serial child sex abuser. Also arrested were the university's athletic director and its senior vice president of business and finance. Both were charged with failure to report the abuse and with perjury.

What about Paterno and the university's president, Graham B. Spanier? The Pennsylvania grand jury said that both men had knowledge of the 2002 first-hand report of abuse, and neither contacted the police. Furthermore, Sandusky was allowed some use of university facilities even long after this report. Paterno went back to coaching football. Spanier went back to raising money and building the school's reputation. Jerry Sandusky had every opportunity to keep on sexually abusing young boys.

When the facts became known, the firings of both Paterno and Spanier were inevitable and necessary. Both men had credible knowledge that young boys were being sexually abused, and neither did anything effective to stop it. Most crucially, neither man did what they should have done within minutes of hearing the first report — contact law enforcement immediately.

Every single coach, athletic director, and college or university president awoke this morning to a changed world. Nothing will ever be the same again. The firing of Joe Paterno will send shock waves through the entire world of higher education. A man who a day before had announced under pressure that he would retire at the end of the season was told by phone that he would never coach another game. Penn State University will forever be associated with a scandal the likes of which college athletics has, thankfully, never seen before.

But the world has not only changed for college athletics. The detonation of the Penn State scandal must shake the entire nation into a new moral awareness. Any failure to report and to stop the sexual abuse of children must be made inconceivable. The moral irresponsibility that Penn State officials demonstrated in this tragedy may well be criminal. There can be no doubt that

all of these officials bear responsibility for allowing a sexual predator to continue his attacks.

What about churches, Christian institutions, and Christian schools? The Penn State disaster must serve as a warning to us as well, for we bear an even higher moral responsibility.

The moral and legal responsibility of every Christian — and especially every Christian leader and minister — must be to report any suspicion of the abuse of a child to law enforcement authorities. Christians are sometimes reluctant to do this, but this reluctance is both deadly and wrong.

Sometimes Christians are reluctant to report suspected sexual abuse because they do not feel that they know enough about the situation. They are afraid of making a false accusation. This is the wrong instinct. We do not have the ability to conduct the kind of investigation that is needed, nor is this assigned to the church. This is the function of government as instituted by God (Romans 13). Waiting for further information allows a predator to continue and puts children at risk. This is itself an immoral act that needs to be seen for what it is.

A Christian hearing a report of sexual abuse within a church, Christian organization, or Christian school, needs to act in exactly the same manner called for if the abuse is reported in any other context. The church and Christian organizations must not become safe places for abusers. These must be safe places for children, and for all. Any report of sexual abuse must lead immediately to action. That action cannot fall short of contacting law enforcement authorities. A clear lesson of the Penn State scandal is this: Internal reporting is simply not enough.

After law enforcement authorities have been notified, the church must conduct its own work of pastoral ministry, care, and church discipline. This is the church's responsibility and charge. But these essential Christian ministries and responsibilities are not substitutes for the proper function of law enforcement authorities and the legal system. As Christians, we respect those authorities because we are commanded to do so.

There may well be further arrests in connection with the Penn State scandal. One can only imagine the lawsuits that will consume the university's time and treasury in years ahead. Christian institutions and churches looking at this scandal had better act immediately to ensure that all operate under adequate policies and guidelines. What would prevent this scandal at your school or church?

Church leaders and pastors must decide now — not later — that we will respond to any report of sexual abuse with immediate action and an immediate call to law enforcement officials. We must decide in advance what we will do, and not allow ourselves to think that we can handle such a challenge on our own. Every church and Christian institution needs a full set of policies, procedures, and accountability structures. As leaders, we must develop the right instincts for right action.

The leaders of Penn State University must have acted, or failed to have acted, out of many motivations. One may well have been to protect the image and reputation of the university. Well, we now see where that leads. A scandal reported and ended in 2002 would be horrible enough. A scandal that began there, was known by officials, and explodes almost a decade later is too horrible to contemplate.

We all need an immediate reality check. I discovered yesterday that the policy handbook of the institution I am proud to lead calls for any employee receiving a report of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, to contact his or her supervisor with that report. That changes today. The new policy statement will direct employees receiving such a report to contact law enforcement authorities without delay. Then, after acting in the interests of the child, they should contact their supervisor.

In a real sense, the whole world changed today. We all know more than we knew before, and we are all responsible for that knowledge. The costs of acting wrongly in such a situation, or acting inadequately, are written across today's headlines and the moral conscience of the nation. The tragedy at Penn State is teaching the entire nation a lesson it dare not fail to learn.

##

My Letter to the Southern Seminary Community: Our Duty to Report

Friday, November 18, 2011

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President

<http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/11/18/my-letter-to-the-southern-seminary-community-our-duty-to-report/>

This letter to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College community was released in the wake of the tragedy and scandal at Penn State University, and in honor of all those who have experienced such abuse.

November 16, 2011

Dear Member of the Southern Seminary Family:

I write to you concerning a crucial dimension of our responsibility to God, to our churches, to Southern Seminary, to each other, and to the society at large. I write concerning our proper response to any report of the sexual abuse of children.

The tragedy at Penn State University continues to unfold day by day, and this scandal has forced all of us to consider anew what is at stake when the abuse of a child is observed or reported.

This much is clear: The tragedy began with what a Pennsylvania grand jury documents as the observation of the sexual abuse of a child. The person observing the act reported it to university officials, who did not take responsible action. According to the grand jury report, the man who reported the abuse to his superiors took no further action, nor did university officials. There was no report of the abuse to law enforcement officials. The abuser was thus allowed to continue preying on young children.

We can now see how the tragedy was compounded beyond the initial horror of a single act of sexual abuse. The abuser was allowed to continue his abuse, and it took a brave survivor, many years later, to bring the pattern to light. The arrests

and firings in Pennsylvania are a horrifying way to learn the lessons of moral and legal responsibility that each of us bears.

Put as directly as possible, our responsibility is to protect those who cannot protect themselves. The problem of sexual abuse is far larger and more prevalent than we would want to think, and the dangers to children and youth are real. Our responsibility is to contact law enforcement officials when the sexual abuse of any child is observed or reported. As the governor of Pennsylvania said over this past weekend, there can be no margin of error or delay when it comes to our legal, moral, and personal responsibility to report abuse.

This means that if you observe or receive any credible report of such abuse, your first and immediate action must be to contact law enforcement officials without delay. If you are ever in doubt of the proper authorities to call, just dial 911 and make your report as quickly and clearly as possible.

Since we update our policies regularly in light of best practices, I had been fairly certain that our Seminary policy, published in our handbook and documents was adequate. Upon review, we found that it was not. The policy called for any employee of the Seminary who witnessed such abuse or received such a report to report the abuse to his or her supervisor. Plainly, this is not enough.

The very day this was discovered we changed the policy to require that employees first contact law enforcement officials, then their supervisor.

I am writing now to the entire Southern Seminary and Boyce College family in order to remind all of us – not just Seminary employees – of our moral and legal responsibility.

Attached with this letter is an essay on the Penn State scandal that I wrote in its aftermath. This may provide further information on why this letter is so timely and urgent.

We need to pray for all victims of sexual abuse. This kind of crime reminds us of the Puritan way of describing “the sinfulness of sin.” In this fallen and sinful world, we must be ready to respond rightly when children are at risk.

Thank you for all you do to make Southern Seminary safe and faithful in order that we may accomplish the mission entrusted to us.

If you ever have any question about any Seminary policy, please do not hesitate to ask your dean or supervisor.

Sincerely,

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President

Post Script

From: Brent Detwiler

Sent: Friday, April 05, 2013 3:42 PM

To: Danny Akin; Thabitti Anyabwile; Voddie Baucham; Alistair Begg; John F. Bettler; Jon Bloom; Ian Booth; Jerry Bridges; Mike Bullmore; Robert C. Cannada Jr.; Don Carson; Matt Chandler; Tim Challies; Bryan Chapell; Lane Dennis; Mark Dever; Kevin DeYoung; Mark Driscoll; Iain M. Duguid; Ligon Duncan; Sinclair Ferguson; John F. Frame; Richard B. Gaffin; Mark Galli; W. Robert Godfrey; Wayne Grudem; Michael A. G. Haykin; Dennis Hollinger; Michael S. Horton; Robert Jones; Douglas F. Kelly; Simon J. Kistemaker; Ted Kober; Andreas Johannes Kostenberger; Tim Keller; Edgar Keinath; Timothy S. Lane; John MacArthur; Michael Milton; Albert Mohler; Russell D. Moore; Stephen Nichols; Moss Nplha; Marvin Olasky; Ray Ortlund; Burk Parsons; Paige Patterson; Richard Phillips; John Piper; David Platt; David Powlison; Vern S. Poythress; Guy Richardson; Phil Ryken; Ken Sande; Pete Schemm; Thomas R. Schreiner; Alan Schuster; Scotty Smith; Winston T. Smith; R.C. Sproul; Ed Stetzer; Sam Storms; Justin Taylor; Tullian Tchividjian; Bryce Thomas; Derek W. H. Thomas; Paul David Tripp; Carl L. Trueman; Gene Edward Veith; Donald S. Whitney; Bruce A. Ware; Stephen J. Wellum; David Wells; Edward T. Welsh; Luder G. Whitlock; John D. Woodbridge

Subject: The Tragic Lessons of Penn State by Al Mohler

I assume most of you have defined policies on reporting sex abuse to law enforcement. If not, please consider the policy adopted by AI at Southern. See attached.

#####

Breaking News! Seconded Amended Lawsuit Filed Today.

Tuesday, May 14, 2013 at 6:35 PM

Brent Detwiler

The Second Amended Lawsuit was filed today in the Montgomery County Circuit Court, Maryland. It is available on BrentDetwiler.com by clicking on "SGM Lawsuit / Class Action Lawsuit." A link is provided.

The original Class Action Lawsuit was filed on Oct 17, 2012. It named three plaintiffs and nine defendants. The First Amended Lawsuit was filed on Jan 11, 2013. It named eight plaintiffs and 14 defendants. The Second Amended Lawsuit names 11 plaintiffs and the defendants remain at 14. Some of the pseudonymous plaintiffs are now using their proper names.

I will begin working on a post tomorrow. The lawyers for SGM have been roundly dismissing the class action lawsuit for a lack of details. No longer! This amendment provides great detail. All horrific.

It is no wonder SGM and the other Defendants are doing all in their power to hide behind the First Amendment. From my perspective, they are doomed if it goes before a jury. I can't imagine the Judge dismissing most of the complaints. Most of the lawsuit will proceed. Furthermore, a lot of people are now under criminal investigation.

Remember, John Loftness recently "resigned" as Chairman of the Board for SGM so he could spend more time with Solid Rock Church and his infirm parents. I knew that was not the primary reason and wrote about it at length. That brought a strong denial by Paul Buckley, the current Chairman of the Board. In fact, the entire Board knew about the growing list of charges against John.

The Board also knew that the additional charges in this Second Amended Lawsuit were incriminating to C.J. It was time for him to "transition as President" before this amendment came out and hit the national news.

Everything alleged at Covenant Life Church occurred while C.J. was the senior pastor. John, Grant Layman, and Gary Ricucci did not act independently of C.J.'s counsel regarding how known sex abusers should be handled. That's why he is a co-conspirator. C.J. was also close friends with Stephen Griney and an acquaintance of Mark Hoffman.

There are also many other names left out of the amendment due to motions by the Defense that are pending before the Judge. A wide circle of people at Covenant Life Church are now alleged to have committed horrible abuses. The FBI is busy! This doesn't end in Civil Court. I've said for a while. More people are going to jail.

God bless all the victims who have been willing to press ahead in spite of all the denials put out by Sovereign Grace Ministries. More tomorrow.