

**Conclusive Evidence the Investigation of C.J. Mahaney by Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund, & Carl Trueman Was Rigged - Each Refuses to Answer Vital Questions
Brent Detwiler
September 9, 2016**

This headline should surprise no one but it should alarm everyone. These three nationally recognized leaders declared C.J. Mahaney fit for ministry and a model to be followed after doing a superficial investigation in less than two weeks that was terribly rigged. It is another egregious example of the corruption that has surrounded Mahaney for so very long. The following events took place in 2011.

Chronological Overview

July 6 - I send out *The Documents* to the pastors in Sovereign Grace Ministries and C.J. steps down as President of SGM.

July 7 - A new puppet Board is put into place by C.J., Dave Harvey and Jeff Purswell.

July 8-12 - During this timeframe, Joshua Harris resigns from the Board because he is unwilling to declare C.J. fit for ministry.

July 12 - Al Mohler and Ligon Duncan condemn me and *The Documents*. They radically defend C.J. (see below, emphasis mine). I been told they did not even read *The Documents*. This was part of a coordinated effort to discredit me and my writings. Others, like Tim Challies, follow their example.

See <http://abrentdetwiler.squarespace.com/the-documents/>

Read <https://mattbredmond.com/2011/08/17/tim-challies-calls-it-a-personal-matter-between-mahaney-and-detwiler-detwiler-calls-him-on-the-carpet-updated/>

**Al Mohler
The Courier-Journal
July 12, 2011**

“I always have had only the highest estimation of C.J. Mahaney as a man and a minister. That continues absolutely unchanged. There is **nothing** in this current situation which would leave me to have even the **slightest pause of confidence** in him. There is **nothing disqualifying** in terms of anything that is disclosed in [*The Documents*]. It’s just evidence we knew all along, that C.J. is human but a deeply committed Christian and a visionary Christian leader. **Detwiler has an obvious vendetta against C.J.**”

Ligon Duncan
Reformation 21
July 12, 2011

I would then encourage you to **ignore** the assaults of wounded people on attack websites and blogs, and that you **discount** the opinings of those who have no real knowledge of these matters or relation to SGM or authority to comment upon them, and that you **refrain** from assuming that you (or they) are in a position to render judgment on these things.

It is clear that far from a scandalous cover up, our brothers at Sovereign Grace are taking these matters with utter seriousness and are endeavoring to walk in Gospel repentance and humility and fidelity. C.J. knows of my **complete love and respect** for him. ...

It would have been **very easy** for the leadership of SGM to **ignore and dismiss** these charges [in *The Documents*], because **so many of them are so evidently self-serving and spurious accusations**.

July 13 – The SGM Board condemns me, declares C.J. fit for ministry, and references an undisclosed Preliminary Panel that will examine C.J.'s confessions. This results in a hurricane force blowback from people throughout Sovereign Grace Ministries.

Sovereign Grace Ministries Board of Directors announcement regarding C.J. Mahaney
July 13, 2011 by Dave Harvey

The board of Sovereign Grace has made the following resolutions. ... That the board of Sovereign Grace Ministries has reviewed Brent Detwiler's documents accusing C.J. Mahaney of sinful practices in the conduct of his ministry and finds no reason at this time to deem him unfit for ministry. ... That C.J. Mahaney is a qualified minister of the gospel and this board approves his pastoral and teaching ministry in Sovereign Grace and the wider body of Christ. ...

A preliminary panel will examine confessions that Mahaney has already made to determine if at present he is qualified to be a pastor and the president of Sovereign Grace. In light of the public defamation of his character, this is to be done with all deliberate speed. The board deems this preliminary panel necessary to show that while it has concluded that Mahaney is fit for ministry, other temporary outside evaluation is necessary either to lend credibility to its assessment or to make changes this panel deems necessary.

July 14 – The Preliminary Panel begins its work about this time but no one is told about its start up.

July 15 – Dave Harvey attempts to respond to overwhelming criticism from members of SGM with a blog post. SGM removed it long ago.

An honest take on a difficult week

July 15, 2011 by Dave Harvey

Thank you all for engaging with us so much over the last week as we've attempted to tell you what's going on with respect to this very difficult season in Sovereign Grace Ministries. There have been hundreds of comments on this blog and no shortage of emails. ... This week has been very challenging, and heading into the weekend I am aware of some places where we screwed up. I'll make no attempt to be exhaustive, but here are some highlights: ... When we posted our resolutions on Wednesday, people were quick to infer that we were "circling the wagons." And I think I understand that interpretation. We should have been a lot more clear about our resolve for self-evaluation, growth, integrity, and honest dialogue. So I'm not surprised that folks wrote to tell us of their heartbreak and stomach knots in response to our post, and I do regret that. ... Communicating our "resolutions" seemed a precise way to convey all that. More seem to disagree than agree, and we've heard you. ... When people are tempted to think that you are (and I'll pull from our vast supply of quotes here) "gaming the system," engaging in "cronyism," "going to war," behaving with "hubris," "presumptuous and self-serving," and, well you get the idea – you've got the burden of ensuring they know you get the point. What's the point? God is drawing our gaze inward as an organization. ... We hope to do a better job of listening to those folks, learning from them, and owning where we've been wrong.

July 22 – Dave Harvey references the Preliminary Panel but withholds the names of panelists. This was intentional so they could not be contacted.

God at work!

July 22, 2011 by Dave Harvey

The two review panels we mentioned last week are now established. Three church leaders outside of SGM are generously giving their time to serve as the preliminary panel, and we expect them to publish their evaluations early next month. [Ambassadors of Reconciliation](#), a ministry that primarily serves Lutheran churches, will be our second and more in-depth panel. We are eager to learn from the evaluation they give us, and we will share their findings online too.

July 27 – The Preliminary Panel composed of Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund, and Carl Trueman writes the Sovereign Grace Board and declares C.J. fit for ministry and a model for others to follow. His confessions of sin give them no pause. This report is not released until August 5. They and their work remains hidden in the interim.

July 27, 2011

To the Sovereign Grace Board,

Here is our conclusion: *We do not believe C.J. Mahaney's confessed sins have disqualified him from Christian ministry.* ... We believe C.J. Mahaney is...still fit to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and a pastor to others. ... We believe his Christian walk, though flawed (as is the case with all Christians), is still a model for others to follow. ... To reiterate: nothing to which he has confessed would appear to us to require his stepping aside...we affirm that C.J. Mahaney has not disqualified himself from ministry.

August 5 – Dave Harvey uses the findings from DeYoung, Ortlund and Trueman to justify the findings of the SGM Board that “C.J. is qualified for the ministry of the Gospel.”

**Takeaways from our preliminary panel's evaluation
August 5, 2011 by Dave Harvey**

On Tuesday I posted [the preliminary panel's evaluation](#) of C.J. Mahaney's qualification for ministry. I'm grateful that these men would take time to help us answer that important question and honestly list their related concerns. Please read their report if you haven't already. In sum, they agreed with the board's initial judgment that C.J. is qualified for the ministry of the Gospel, noting that C.J. had confessed his sins and that what he confessed did not “constitute public scandal.”

For years, I have wanted to write Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund and Carl Trueman and ask them questions about their findings. I finally did this past April and May (see below). I've kept this information to myself until now.

That's because I recently read a post I had been told about on The Wartburg Watch titled, *Mortification of Spin Hosts Discuss Abusive Pulpits on Bully Pulpit Broadcast*. During this broadcast (i.e. podcast) with Todd Pruitt and Aimee Byrd, Carl Trueman references C.J. Mahaney, though not by name, and says he is disqualified as a church leader. This was a 180-degree change of direction for Trueman.

Understandably, the first comment on TWW blog was by Rose, “So I’m assuming, here, that Carl Trueman is taking back his previous support of CJ being cleared and fit for a return to ministry?” Todd Pruitt from the Mortification of Spin jumped into the conversation and made numerous harsh, belligerent, and irrational statements. He finally told everyone on TWW, “Carl Trueman does not owe you answers” and “I would discourage him from doing it.” That’s when I decided to write this post. I’ll be doing a follow up post on Pruitt.

See <http://thewartburgwatch.com/2016/04/20/mortification-of-spin-hosts-discuss-abusive-pulpits-on-bully-pulpit-broadcast/>

From: Brent Detwiler [<mailto:abrentdetwiler@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2016 3:37 PM
To: Carl L. Trueman <ctrueman@wts.edu>
Subject: Personal Letter re: Panel Report

Hello Carl,

I have been meaning to write you for years but as you well know, the Lord reigns. All the hindrances of the past, have finally given way so I can write you a thoughtful letter asking fifteen questions regarding the findings of your panel in July 2011 in which you declared C.J. above reproach, fit for ministry and a model to follow. I am glad to talk by phone if you prefer to answer these questions via a conversation. In whatever way, I am hopeful you will respond, amend your position, and acknowledge any ways in which you feel the investigation was poorly done. I appreciate your time restrains but I hope you can provide a prompt response.

Thank you,
Brent

##

May 10, 2016

Hello Ray,

Six months ago, I called your office hoping I could get your email address so I could write you in private. I didn’t want to use the general address given the important matters about which I wanted to write you. I left a voice mail message to that effect when no one answered the phone. ...

Ray, I've been meaning to write you for several years regarding the work you did on the Preliminary Panel for Sovereign Grace Ministries with Kevin DeYoung and Carl Trueman but I have been providentially hindered. Now, in the sovereignty of God, the Lord has enabled me to write you in a thoughtful manner.

##

May 10, 2016

Hello Kevin,

For over three years, I have diligently and graciously sought to speak or meet with you. All my efforts have failed. The most recent effort was six months ago when I contacted Jenny Olson, your administrative assistant by phone. I followed up that conversation with an email to you that she made sure was brought to your attention. ...

These were crucial matters of real importance but you were unwilling to give me any of your time. I hope that changes with this writing.

Kevin, I've been meaning to write you for several years regarding the work you did on the Preliminary Panel for Sovereign Grace Ministries with Ray Ortlund and Carl Trueman but I have been providentially hindered. Now, in the sovereignty of God, the Lord has enabled me to write you in a thoughtful manner.

After these individual prefatory comments, I added the same body of material regarding the following 15 vital questions.

1. Were you given and did you evaluate all six of C.J.'s formal confessions?
2. Did you take seriously C.J.'s confession that he remained blinded by pride for over 10 years despite constant correction?
3. Did you ask C.J. about the "couple areas of sin" he perceived in June 2011?
4. Did you talk to others against whom C.J. confessed he sinned?
5. Did you talk to Bo Lotinsky?
6. Did you talk to Ken Roberts?

7. Did you talk to Larry Tomczak?
8. Did you talk to Ken Sande?
9. Why didn't you talk to me?
10. Did you tell C.J. it was decidedly unwise for him to take a leave of absence?
11. Did you tell C.J. none of his sins needed to be confessed in public?
12. Did you tell C.J. he overstated his sin and thereby confused people outside of Sovereign Grace?
13. Do you think the panel acted ethically in keeping with its narrow assignment?
14. What is your definition of "above reproach" in 1 Timothy 3:2 and "blameless" in Titus 1:6-7?
15. Do you still believe C.J. is a "model for others to follow"?

Though asked in a respectful manner, none of these men were willing to answer or interact over the questions. I sincerely hoped at least one of them would be open, honest and humble. In asking these questions, I knew the answers to most of them. Nevertheless, I wanted to give them opportunity to be transparent like Peter did with Ananias and Sapphira.

Instead, DeYoung, Ortlund, and Trueman chose to hide behind their silence. Truthfully answering these questions would have revealed the corrupt way in which they conducted themselves. The whole thing was horribly rigged. There was nothing objective about their investigation or their findings. The sins which C.J. confessed were clearly disqualifying in nature. That is indisputable if the Bible is your guide. It was not the guide for these elite pastors and theologians. That is apparent in what follows. Furthermore, they should have disagreed with the SGM Board of Directors, Ligon Duncan, and Al Mohler but that was not going to happen.

Here is the manuscript I sent Carl Trueman this past spring. I sent the exact same to Ray Ortlund and Kevin DeYoung. The only changes I made concerned the use of their names.

##

Introduction

In July 2011, you declared C.J. fit for ministry and a model to be followed based upon your evaluation of his confessions. Here is what you, Kevin and Ray said in that regard in your letter to the Board of Directors.

Sovereign Grace Board,
July 27, 2011

Our responsibility, as we understand it, is to offer non-binding advice on the narrow question as to whether C.J. Mahaney is presently fit for ministry based on those sins to which he has already confessed. Our remarks should be seen in that light. ...

Here is our conclusion: *We do not believe C.J. Mahaney's confessed sins have disqualified him from Christian ministry.* Or to put it positively, from all that we have seen, heard, and read, we believe C.J. Mahaney is, at this moment in time and based on those sins which he has acknowledged, still fit to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and a pastor to others. ...

The question is whether there are disqualifying sins impeding C.J. Mahaney's ministry of the gospel. We do not see a pattern of egregious sins which would dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ should C.J. Mahaney continue to minister. We believe his Christian walk, though flawed (as is the case with all Christians), is still a model for others to follow. ...

To reiterate: nothing to which he has confessed would appear to us to require his stepping aside...we affirm that C.J. Mahaney has not disqualified himself from ministry.

Kevin DeYoung
Ray Ortlund Jr.
Carl Trueman

I've had many questions about your report that I'd like to ask you about now. I think they are still relevant and important. Would you please take the time to provide answers; if only short answers? I respect your time limits.

Were You Given & Did You Evaluate All Six of C.J.'s Formal Confessions?

I've always wondered if you were given all of C.J.'s formal confessions. In particular, the first two. This couldn't be determined from your report since you did not cite or post the specific confessions you were examining. Neither did the SGM Board. From my perspective, that should have been done so people could judge for themselves and

know the basis for your assessment. There were six of them that were formally written down as follows. This list doesn't include informal and unwritten confessions made by C.J. that should also have been provided to the panel.

1. August 10, 2004 - addressed to me, Dave Harvey, Steve Shank, Pat Ennis, Joshua Harris, Grant Layman, Kenneth Maresco, Bob Kauflin
2. October 13, 2004 - ditto
3. December 16, 2010 - addressed to me
4. March 11, 2011 - ditto
5. July 6, 2011 - addressed to SGM in "Why I'm taking a leave of absence"
6. July 10, 2011 - addressed to Covenant Life Church

Henceforth in this correspondence, I will refer to them as Confession 1, Confession 2, etc.

Here is my first question. Did you evaluate all six confessions? That's important to know. For example, C.J.'s first confession to us from August 10, 2004. It served as the baseline for all his subsequent confessions. Confession 1 informs Confessions 2-6 and is frequently referred back to by C.J. Was it included as part of your evaluation? It follows.

From: C.J. Mahaney

Sent: Tuesday, August 10, 2004 10:04 AM

To: Brent Detwiler; Dave Harvey; Steve Shank; Pat Ennis; Joshua Harris; Grant Layman; Kenneth Maresco; Bob Kauflin

Subject: Confidential

My friends,

Below is my confession in this form for your critique and evaluation.

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." Hebrews 12:5-6

I am presently experiencing the discipline and chastisement of God as yet another expression of His love for me. How merciful of God to reveal my sin and how kind of you men to be a means of discipline through your correction (Ps 141:5). Though painful this discipline is a loud statement of His love and yours. I trust you feel my gratefulness for your friendship.

I am convinced this discipline was necessary because of the pronounced and pervasive presence of pride in my heart. And I am convinced that my

perception of this pride is limited and that we are only beginning the process of discerning and weakening pride in my life. But I am also convinced that with the help of the Holy Spirit, as well as my wife and friends, that I will gradually perceive more of this pride and hopefully grow in humility.

In recent history this arrogance has been evident in the following ways:

- On numerous occasions I have not been easy to entreat or correct.
- I have arrogantly assumed the superiority of my discernment when corrected.
- I can be quick to disagree when I am being corrected.
- I have disagreed with those correcting me before I have sufficiently understood the nature and content of their correction.
- Too often I have failed to humbly ask questions and draw out the one correcting me.
- I have not consistently made the individual correcting me comfortable by inviting and encouraging their correction.
- I have failed to discern the effect of my disagreement upon the one correcting me.
- I can be quick to find fault with the one correcting me thus revealing my self-righteousness.
- I have not sufficiently perceived the effect of my words and decisions upon individuals.
- There has been a pattern of sinful judgment toward those who are correcting me.
- I have not communicated the correction of the team to the CLC men [i.e. the pastors of Covenant Life Church], arrogantly assuming the inaccuracy of their correction and wrongly assuming the agreement of the CLC team with my perspective.

The above list is far from exhaustive. It is merely representative and there are many expressions of pride that can be listed under each one and sadly no lack of illustrations for each one. These numerous expressions of pride are offensive

to God and particularly serious because of my position. In my position and because of my position I should be an example of humility and very easy to correct. To my shame there have been many occasions in recent history where my arrogance has been pronounced and I have not been easy to entreat. That is unacceptable for a Christian and even more for a leader. So there it is as I presently perceive my sins. This is just a beginning and I am sure it is inadequate.

No confession would be complete without expressing my gratefulness to those who have cared enough to correct me, forbear with me and forgive me. But this confession would become a book if I identified each one who has been a true friend in detail.

I must begin by thanking Carolyn [his wife] and I simply don't have the words to adequately express my gratefulness to her and for her unique love for me. There is no one I respect more than her, no one I know who is more discerning than her and no one who cares for me more than her. And there is no one who has been more patient with me than her. And no one has encouraged me more than her. There is simply no one like her. And so there is no one I am more grateful for than her.

And I would like to express my deep gratefulness to Brent, Dave [Harvey] and Steve [Shank] for their kindness and patience. I think these sins have been most evident to you and sadly manifested the most toward you men. I am so deeply grieved by this. And yet your response to my many sins has been forbearance and forgiveness. I am unworthy of your friendship and you certainly deserve better leadership than I have provided.

And finally thanks to Josh [Harris], Kenneth [Maresco] and Bob [Kauflin]. Your example of humility is the most compelling I have observed up close and personal. You men are exemplary in the way you consistently and precisely confess your sin, aggressively pursue correction, welcome correction and respond to correction. I should have followed your example but to my shame I have only admired your example. How kind of the Lord to providentially place me with you men (and now Grant [Layman] and Pat [Ennis]). In whatever remaining years I have left to serve I hope to resemble your example to some small degree. I have no excuse if I do not.

So here is my inadequate (and I am sure incomplete) attempt to confess and describe the sin I perceive at present, express my remorse and once again ask your forgiveness.

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

C.J.

In this confession, C.J. points out,

“I am presently experiencing the discipline and chastisement of God as yet another expression of His love for me. ... I am convinced this discipline was necessary because of the pronounced and pervasive presence of pride in my heart. And I am convinced that my perception of this pride is limited and that we are only beginning the process of discerning and weakening pride in my life.”

He also points out,

“The above list is far from exhaustive. It is merely representative and there are many expressions of pride that can be listed under each one and sadly no lack of illustrations for each one. These numerous expressions of pride are offensive to God and particularly serious because of my position.”

Then again,

“To my shame there have been many occasions in recent history where my arrogance has been pronounced and I have not been easy to entreat. That is unacceptable for a Christian and even more for a leader.”

Finally,

“And I would like to express my deep gratefulness to Brent, Dave and Steve for their kindness and patience. I think these sins have been most evident to you and sadly manifested the most toward you men.”

All of these statements were true. Everyone agreed with C.J.’s self-assessment. He was experiencing the discipline and chastisement of the Lord. His pride was pronounced and pervasive. The list of sins was far from exhaustive and there was no lack of illustrations for each one. On many occasions, he was hard to correct. His numerous expressions of pride were offensive to God and particularly serious because of his position as head of Sovereign Grace Ministries. All these sins were centrally against me, Dave and Steve. Finally, his behavior as a Christian leader was shameful and unacceptable.

And yet, these sins continued and worsened.

That's because the "process of discerning and weakening pride in [his] life" abruptly ended when C.J. shut down the process soon after our meeting with him ten days later on August 20, 2004 (see *Response Regarding Friendship & Doctrine*, pp. 16ff.). He claimed, he was "so deeply grieved" by his sins against us. In reality, he was so deeply offended at us for confronting him and holding him accountable (e.g. see RRF&D, pp. 38-53).

See <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/970485/13898998/1314638941327/Part-1-Response-Regarding-Friendship-Doctrine+with+links.pdf?token=z zrYY3GoOyLrFIP59GBAE%2FEDIT8%3D>

Did You Take Seriously C.J.'s Confession that He Remained Blinded by Pride for Over 10 Years Despite Constant Correction?

C.J. never talked to us about his August 10, 2004 email confession (or the one to follow on October 13, 2004) and he never asked forgiveness for any of the ways he sinned against us. Instead, he turned against Dave Harvey and me after the August 20 meeting. That was painful and grievous in ways you cannot imagine. It was a classic example of C.J.'s hypocrisy. He wrote out a great confession and then totally disregarded it. He claimed to need our help in order to "gradually perceive more of this pride and hopefully grow in humility" and then turned against us. It was the beginning of the end.

Eight men were at the August 20, 2004 meeting. Dave, Steve Shank, Pat Ennis, Joshua Harris, Grant Layman, Kenneth Maresco, Bob Kauflin, and me. We were best friends with C.J. Only Bob remains in SGM. Steve recently left. The rest of us left between 2009 and 2013 primarily due to the effect of C.J.'s sin upon us and others as illustrated in his first confession.

For example, these same sins played out against Covenant Life Church. The members overwhelming voted to leave SGM in December 2012 due to C.J.'s abusive and hypocritical leadership. So did a host of other SGM churches. In time, forty to be exact.

C.J. "confessed" these things to us on paper in 2004 but that was all. He had gained some illumination but there was no repentance or resultant fruit. These same long term patterns of serious sin continued. I brought them up again in far more detail and with far more illustrations in three major documents [below] in 2010 and 2011. The number of examples had greatly grown since 2004.

Response Regarding Friendship & Doctrine (RRF&D)

March 17, 2010

128 pages

A Final Appeal (AFA)
October 8, 2010
168 pages

Concluding Remarks (CR)
June 8, 2011
202 pages

On June 8, 2011, I added 224 endnotes to RRF&D and 181 endnotes to AFA. These too were sent to C.J. and the men around him.

Here's the point. What C.J. confessed in 2004, he confessed again in 2010 and 2011. This time in relation to a much larger group of people. He had not changed over the course of those 7 years. For example, consider what he said in Confession 6 to Covenant Life Church on July 10, 2011. This was the same week you, Kevin, and Ray began your evaluation.

“After receiving the second document [AFA], I sent it to the SGM leadership team, eight Covenant Life Church elders, and some friends who have known me and worked with me for many years. I asked them to read the documents and provide me with their honest evaluation of me not only in relation to the documents but any sins or leadership failures they would have observed apart from these documents in their own experience with me. I spent a day together with these [12] men in November of 2010 where I could hear evaluation from each of them. It was a sad and painful day for me to recognize that Brent was not the only one to experience the effects of my sin, but to various degrees many of the other men in the room had as well. ... There are certainly other examples I could give of these sin categories: examples that have hurt others, hindered my leadership, gone against what I've taught, and—most significantly—dishonored God.” (C.J., Confession 6 to CLC, July 10, 2011)

In this confession, C.J. refers to “sin categories” that have “hurt others” and “gone against” what he taught. They included the following.

- Resistant to correction
- Difficult to entreat
- Sinfully judging the motives of others
- Arrogantly confident in his perception of others
- Favorably comparing himself to others
- Offended by what he thought was a lack of appreciation and care
- Withdrawing from individuals in his soul when disagreed with
- Arrogantly dismissing critique
- Not informing others of critique after agreeing to do so

- Managing process on his own (i.e., cutting off input when offended)
- Defensive when integrity was challenged

These continuing patterns of sin were confirmed by “the 12 of us who know him best.” That included Dave Harvey, Jeff Purswell, Joshua Harris, and Pat Ennis. They wrote me about “our areas of agreement with your documents” in March 2011.

“When the SGM board, the CLC governing board, and other involved parties met with CJ in November [2010], he asked the 12 of us who know him best to identify in our own experience the things that you [Brent] communicated in your documents. All of us could see his tendencies to withdraw when disagreed with, to make correction difficult, to be unduly confident in his own judgments (including his judgments of the motives of others), and to give insufficient attention to process in his leadership. ... Brent, this is not an exhaustive accounting of our areas of agreement with your documents, but we hope it is sufficient to communicate general areas of agreement and our sorrow over these sins and failures.” (Dave, Jeff, Joshua, Pat, March 11, 2011)

Twelve men could identify the sinful tendencies I communicated in the documents based upon their own experience. I first addressed those “sins and failures” in December 2000. C.J. refers to this in his opening paragraph from Confession 3.

“Let me begin with what seems to me to be the only appropriate place to begin, by thanking you [Brent] for your friendship and your desire to serve me by providing me with these two documents [RRF&D, AFA] that express your perspective, concerns, correction and care for me. I am deeply grateful for your friendship over the years and this particular expression of your friendship has helped me to perceive my sin more clearly, experience conviction of sin more deeply and comprehend the effects of my sin more specifically. I deeply regret that I didn’t respond humbly to your correction when you first gave it years ago.” (C.J., Confession 3 to Brent, Dec 16, 2010)

The acknowledgements are important but take special note of the last sentence. It is extremely important. C.J. refers to “correction when you first gave it years ago.” He is referring to December 2000. That’s when Dave Harvey, Steve Shank and I began to correct him in a formal and ongoing manner (see “A 3½ Year Process Starting December 2000” in RRF&D, pp. 5-15). I led that lengthy and difficult process. It culminated in our August 20, 2004 meeting. I continued to correct C.J. thereafter but to no avail.

C.J. continues his confession. Follow carefully.

“As for my sin it seems to me that PRIDE is THE sin and the primary category so much of my sin fits under (although other sins are most definitely present as well). ... I have been arrogantly confident in my perception of my own heart and my discernment in relation to others. As I look back this is a pronounced and persistent pattern of sin that I did not even begin to perceive until the end of this season of correction [from March-November 2010]. I vividly remember the meeting with a few of the CLC pastors where I began to perceive what I know was obvious to you and others. I proudly trusted my own discernment and consistently disagreed with your correction, dismissed your correction, and, blinded by my pride, failed to inform the CLC guys about your correction in specific and appropriate ways even after assuring you men I would. And I failed to inform you of ways they were correcting me as well.” (C.J., Confession 3 to Brent, Dec 16, 2010)

C.J. says he did “not even begin to perceive” “this pronounced and persistent pattern of sin” until November 2010 because of his pride. That is not true in one sense. He perceived it and confessed it on paper six years earlier in 2004. He just didn’t “perceive” it as it applied to me, Dave Harvey or anyone else correcting him before, during or after 2004 or so he claimed. Confession 1 from August 10, 2004 was an accurate, but theoretical confession that proved meaningless in terms of application. As a result, his sin grew. That is evident in the events that transpired after the August 20, 2004 meeting with him which I carefully detailed in my documents.

C.J. goes on to state with certainty that he was “only beginning to perceive the depth and the pervasiveness of my sin.” That was true also. There were major categories of sin he was not beginning to see or else seeing but refusing to acknowledge.

“And I am certain I am only beginning to perceive the depth and the pervasiveness of my sin. So from the outset I want you to be aware that I have no doubt this written response is both limited and deficient. I have no doubt I do not perceive all I need to perceive, all the sin in my life that you and others no doubt do perceive. And I am deeply grateful for the patience that has been extended to me by you and all my friends in this process. ... My perception of my sin and progress in fighting my sin seems to be so very slow and I often wonder if I am growing at all. ... As I have already stated, I am sure my perception of my sin remains limited and faulty. ... Brent, as I stated at the outset, the only thing I am certain of is that this would be just a portion of my sin. ... Brent, I hope you will find my response an honest evaluation of my heart prompted by your concerns and informed by the correction of those I serve with. I am sure in many ways it is inadequate and insufficient and I appeal for your patience and ask for your help.” (C.J., Confession 3 to Brent, Dec 16, 2010)

Here's what important to note. In August 2004, he confessed his pride was "pronounced and pervasive." In December 2010, he confessed his pride was "pronounced and persistent." It was persistent because it continued unabated. It continued unabated because he "did not even begin to perceive" it until November 2010. Taken together, his arrogance in relation to others was pronounced, pervasive and persistent. That was true and that is what he confessed.

Furthermore, C.J.'s pride remained intact over the next 8 months - that is, from November 2010 when he began to perceive it until July 2011 when he fled Covenant Life Church never to return. In the end, all his confessions proved to be worthless. See [C.J.'s Foxhole Conversion](#) (Oct 13, 2011).

I hope my point is obvious. I/we corrected C.J. for over 10 years but he persisted in the very sins we were bringing to his attention to the very end. Therefore, I must ask, did you take seriously the fact that C.J.'s pride remained intact despite years of extensive correction? It appears not even though this long history of arrogance is apparent in his confessions.

Did You Ask C.J. about the "Couple Areas of Sin" He Perceived in June 2011?

In Confession 3 to me, C.J. said,

"So from the outset I want you to be aware that I have no doubt this written response is both limited and deficient. ... I am sure in many ways it is inadequate and insufficient and I appeal for your patience and ask for your help." (C.J., Confession to Brent, Dec 16, 2010)

He was correct. Confession 3 was "limited and deficient...inadequate and insufficient," though not meaningless. C.J. appealed for my "help" so I outlined the 15 most critical areas of sin he failed to address.

January 21, 2011

C.J.,

Before we meet, I must understand far more clearly how you view my assessment. For instance, in what you've written [in Confession 3] you acknowledge [1] no lack of integrity, [2] no deceit or [3] hypocrisy, [4] no concealment or [5] cover-up, [6] no damage control, [7] spin or [8] manipulation, [9] no partiality or [10] favoritism, [11] no abuse of authority or [12] lording, [13] no need for a confession to the movement or the leaders, [14]

no wrong doing by others, [15] no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others, etc.

Brent

Two months later, C.J. sent me Confession 4 but it was a repeat of Confession 3. He refused to address these 15 crucial issues.

As a result, I sent him my third major document on June 8, 2011. In the 202-page *Concluding Remarks*, I illustrated the sins mentioned above including the premeditated blackmail of Larry Tomczak (it was no “unfortunate lack of judgment” as you state in your report). I also added and sent 224 endnotes to RRF&D and 181 endnotes to AFA. By the way, did SGM provide you, Kevin, and Ray the endnotes or only the documents? I ask because the endnotes are critical. They should have been given to you.

In these new writings, I repeatedly illustrated in just fashion C.J.’s lack of integrity, deceit, hypocrisy, concealment of sin, covering-up of wrong doing, damage control, spin, manipulation, partiality, favoritism, abusive use of authority, lording over others, unwillingness to confess to SGM or its pastors, refusal to acknowledge any wrongdoing by other SGM leaders like him, and refusal to acknowledge the effect of sinful judgments passed on by him to other leaders who mistreated people as a result.

I did not hear from him so I wrote again on June 23, 2011.

June 23, 2011

Dear C.J.,

I ask the following questions with grace and tenderness of heart. Have you had a change of heart and mind? If so, are you willing to provide me a complete and thorough response to RRF&D, AFA, and CR in preparation for a meeting between us? And are you willing to walk in the light by publicly confessing the sins I’ve addressed?

I mean you no harm. These are redemptive requests designed to serve you and the movement you lead. Please provide me a response in the next day or two.

With sincere affection,
Brent

Concluding Remarks and the 405 endnotes were filled with evidence that could not be refuted. The men around him were freshly challenging him “to go back again and seek

to dig deeper into the issues" I had brought to his attention. That included Ken Sande. They knew there was a lot more for C.J. to see and acknowledged.

From: C.J. Mahaney

Sent: Friday, June 24, 2011 12:44 PM

To: Brent Detwiler

Cc: Dave Harvey; Jeff Purswell; Joshua Harris; Tommy Hill; Tony Reinke; Ken Sande; John Loftness; Bob Kauflin; Gary Ricucci; Carolyn Mahaney; Chad Mahaney

Subject: FW: Change of Heart?

Brent,

Thank you for your affection and care. I trust you know I feel the same toward you.

In answer to your question, yes, I am changing my mind in regard to your request to give a more thorough response to your documents. At the same time, I am committed to making a public confession, as detailed below.

The men around have challenged me to go back again and seek to dig deeper into the issues you've brought. ... Brent, I know my sin has deeply hurt you and others and I want to more clearly acknowledge this wherever I can. I want to benefit from all God has for me in your documents. ... Please pray that God would give me the gift of sight as I continue to examine your documents and my heart.

So here is how I plan to proceed. In attempting to give a more thorough response to the three documents [RRF&D, AFA, CR], my plan was to give particular attention to the 15 areas of concern/sin you think I have yet to perceive or acknowledge. I'd like to hear your thoughts on this approach. ... As a result of these steps, my plan is to provide you with my response to your documents that specifically addresses your primary areas of concern.

I also plan to make a public confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors. My hope is to do this at our November [2011] conference although it's possible this could take place at an earlier date. I want my confession to be as fully informed as possible, so I'd like to get the benefit of the independent review process before making it. It's also my preference to make this confession in person with the pastors rather than by e-mail. I want these men to hear my confession and hopefully perceive my conviction/sorrow as well as ask their forgiveness. ... And once God has given me a clear understanding of my sin and its impact on

others, I anticipate that it will be beneficial for me to make a wider confession to the general public about God's correction and refinement in my life.

So it is my determined intention to continue to pursue a rigorous evaluation of my heart, involving those inside Sovereign Grace as well as those outside Sovereign Grace who do not have history with me. I take your charges seriously and I want to do all I can to convince you of this. Most importantly I want to please and glorify God by walking humbly before him by his grace. Thanks for helping me to do this.

In His grace,
C.J.

In response to the overwhelming evidence contained in *Concluding Remarks* and the 400 plus endnotes in *Response Regarding Friendship & Doctrine* and *A Final Appeal*, C.J. changed his mind in two important respects.

First, he agreed to "give a more through response" to all of the above with "particular attention to the 15 areas of concern/sin" that "specifically addresses your primary areas of concern."

Second, he resolved to confess his sins to the SGM pastors and anticipated doing the same to the general public. This was something he refused to do for the previous 15 months.

"I am committed to making a public confession, as detailed below. ... I know my sin has deeply hurt you and others and I want to more clearly acknowledge this wherever I can. ... I also plan to make a public confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors. I want my confession to be as fully informed as possible. ... And once God has given me a clear understanding of my sin and its impact on others, I anticipate that it will be beneficial for me to make a wider confession to the general public about God's correction and refinement in my life." (C.J., Email to Brent, June 24, 2011)

The next day, C.J. sent me a follow up note. He was already perceiving "a couple of areas of sin" related to the 15 areas of sin and he hoped the illumination continued.

From: C.J. Mahaney
Sent: Saturday, June 25, 2011 1:58 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Confidential

Brent,

I was reluctant to send this but decided to do so. I am not trying to impress you or convince you about what I am perceiving in my heart. But since I began to reengage with your documents a couple of days ago and with the help of others I have already perceived a couple of areas of sin I didn't clearly perceive previously. It's discouraging how slow and dull and blind I can be. My pride/self-righteousness are no doubt the root cause. Pathetic really.

Just wanted to inform you of the small incremental stuff that seems to be happening. My hope is that it continues.

Thanks for your patience and care my friend. Please keep praying for me.

With my gratefulness,
C.J.

Four days later, the pastors met with C.J. Keep in mind, they had already challenged him to go back again and dig deeper into the 15 crucial areas I brought to his attention. This was a follow up meeting. Joshua Harris wrote me about it below.

At this meeting, the pastors "asked hard ... and serious questions" about C.J.'s integrity and the integrity of the SGM Board. In this context, they "talked about categories of hypocrisy and deception and coercion." As a result, the pastors were "encouraged by the way CJ was deepening in conviction and processing his sin." All of this was recorded in official minutes.

Did C.J., CLC or SGM give you a copy of these minutes or did you ask for these minutes? Why? Because they contained a confession by C.J. regarding hypocrisy, deception and coercion. Like you said:

"Our responsibility, as we understand it, is to offer non-binding advice on the narrow question as to whether C.J. Mahaney is presently fit for ministry based on those sins to which he has already confessed." (Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund Jr., Carl Trueman, Preliminary Panel Report, July 29, 2011)

Was this crucial confession part of your assessment? Were you given the official minutes?

From: Joshua Harris
Sent: Friday, July 01, 2011 12:01 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Re: Update

Dear Brent,

Thanks for your patience. I have been thinking about you and Jenny and I pray this update will encourage you.

On Wednesday [June 29, 2011] we met as a [pastoral] team [i.e., Joshua, Grant Layman, Kenneth Maresco, Robin Boisvert, Brian Chesemore and Corby Megorden] with CJ—Bob [Kauflin], Gary [Ricucci], John L. [Loftness] and Jeff [Purswell] were also present [from SGM]. (My assumption is that you will see the minutes of this meeting down the road if you participate in the review process. But I think it would be best for it to come to you through the independent panel.)

The pastors asked hard questions. In a loving and I think gracious way they pressed CJ on the important issues. ... It was not always comfortable. He was sobered by the serious questions these issues raise about his integrity as well as the integrity of the SGM board. We talked about categories of hypocrisy and deception and coercion. We were encouraged by the way CJ was deepening in conviction and processing his sin while acknowledging a need for deeper conviction—one example of how he humbled himself was how he owned the issue with Larry. He was clear that what he did was wrong, sinful and a threat. ... Brent, your documents have helped me to face issues that I have not wanted to face. I told CJ and Dave and Jeff that I have played a part in failing to challenge CJ. If I had been more courageous 7 years ago he might not be at this same place. I feel that I have failed many people. And so I feel a great weight of regret and I know the Lord is disciplining me in this process too.

In Grace,
Joshua

Joshua's reference to "7 years ago" was a reference to our meeting with C.J. on August 20, 2004 and the months that followed. Even though Confession 1 and 2 occurred at this time, Joshua was still afraid to correct C.J. and hold him accountable as agreed upon at our meeting. Joshua's cowardice resulted in C.J.'s sins worsening and his heart hardening.

Back to the big picture. After a formal process of correction that began in December 2000, I thought we were finally making progress 11 years later in June 2011. I genuinely hoped "the small incremental stuff" continued. That proved not to be the case. C.J. was feigning humility. See [C.J.'s Foxhole Conversion](#) (Oct 13, 2011). He also knew I was planning on sending RRF&D, AFA, and CR to the SGM pastors (see CR, pp. 201-202) unless he repented. That was the impetus for his response to me above that "I have already perceived a couple of areas of sin I didn't clearly perceive previously."

Two weeks later on July 10, 2011 C.J. attended Covenant Life Church for the last time. A month later on August 12, he announced on the SGM website that he was leaving CLC for Capitol Hill Baptist Church to be with Mark Dever without ever talking to the CLC pastors. It was a complete shock to them. When they found out they asked him to stay. He was unwilling.

C.J. was “slow and dull and blind.” Even worse he was terribly angry and offended. His pronounced, pervasive and persistent pride was on full display before thousands of people. A decade of correction had produced no fruit. As C.J. says above, “Pathetic really.” And there was no doubt, his pride and self-righteousness were the root cause.

That aside for the moment, did you ask C.J. about these “couple of areas of sin”? Did you find out what new areas of sin he was finally acknowledging? Deceit, lording, hypocrisy? Did these new areas of sin factor in to your evaluation? Did C.J. give you this group of emails and the minutes or did he withhold them from you? I ask because they were part of what he confessed.

Did You Talk to Others Against Whom C.J. Confessed He Sinned?

These emails from C.J. regarding his “change of heart” were written on June 24 and 25, 2011. They were followed by Confession 5 which was his confession to Sovereign Grace Ministries on July 6, 2011. It covered the same ground as his first four confessions but in truncated fashion. He could have, and should have, confessed much more. In fact, he misled people. See [My Thoughts on C.J.'s Leave of Absence](#) (August 5, 2011). Nevertheless, here is what he confessed.

“Over the last few years some former pastors and leaders in Sovereign Grace have made charges against me and informed me about offenses they have with me as well as other leaders in Sovereign Grace. These charges are serious and they have been very grieving to read. These charges are not related to any immorality or financial impropriety, but this doesn’t minimize their serious nature, which include various expressions of pride, unentreatability, deceit, sinful judgment, and hypocrisy. I believe God is kindly disciplining me through this. I believe I have by the grace of God perceived a degree of my sin, and I have been grieved by my sin and its effects on others.” (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

He continues Confession 5 by telling everyone in SGM he wants to perceive and confess all his sin and needs prayer for illumination, conviction and godly sorry in order to be reconciled with those adversely affected by his sin.

“But I want to perceive and confess any and all sin I have committed. Although my experience of conviction has already started—and this is an evidence of God’s mercy—I’m sure there is more for me to perceive and acknowledge. ... My friends, I would greatly appreciate your prayers as I continue to walk through this process. Please pray that God would give me the gift of sight where I have been blinded by my sin and others have been adversely affected by my sin. Pray that I will be convicted and experience godly sorrow resulting in reconciliation where necessary and adjustments to my heart and leadership. Thank you for praying in this way for me.” (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

A week later on July 13, Dave Harvey, the interim President of SGM, formally announced your involvement.

“A preliminary panel will examine confessions that Mahaney has already made to determine if at present he is qualified to be a pastor and the president of Sovereign Grace.”

In Confession 5, C.J. makes reference to “others” who were adversely affected by his sin. Did you ever seek to quantify the number of people harmed by him? It went far beyond “the 12 of us who know him best.”

Let me put it another way. C.J. mistreated anyone who crossed him, corrected him or challenged him. That includes pastors, staff, church members or people at large.

At the time of your evaluation, I could literally have sent you the names of a hundred people badly mistreated by C.J. He refers to some of these people in his email to me on June 24, 2011 and in Confession 5 on July 6, 2011 and Confession 6 on July 10, 2011 which you possessed.

“Brent, I know my sin has deeply hurt you and others and I want to more clearly acknowledge this wherever I can. ... And once God has given me a clear understanding of my sin and its impact on others, I anticipate that it will be beneficial for me to make a wider confession to the general public about God’s correction and refinement in my life.” (C.J., Email to Brent, June 24, 2011)

“Over the last few years some former pastors and leaders in Sovereign Grace have made charges against me and informed me about offenses they have with me as well as other leaders in Sovereign Grace. These charges are serious and they have been very grieving to read. ... I believe I have by the grace of God perceived a degree of my sin, and I have been grieved by my sin and its effects on others. ... Please pray that God would give me the gift of sight where I have

been blinded by my sin and others have been adversely affected by my sin.” (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

“I have been grieved by my sin and its effects on others [former pastors and leaders]. I have had the opportunity to confess my sin to some of those affected in various ways by my sin. ... With the guidance of the SGM board, I would also hope to pursue reconciliation with former pastors of Sovereign Grace during this leave. ... For the past 5 years or so I have become increasingly aware of...the number of former Sovereign Grace pastors who are offended with me/SGM.” (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

“A few years ago I started to realize that there were a number of former SGM pastors who had offenses with SGM and/or me. ... There are certainly other examples I could give of these sin categories: examples that have hurt others, hindered my leadership, gone against what I’ve taught, and—most significantly—dishonored God. ... I bear a unique and primary responsibility for all that took place in 1997 [with Larry Tomczak], 2004 [with Dave Harvey, me and others], and on other occasions as well. ... But this evening I want to communicate my sorrow for my sin and leadership failures and their effects on others; in particular you, the church I love the most.” (C.J., Confession 6 to Covenant Life Church, July 10, 2011)

Here’s the question. Did you seek to understand the nature and extent of C.J.’s sin that hurt others, hindered his leadership, went against what he taught and most significantly, dishonored God? These confessions by C.J. are so serious. Did you take them seriously?

In other words, did you research his sins against the members and pastors in Covenant Life Church and “former pastors and leaders” in Sovereign Grace Ministries? That was your responsibility because it was a central part of his confession.

Did You Talk to Bo Lotinsky?

For example, did you seek to understand C.J.’s grievous sins against Bo Lotinsky? Did C.J. tell you about them?

Bo was the Executive Director of SGM from 1989-2002. He raised concerns for C.J.’s leadership. C.J. sinfully reacted. It took seven years of consistent correction by me, Dave Harvey, Steve Shank and others before C.J. was willing to fully ask Bo’s forgiveness in 2007.

The process of evaluating C.J.'s sins against Bo began in 2000. I was put in charge of the assessment. The first time I expressed concerns for C.J. sins against Bo, with Dave and Steve's complete agreement, C.J. "fired" me from the assignment, refused to talk with us, and attempted to shut down the process. We pressed on for seven years. I could literally write a book just about our dealings with C.J. as they relate to Bo. Seriously.

Here is Bo's assessment of C.J. Keep in mind, he was the Executive Director (i.e., chief operating officer) of SGM for 14 years. He worked closely with C.J. and knew him extremely well. And for your information, C.J. also removed the Executive Director before Bo when he raised similar concerns for C.J.'s character and leadership. Furthermore, the Executive Director after Bo, quit because he could no longer support C.J. due to three years of conflict related to the same concerns for his pride and abusive leadership. They were Bill Galbraith (1982-1988) and Pat Ennis (2003-2010). All of these men should have been interviewed by you because all of these men were alluded to in C.J.'s confessions.

From: Robert Lotinsky
Sent: Thursday, April 05, 2012 7:49 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Subject: Re: C.J. Like a Sheep without a Shepherd

Brent,

I appreciate your charitable approach to where CJ is with his view of his situation. At first, I thought it was all tongue in cheek until I came to your tenderness sentence.

Now I'll sound like I'm bitter, and I don't believe I am, when I say that I'm not sure I can agree with your diagnosis of his soul. I have come to believe that CJ genuinely doesn't really care about people. I know he would take great offense with this but I don't believe he has a shepherd's heart. I don't know if he ever did. He and Larry [Tomczak] are very much alike in this regard. I remember when I shared with Larry my musings about going back to Indiana to get back into pastoring. Nancy and I recall what he said because it surprised us. He said, "Why do you want to get back to changing people's diapers?" I always felt that he and CJ were two birds of the same feather in that regard. They were quick to hire Gary [Ricucci] then Robin [Boisvert] to handle the messy work of pastoring. Have you ever known CJ to pastor the lowly flock? He pastored the church vicariously through his pastoral team. Other than pastoring pastors and notables like John Piper and Mark Driscoll has he really spent much time pastoring? You would know better than I but I never saw it.

I can go as far as recognizing other leadership gifts in his life. God has clearly gifted him with that rare charisma that few leaders have. He's a gatherer of men. He can teach, though, like Larry, his skill in that area is waning and is becoming more narrow in scope. He is a strong leader though has glaring weaknesses that he doesn't seem to see and the enablers around him are either too afraid to point this out or are too blinded by an unhealthy loyalty to clearly see this.

His deep loyalty and love is reserved for his family. Beyond that his relationships are expendable. He would vehemently deny this. I know he doesn't believe this but look at the wake of broken relationships in his life. Take Steve Shank for example. Who has been more loyal than Steve even to the point where Steve willingly did CJ's dirty deed with threatening [i.e., blackmailing] Larry and Doris? And what is the status of that relationship? Steve has been marginalized. Why? Steve faithfully follows CJ's direction when overseeing the west and when it ends up in shambles and the Tomczak thing blows up who is the one who suffers the consequences? Poor Steve. I wish I could get Steve to be honest about how he's viewing all this now. I'm guessing he's suffering in secret like many of us had to.

CJ, if he is suffering, he is suffering because he has a twisted understanding of loyalty and a lack of understanding on what genuine Christian love is. Because of this he is unable to accurately understand why people have been "disloyal." If CJ knew what love really was and how it operates in the life of a believer, I don't believe most of these relationships would be broken. We didn't desert him, he deserted us. When we tried to biblically love him, he recoiled, marginalizing us and eventually viewed our love as disloyalty and concluded that we were untrustworthy and even viewed as a potential enemy.

I too feel sorry for my friend but not for the same reasons.

C.J. finally confessed but so much damage was done to Bo and his wife, Nancy. It was a tragedy like so many others. Bo experienced what everyone experienced who corrected C.J.

Dave Harvey put it this way in November 2004.

"To correct CJ, or to challenge his own self-perception, was to experience a reaction through e-mails, consistent disagreement (without seeking to sufficiently understand), a lack of sufficient follow-up and occasionally, relational withdrawal. Along with this, CJ was poor in volunteering areas of sin, temptation or weakness in himself." (Dave Harvey, Nov 11, 2004)

C.J. fully agreed with this assessment in his March 11, 2011 confession to me. To quote, "So you and Dave were accurate in the following assessment of me." That is, the one above.

Given this pronounced pattern of sin, Dave tried to convince me in January 2005 that we must relate to C.J. like a stereotypical teen. I completely disagreed. I wrote C.J. about this in *A Final Appeal*.

"Simply put Dave said 'we have to approach C.J. like a teenager.' He went on to explain his meaning. Like with a stereotypical teen, we must 'work to make our points' and 'lower our expectations.' In other words, when talking to you we needed to be as affirming and winsome as possible and be careful to avoid any language or expressions that might offend or tempt you. In addition, we should not expect you to behave or respond like a mature adult but like a difficult teen. Lastly, Dave said 'we don't have a position or role with C.J. like you do with a younger person [i.e. a child].' This last point was important. In Dave's analogy, parents have a position or role that allows them to direct and correct a child; they don't have the same role with a teenager. In other words, Dave was now advocating a dumbed down and "hands off" approach to you. I don't say this to shame you. Dave was trying to help me adopt a new paradigm for relating to you." (*A Final Appeal*, pp. 91-92)

Did You Talk to Ken Roberts?

Ken Roberts and the pastoral staff of North Coast Church in Ohio also serve as another example of C.J.'s "protracted pattern of behavior." Did C.J. tell you about his sins against them?

I wrote about it in *A Final Appeal* (pp. 76-81). You were provided this document. Ken was the senior pastor and well-respected in SGM. Notice his reference below to "twenty to thirty leaders" that had already left the movement by 1997 primarily due to C.J. and his leadership. Here's a small portion of what I wrote C.J.

"I [Brent] also think you [C.J.] would benefit from the feedback of men who have left the movement. What I have experienced is unusual in degree but it is not new or novel. Here is another paradigmatic example. I've chosen this one because it exemplifies several important points. ...

"The NCC [North Coast Church] pastors had some good advice a decade ago [1999]. It still holds true today [2010]. There is a pattern in your life of reacting with sinful judgments, withdrawing affection, separating relationally, speaking harshly due to resentment and anger, misrepresenting others, undermining

reputations, and dismissing input. Ken [Roberts] cites “twenty to thirty leaders” or “good men” who had this same kind of experience. The list is much longer today.

“If you [C.J.] really want input and candid observations from others concerning the movement, I [Ken] would recommend that you send a standardized letter to twenty to thirty leaders who have left the movement. Ask certain questions and request input on specific topics in this letter. I know every situation isn’t the same – guys leave for different reasons, under different circumstances, with different attitudes – I understand that. But I would venture to say that you would find very similar input for the movement through each of their own observations and experiences. Truth can be found from the observations of our friends, critics, and even our enemies.

“Since leaving the movement [in 1997], I have been amazed at the same observations and concerns for PDI from good guys who have left the movement, as well as national, and international leaders. Many of these observations have come to us unsolicited as people/leaders heard North Coast Church had left the movement. I think there are some very legitimate issues that are crucial and are very significant for PDI to pursue, discuss, and possibly address.” [Ken Roberts, April 1, 1999]

C.J.’s (and Dave Harvey’s) treatment of this pastoral team was paradigmatic and reprehensible. I still cringe. I was the one who addressed it with C.J. and Dave in 1997 and the years following. I wrote about it in *A Final Appeal*.

“I [Brent] fundamentally agreed with Ken and the pastors. I was concerned for you [C.J.] and brought these things to your attention. ... Your handling of the situation was one of the reasons I began to press for changes in your life in December 2000. Soon after this situation with North Coast Church, we were addressing the same kind of issues in your relationship with Bo Lotinsky. It took seven years of constant input before you fully acknowledged your sin against him [Bo].”

C.J. finally made a confession to the NCC pastoral team three years later in 2000 but it was woefully inadequate. Did you talk with Ken Roberts, his fellow pastors or the “twenty to thirty leaders” who left SGM?

Did You Talk to Larry Tomczak?

If I were asked to do an objective evaluation of someone's confession of sin, I would need to understand the nature of that sin and the extent of that sin. In C.J.'s case, that means talking to scores and scores of people. For example, Larry Tomczak.

Here's what C.J. confessed to Covenant Life Church regarding Larry.

"It grieves me to report to you that in a particular phone conversation I sought to coerce Larry to present his leaving as I thought was right. ... And when Larry did leave, my public announcement of his departure was self-righteous in attitude and critical of Larry at a very vulnerable time in his life. I highlighted his sin alone, and I was blind to my own." (C.J., Confession 6 to CLC, July 10, 2011)

In response to this you, Kevin and Ray wrote,

"The most serious charge in the documents is that, over a decade ago, C.J. Mahaney, in an effort to do what he thought would protect Sovereign Grace, threatened to break a promise, an act which appears in context to have been an attempt at coercion. This serious sin looks to us like an unfortunate lack of judgment, rather than a protracted pattern of behavior. It was clearly wrong, but C.J. Mahaney never acted upon it and has since apologized."

This "most serious charge in the documents" is found in *Concluding Remarks* (pp. 131-179) which you were provided. Your description is errant and inadequate. Little like the documented facts.

First, there is no question C.J. intentionally coerced Larry. It doesn't "appear" to be the case. It was the case.

Second, it had nothing to do with "an unfortunate lack of judgement." It was premeditated. C.J. planned on coercing Larry if he used doctrine as a reason for his departure.

Third, it was largely done out of rage, not an altruistic motive to protect Sovereign Grace. C.J. despised Larry.

Fourth, C.J.'s sins against Larry, Doris and Justin were most definitely part of "a protracted pattern of behavior." Not in degree, but in kind. C.J. silenced many individuals with anger and intimidation before and after the events of October 1997 when he attempted to blackmail the Tomczak's.

Fifth, C.J. didn't need to act upon his threat because his threat worked!

“Larry produced a six page paper dated October 22 [1997] offering his alternative explanation of his departure for those who inquired. Tomczak’s paper avoided the subject of doctrinal disagreement.” (Report on Larry Tomczak’s Departure from Sovereign Grace Ministries,” January 25, 2012)

Later, C.J. withdrew the threat primarily because he feared a lawsuit by the Tomczak’s who were consulting legal experts. For the next 13 years, C.J. refused to ask Larry and Doris’ forgiveness.

Sixth, you say nothing about C.J.’s “public announcement” and “self-righteous attitude” that he confessed. C.J. coerced Larry but he also dammed Larry in 1997 before 1,000 people at Covenant Life Church and stated he’d rather be “dead then do what Larry Tomczak is doing.” He also branded him a “liar” without qualification. Then he commended all the CLC pastors on the stage for being nothing like Larry. This resulted in a standing ovation for the pastors. And yet, none of those pastors were ever told about C.J.’s blackmail of Larry. They read about it for the first time in *Concluding Remarks* which was 14 years after the self-righteous condemnation. C.J. hid the coercion from all his fellow pastors claiming “it involved SGM not CLC.”

This condemnation was also part of a “protracted pattern of behavior. Again, not in degree, but in kind. In all six of his written confessions, C.J. references his adverse, arrogant, and self-righteous judgement of others. I pointed this out to C.J. “as another example” in *Concluding Remarks*.

“The way Larry was conducting himself on different fronts was wrong and misleading. But this serves as another example of how aggressively or angrily you can respond when you feel sinned against by someone, especially if you don’t like them, which was the case with Larry. You had renounced him as a friend. ... You didn’t want Larry to misrepresent his departure and put us in a bad light. You were concerned for your reputation. These two, bitterness and love of reputation, were the cause of your rage and compromise.” (*Concluding Remarks*, pp. 143-144)

Furthermore, these sins against the Tomczak’s were scandalous sins though you reject any such notion in your report. You say, “None of the sins to which he [C.J.] has confessed constitutes public scandal” including the ones against them. I could not disagree more.

Larry’s son, Justin, had confessed in detail to statutory rape under pressure from C.J. and Steve Shank who promised him absolute secrecy. Yet, C.J. threatened to publicly reveal details of Justin’s sin if Larry included doctrine as a reason for leaving the movement. If that is not scandalous, what is? Do you really disagree?

In your report, you referred to the coercion as “the most serious charge in the documents.” That being the case, it deserved careful investigation. That would have involved extensive interaction with Larry and listening to his recording of C.J.’s premediated blackmail on October 3, 1997. This meager confession by C.J. to Covenant Life Church doesn’t begin to capture the extent and seriousness of his sin against Larry. That being the case, did you talk to Larry in pursuit of an objective evaluation? Did you read the evidence provided you in *Concluding Remarks*?

As an aside, C.J. also said this about Larry in his confession to the church. It was all hype in an attempt to appear humble.

“Larry and I stood side by side and cofounded CLC. We stood side by side and cofounded SGM. Sin separated us, but I will have the sweet joy to stand side by side with him again in November when he joins us as a special guest at our Pastors Conference. I hope to do the same at CLC to welcome him back. Actually when we do this I think it would be appropriate if I stand off to the side. Larry has been a wonderful example of extending forgiveness.” (C.J., Confession 6 to CLC, July 10, 2011)

Three months later, C.J. had Dave Harvey tell Larry he was uninvited to the Pastors Conference because C.J. was once again offended at him. Nor was Larry ever invited to CLC. Their reconciliation was short lived. They remain unreconciled. Read [Harvey Tells Tomczak to Stay Home](#) (October 4, 2011).

Did You Talk to Ken Sande?

In his confessions to Sovereign Grace Ministries and Covenant Life Church, C.J. references the long term “correction, counsel and care” of Ken Sande.

“Just so you’ll know, I have also contacted David Powlison and Mark Dever and asked them to review the charges and provide me with their counsel and correction. I have enlisted them to serve me personally during this time and to ensure this process of examining my heart and life is as thorough as possible. And for the past year I have been the recipient of Ken Sande’s correction, counsel and care. That, I am grateful to say, will continue.” (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

“Throughout this time [March 2010-July 2011] I was also benefitting from the counsel of Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries.” (C.J., Confession 6 to CLC, July 10, 2011)

Here's my question. Did you ever talk to Ken Sande about the sins C.J. confessed to him? Why is this important? Because Ken knew about the horrors I experienced at the hands of C.J. and his surrogates. He was raising them with C.J. Therefore, he admonished C.J. to confess, "I'm guilty, so very guilty!!"

Here is Ken's email to C.J. from June 14, 2011. Take note of the date. It was two or three weeks before you got involved as a panel.

From: Ken Sande [mailto: ksande@peacemaker.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2011 6:04 PM
To: Amazgrace [C.J. Mahaney]
Subject: Message to Brent

Hi CJ,

Since Eric cleared up the issue about his email, I think the coast is clear for you to respond to Brent's earlier message. That message put Brent's heart on the table more openly than anything else he's written, so there is an opportunity for you to connect with him at the heart level, which is where this kind of conflict originates and festers. You'll need to put this in your own words, but here's how I would approach it.

I've [C.J.] reread this message several times, and each time it breaks my heart further. This paragraph in particular told me how much pain I've caused you:

"Indeed, I [Brent] have many sorrowful experiences, where 'conversations' turned out to be surprise attacks. Sometimes I was told these face to face meetings were for discussion; but, they turned out to be spiritual ambushes. The goal was not understanding. The goal was correction. So often, 'conversations' have not been conversations, but the means to intimidate, control or confront. They been used as guises for thrusting forth hidden agendas. Like a deer in the headlights, I've been stunned, frozen and frightened many times. They are a pretense for manipulation in an unrecorded, and therefore unaccountable context; the contents of which can later be denied or distorted with impunity."

I'm guilty, so very guilty!! All too often I have turned conversations with you into attacks and ambushes. All too often I've come to you not to seek understanding but to offer correction. All too often I have spoken to you in a way that intimidated, controlled, or confronted you.

All too often I've been more concerned about my agenda rather than discerning your needs and ministering to your soul. I am ashamed of how I have made you feel stunned, frozen, and frightened by my words. I'm ashamed of the many times I've approached you with the sting of the law rather than the hope of the gospel ... how often I've failed to practice with you the concepts I've preached from the pulpit ... how often I've sinned against the Lord and you by not treating you as I'd want to be treated. I can see why you feel manipulated and fearful.

Brent, your words in this email ripped at my heart, as well they should. But they have also helped me understand so much more clearly how I have hurt and wounded you. I am grieved more than I can convey by the realization of how I have injured you and contributed to your struggles. I am so very, very sorry.

I realize written words cannot undo the hurt I've caused you, but I still want you to know how your opening your heart and sharing your pain in this message helped me to understand and grieve over how I have affected you. I pray God will someday allow me to say this to you in person so that I can reinforce my sorrow in every possible way.

In addition, I want you to know that I will keep this email on my computer with a special desk top icon labeled "Before Confronting," and I will reread and pray over your words, especially when I am about to have a potentially difficult conversation with someone. I am praying that God will use your words to remind me of my blind spots and sinful tendencies, especially when I think I need to bring correction to another person.

Thank you for opening up to me like this. The wounds of a friend are true.

I [Ken] realize that this might seem "over the top," CJ, but at a time like this I've found it is important to match the emotional intensity of the person who has been hurt, to resist the temptation to qualify a confession or point out where the person contributed to the problem (which is something the Holy Spirit can do any time he wishes), and to indicate some kind of concrete action you will take to change the behavior that hurt the other person. If you can think of a better step than the computer icon, use that instead. (One of the greatest evidences of real reconciliation and healing would be for Brent to one day write and say, "About that "Before Confronting" icon ... delete it, brother! God's grace has covered all!)

By all means, edit so the words are really yours. But if you err, err in going too far rather than holding back.

Warmly in Christ,
Ken

You knew about Ken's long term involvement because C.J. noted it in Confessions 5 and 6. I have two questions. First, did you talk to Ken about the sins C.J. confessed to him? Second, did C.J. give you a copy of this email from Ken?

C.J. also boasted about Ken's ongoing correction, counsel and care.

"And for the past year I have been the recipient of Ken Sande's correction, counsel and care. That, I am grateful to say, will continue."

It did not continue. C.J. cut Ken off in predictable fashion because Ken was correcting him. He did the same with David Powlison. Ken wrote me just three months later.

From: Ken Sande
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 4:46 PM
To: Brent Detwiler
Cc: Ken Sande
Subject: Re: Confidential please

Thank you for confiding in me, Brent. I can understand all of your apprehensions, but I do hope you will participate. I have little contact or influence with SGM at this point, but I will do what little I can to encourage them to revisit the issue of how to constitute an objective and credible panel.

Please keep me informed of any developments in this regard. I'll keep praying for wisdom for all involved.

Ken

C.J. rejected Ken and his counsel even though he was the foremost Christian conciliator in the nation and a close friend. C.J. boasted about Ken's continuing "care, counsel and correction." Three months later, Ken writes, "I have little contact or influence with SGM." That is the story of C.J.'s life and that pattern is repeatedly referenced in his confessions.

Why Didn't You Talk to Me?

Though I was the central figure in all of the above, you did not talk to me. Can you explain why? You obviously interacted with C.J. and others. Why not with me? Were you only interested in C.J.'s perspective? Did you have no interest in understanding the true nature and extent of C.J.'s sin against me?

For instance, the kinds of things referenced in my email to C.J., Dave Harvey, Jeff Purswell and Joshua Harris that Ken Sande cites above. Only a lengthy conversation with me could convey the ethos and pathos of these horrific events from 2004 to 2009. They were numerous and not ancient. I still haven't written about most of them.

“Indeed, I [Brent] have many sorrowful experiences, where ‘conversations’ turned out to be surprise attacks. Sometimes I was told these face to face meetings were for discussion; but, they turned out to be spiritual ambushes. The goal was not understanding. The goal was correction. So often, ‘conversations’ have not been conversations, but the means to intimidate, control or confront. They been used as guises for thrusting forth hidden agendas. Like a deer in the headlights, I’ve been stunned, frozen and frightened many times. They are a pretense for manipulation in an unrecorded, and therefore unaccountable context; the contents of which can later be denied or distorted with impunity.” (Email to C.J., Dave, Jeff and Joshua, June 14, 2011 in [The Five Resolutions – July 13, 2011](#))

You said in your July 27, 2011 report, “We do not believe C.J. Mahaney’s confessed sins have disqualified him from Christian ministry” based upon “all that we have seen, heard, and read.” That suggests interaction with C.J. well beyond an objective evaluation of his written confessions taken at face value.

I’d like to know what you saw? What you heard? And what you read? I was never told and I was never given the opportunity to make comment. In fact, I first heard about your evaluation on July 13, 2011 when Dave Harvey posted on the SGM website. I was not consulted in the least. I had no idea who or how the evaluation was being done. Two weeks later, I read your conclusions and discovered your names having never interacted with you. How can that be? Do you believe your approach was just, impartial and without favoritism? Why no effort whatsoever to contact me?

No one in all of Sovereign Grace Ministries knew more about C.J.’s sins and the things he confessed than I did. In many respects, I was his confidant and pastor. That’s because I cared for C.J.’s soul for 25 years (1982-2007) and in a primarily way for 15 years (1991-2004).

Moreover, no one in all of Sovereign Grace Ministries experienced the effect of his sins more than I did. All six of C.J.'s confessions were solely, centrally, or largely about the sins he committed against me.

“And I would like to express my deep gratefulness to Brent, Dave and Steve for their kindness and patience. I think these sins have been most evident to you and sadly manifested the most toward you men.” (C.J., Confession 1, August 10, 2004)

Everyone would agree they were “manifested” toward me the most because of my role in his life. I was a faithful friend (Prov 27:5-6). For example, read [The Lesser to Greater Argument: A Classic Example of C.J. Mahaney's Abusive Leadership](#).

Can you help me understand why you talked to C.J. but never to me? Why was I not contacted in order to discuss C.J.'s confessions?

Did You Tell C.J. It Was Decidedly Unwise for Him to Take a Leave of Absence?

C.J. announced his leave of absence on July 6, 2011 in Confession 5. Your evaluation of his confessions began on July 13, 2011. He gave these crucial reasons for the leave.

“I've asked to take a leave of absence in order to give time to considering these charges, examine my heart, and receive the appropriate help from others. With the guidance of the SGM board, I would also hope to pursue reconciliation with former pastors of Sovereign Grace during this leave. I have stepped off the board and I will not be the President of Sovereign Grace Ministries during this period of examination and evaluation. ...

“This leave of absence will also help remove any impediment to the panel's exploration [a reference to a second panel after your initial panel], that could potentially arise if I remained in my current position, and it will enable me to fully cooperate in the process. ...

“So during this leave of absence I will not only devote all the appropriate and necessary time to the independent panel and the charges but also to doing what I can to identify where I have failed to lead us effectively in relation to pastoral evaluation and conflict resolution.” (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

Four months later at the Sovereign Grace Pastors Conference, C.J. told all the pastors and their wives that “numerous leaders outside of Sovereign Grace” told him it was “decidedly unwise” to step down? Were you one of them?

“After the leave of absence was announced, I was informed by numerous leaders outside of Sovereign Grace that this decision was decidedly unwise, that it would be perceived as an admission of guilt or some form of discipline, though neither would be true. And in retrospect, I do think this was an unwise decision on my part.” (C.J., Pastors’ Conference Family Meeting, Nov 9, 2011)

Do you allude to this counsel in your report to the SGM Board of Directors when you reference the leave of absence as “highly unusual”?

“We are aware that numerous other instances of sin have been alleged against C.J. Mahaney. We have not been asked to look at the evidence for these but would comment that it is highly unusual for a pastor to step aside prior to the institution and completion of a proper church judicial process.” (Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund Jr., Carl Trueman, Preliminary Panel Report, July 29, 2011)

C.J. did not “step aside” as an admission of disqualification. That is readily apparent in his explanation. He stepped aside (not down) as President so he could considering the charges, examine his heart, receive help from others, pursue reconciliation with former SGM pastors, avoid any conflict of interest, fully cooperate in the process of examination and evaluation, and devote all the time necessary to the independent panel, charges, and identifying where he failed to lead effectively in pastoral evaluation and conflict resolution.

Do you believe his leave of absence was “decidedly unwise”? If so, did you convey that to him?

Did You Tell C.J. None of His Sins Needed to Be Confessed in Public?

On June 24, 2011 as cited above in more detail, C.J. told me "I am committed to making a public confession." "I plan to make a public confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors." And "I anticipate that it will be beneficial for me to make a wider confession to the general public."

He refers to this promise on July 6, 2011 in his "Why I'm taking a leave of absence" letter to the pastors which was posted on the SGM website.

"And I am resolved to take responsibility for my sin and every way my leadership has been deficient, and this would include making any appropriate confessions, public or private." (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

C.J. was "committed" to make public confessions because he was "resolved to take responsibility" for his sins. Just the opposite happened. He broke his commitment and took no responsibility for his sin.

His meager confession to Covenant Life Church on July 10, 2001 was not at all satisfactory. He confessed his sins against Dave Harvey, Larry Tomczak and me. Not against the church. The pastors and church asked him to return to answer questions and take responsibility for his sins as revealed in the documents and in their experience with him over many years. Instead, he fled and never returned.

Why didn't he confess his sins as promised to the pastors, CLC, SGM or the general public? It appears your panel talked him out of it. Is that the case?

Remember what C.J. said about the upcoming Pastors Conference?

"I also plan to make a public confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors. My hope is to do this at our November [2011] conference although it's possible this could take place at an earlier date." (C.J., Email to Me & CLC/SGM Leaders, June 24, 2011)

Nothing of the kind happened. I received a transcript of his comments and wrote about it in [Transcript of C.J. Mahaney's Remarks at Sovereign Grace Ministries 2011 Pastors Conference](#) (Nov 12, 2011) and in [C.J.'s State of His Heart Message - Reflection on Personal Sins](#) (Dec 28, 2011). I summated this way.

"Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, C.J. did not ask forgiveness of the pastors for any aspect of his character, example, or leadership. He saw no need to ask the pastors forgiveness for anything. He was focused on the sins against

him, his overstatement of sin, and the “exploitation” of his sin by others. He was not focused on his sins against others including the pastors and the movement. My documents, blog posts, letters from others, and input from others resulted in absolutely no acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Not once does C.J. say ‘I was wrong, please forgive me.’”

In fact, C.J. told all the pastors and wives that one of men on your panel told him there was absolutely nothing “requiring a public confession” because his sins were “respectable ... routine and common.” Did you provide C.J. this “helpful critique?” Here are C.J.’s words.

“I think it might also be helpful to say something about the confession statement to Covenant Life and to you via a letter. ... After making this confession, I have received much helpful critique from a number of leaders about my confession and I have concluded that I did not serve you well with this confession. My confession has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and exploited. ...

“I left the wrong impression of my sin. In that confession, I was trying to convey that I take my sins seriously but I regret that my language conveyed that my sins were unusually serious. I do not think that, I have never thought that. ...

“One member of the first panel said this to me – quote: ‘I respect, C.J., how seriously you take the respectable sins but you left the impression that you did something scandalous. But nothing you confessed reached the level of public scandal requiring a public confession. Your sins are routine and common.’” (C.J., Pastors Conference, Nov 9, 2011)

C.J. confines his comments at the Pastors’ Conference to Confession 5 regarding his letter explaining “Why I’m taking a leave of absence” and Confession 6 to CLC regarding Dave, Larry and me. He makes no mention of Confessions 1-4.

Confession 5 was barely a confession. It was an explanation. Confession 6 was extremely limited in scope. I address this in my article, [No One Can Question C.J.'s Public Confession of Specific Sin - Really?](#) (Aug 3, 2011). C.J. combines these two confessions and says he “left the wrong impression of my sin.”

That aside, did you tell C.J. there was no need for Confession 5 and 6 or any future confessions because his sins were respectable, routine and common? Whoever gave this counsel contributed to the demise of Sovereign Grace Ministries.

After this counsel from the panel member, C.J. never again confessed to a single sin; only to “deficiencies in my leadership” on one occasion in his response to the report produced by Ambassadors of Reconciliation in April 2012. Thirty-five churches including Covenant Life Church left Sovereign Grace Ministries over the next 18 months. It was primarily due to C.J.’s obstinacy. More have left since then. The whole time this was happening, he was using your report to justify himself and acknowledge no sin.

Did you tell C.J. nothing he confessed required a public confession?

Did You Tell C.J. He Overstated His Sin and Thereby Confused People Outside of Sovereign Grace?

In the same context, a different panel member commended C.J. for his “genuine effort to be humble” in Confessions 5 and 6. C.J. also told the pastors and wives that he overstated his sins in these confessions and thereby confused “those outside of Sovereign Grace.”

“Another member of the panel said this: ‘I think you made a genuine effort to be humble. You overstate the level of offense and you confuse those outside of Sovereign Grace.’ I happen to think that is an accurate critique.” (C.J., Pastors’ Conference, Nov 9, 2011)

C.J. did not overstate his “level of offense” in Confession 5 and 6. He woefully understated his level of offense (i.e., his sin). That’s what confused thousands of people inside Sovereign Grace. Approximately half the members in Sovereign Grace churches left the movement in 2012 and 2013.

That too aside. Did you tell C.J. he overstated his sin in Confession 5 to CLC and Confession 6 to SGM and its pastors?

Do You Think the Panel Acted Ethically in Keeping with Its Narrow Assignment?

In the report, you state your concern for “an over-emphasis on introspection and confession” but make clear the panel was “not asked” or “in a position” “to render judgement on these matters.” Here’s what you wrote.

“To varying degrees, the three of us have wondered at times whether this present controversy was made worse...by an over-emphasis on introspection and confession. We were not asked to render judgment on these matters, nor are we in a position to do so. But in our minds it is hard not to look at the task

before us without noting the possibility that these broader factors may have played a role in this crisis.” (Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund Jr., Carl Trueman, Preliminary Panel, July 29, 2011)

In reality, however, two of the panelists did “render judgement” on C.J.’s “over-emphasis on introspection and confession.” They told C.J. he overstated his sin, his sins were not serious, and none of his sins required a public confession. How can this be?

In your report, you define your singular responsibility in explicit terms.

“Our responsibility, as we understand it, is to offer non-binding advice on the narrow question as to whether C.J. Mahaney is presently fit for ministry based on those sins to which he has already confessed.” (Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund Jr., Carl Trueman, Preliminary Panel, July 29, 2011)

Dave Harvey made the same point to everyone in Sovereign Grace Ministries. Your sole responsibility was to examine his confessions. He said,

“A preliminary panel will examine confessions that Mahaney has already made to determine if at present he is qualified to be a pastor and the president of Sovereign Grace.” (Dave Harvey, SGM Board of Directors announcement regarding C.J. Mahaney, July 13, 2011)

Dave Harvey made the same point to everyone in Sovereign Grace Ministries. Your sole responsibility was to examine his confessions. He said,

“A preliminary panel will examine confessions that Mahaney has already made to determine if at present he is qualified to be a pastor and the president of Sovereign Grace.” (Dave Harvey, SGM Board of Directors announcement regarding C.J. Mahaney, July 13, 2011)

You were not called upon to talk C.J. out of his confessions or tell him no past or future public confessions were necessary. Nevertheless, at least two of the three panelists felt no hesitation in rendering a judgement on C.J.’s “introspection and confession.” It is clear the panel did not withhold advice in private. Two of the panelist clearly went way beyond the narrow responsibilities they were assigned.

Do you think it was ethical for panel members to tell C.J. there was no need for public confession and that he overstated his sin given its job description and claim to objectivity? Your job was to study C.J.’s confessions at face value, was it not? How can two of the three panelists be talking him out of his confessions while pretending to be neutral parties in the evaluation of his confessions?

What Is Your Definition of “Above Reproach” in 1 Timothy 3:2 and “Blameless” in Titus 1:6-7?

This is a crucial question. The Scripture clearly teaches an elder, pastor or overseer must be above reproach (Gr., *anepileptos*) and blameless (Gr. *anengkletos*). In your report, you ask the question, “Is C.J. Mahaney “above reproach.” You answer in two ways.

“The term [above reproach] does not entail complete likeability or the absence of public accusations. If it did, Jesus could not have been a preacher; neither could Paul (or Luther or Calvin or just about anyone else).” (Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund Jr., Carl Trueman, Preliminary Panel, July 29, 2011)

I agree with this statement if by “public accusations” you mean false accusations but of course, that is not the case with C.J. Therefore, I don’t agree with your implication. The same applies with “complete likeability.” C.J. was justly accused and not “liked” because his pride adversely affected and harmed many people. So while I agree with the statement, I don’t agree with the implication that C.J. is like Jesus, Paul, Luther or Calvin.

Regardless, you say more about your definition of “above reproach.”

“The question is whether there are disqualifying sins impeding C.J. Mahaney’s ministry of the gospel. We do not see a pattern of egregious sins which would dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ should C.J. Mahaney continue to minister.” (Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund Jr., Carl Trueman, Preliminary Panel, July 29, 2011)

Egregious means “shocking, appalling, terrible, awful, horrendous, frightful, atrocious, abominable, abhorrent, outrageous.”

In context, you define “disqualifying sins” as “a pattern of egregious sins.” Based upon this definition you say, “Here is our conclusion: *We do not believe C.J. Mahaney’s confessed sins have disqualified him from Christian ministry.*”

You also ask the question, “Is there scandalous sins?” To this you answer, “None of the sins to which he has confessed constitutes public scandal.”

Scandalous means “disgraceful, shocking, outrageous, monstrous, criminal, wicked, sinful, shameful, atrocious, appalling, dreadful, deplorable, reprehensible, inexcusable, intolerable, insupportable, unforgiveable, unconscionable, and unpardonable.”

Having defined “above reproach” as not guilty of egregious or scandalous sins, you assert again,

“To reiterate: nothing to which he has confessed would appear to us to require his stepping aside...we affirm that C.J. Mahaney has not disqualified himself from ministry.” (Kevin DeYoung, Ray Ortlund Jr., Carl Trueman, Preliminary Panel, July 29, 2011)

When I study your report, I am left to conclude that an elder or overseer meets the qualifications of Scripture provided his sins are not egregious or scandalous. Is that the working definition you used with C.J.? Is that basis upon which you declared him fit for ministry? It certainly appears so.

This is confirmed by Dave Harvey’s official comment on the SGM website regarding your conclusion.

**Takeaways from our preliminary panel’s evaluation
August 5, 2011 by Dave Harvey**

On Tuesday I posted the preliminary panel’s evaluation of C.J. Mahaney’s qualification for ministry. ... In sum, they agreed with the board’s initial judgment that C.J. is qualified for the ministry of the Gospel, noting that C.J. had confessed his sins and that what he confessed did not “constitute public scandal.”

Moreover, C.J. agrees with your understanding. Here’s what he said at the Pastors’ Conference in November 2011. It was based upon his newfound positive assessment of himself. He was no longer “the worse sinner I know.”

“I don’t believe my sins are uncommon or scandalous or disqualifying. I have never believed that since the day the first document arrived. So I was grateful for the findings and rulings of the first panel in this regard and their agreement with that assessment.” (C.J., Pastors’ Conference Family Meeting, Nov 9, 2011)

In other words, because he sins were not uncommon or scandalous, they were not disqualifying. He agrees with your understanding and therefore your findings.

Here is my understanding. According to the best Greek lexicons the word translated “above reproach” (Gr. *anepileptos*) in 1 Timothy 3:2 means “not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; hence that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable, blameless, irreprehensible, unassailable” and the word translated “blameless” (Gr. *anengkletos*) in Titus 1:6, 7 means “that cannot be called to account, unprovable, unaccused, irreproachable.”

These words do not require a sinless life but they do require an exemplarily life that cannot be called into question because the elder is “just, devout” (Tit 1:8 NASB) and “upright, holy” (Tit 1:8 ESV, NIV). In fact, an elder or overseer must be much more. Altogether there are 21 different qualifications by my count in the Greek text when you combine 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

For instance, he must not be “arrogant,” “self-willed” or “overbearing” (Titus 1:7). Or for instance, he must be “gentle” and “not quarrelsome” (1 Tim 3:3).

In particular look at the proximate relationship between above reproach and arrogant in Titus 1:7. “For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant.”

The meaning of the text is clear. If a person is arrogant, he is not above reproach. Therefore, how can C.J. be above reproach when he emphatically and repeatedly said his pride was pronounced, pervasive and persistent? In his own words, he “did not even begin to perceive” his long standing pride until November 2010 which was after ten years of gracious correction by his closest friends.

Here is a non-exhaustive summary of what C.J. acknowledged in the confessions you were called to examine. More could be added.

He is hard to correct, arrogantly assumes his discernment is superior to that of those correcting him, quickly disagrees with those who correct him, doesn’t seek to understand correction when it is given; doesn’t ask questions, draw out, invite or encourage those bringing correction; quickly and self-righteously finds fault with those correcting him, sinfully judges those who bring correction, fails to see how this sinful behavior adversely effects those bringing correction, fails to perceive the adverse effects of his sinful words and decisions upon those who correct him, and does not tell those to whom he is accountable about the correction he receives from others because he arrogantly assumes their correction is inaccurate.

In light of this how could you declare C.J. above reproach given the standards of Scripture? Keep in mind, these were not occasional sins, they were persistent sins. Nor were they short term sins, they were long term sins. This is what C.J. confessed.

Do You Still Believe C.J. Is a “Model for Others to Follow”?

In your July 2011 report, you put C.J. forth as a model to follow. At the same time, you acknowledged, “We are aware that numerous other instances of sin have been alleged against C.J. Mahaney. We have not been asked to look at the evidence for these.” That

is true. There were “numerous other instances of sin.” If fact, far more numerous than you can imagine. You made that statement almost five years ago. Since that time, C.J.’s “hypocrisy and deception and coercion” have only continued.

I first wrote you and other national leaders on February 6, 2013 about the class action lawsuit against SGM alleging a conspiracy to commit and cover-up the sexual abuse of children, the ethical demise of SGM, the departure of many churches from SGM, the arrest of Nathaniel Morales for abusing boys in Covenant Life Church, etc. See [An Appeal to 77 National Leaders Regarding C.J. Mahaney](#). I have continued to send you (and them) hard evidence against C.J. and SGM over the past three years.

For example, did you read [Hush Fund Set Up by Top SGM Leaders to Meet the Demands of a SGM Pastor Whose Son Was Sexually Abused?](#) I sent it to you on April 1, 2015. It documents a scandal in March 2013 when C.J. (President), Mark Prater (Executive Director), Paul Buckley (Chairman of the Board), and Tommy Hill (Director of Administration & Finance) set up a “hush fund” at the recommendation of their lawyer, Chip Grange, to silence a family whose young son was repeatedly sodomized by the older son of the senior pastor! Of course, the sexual abuse was criminal but so too the fraudulent use of tax deductible contributions in order to keep the family from suing. I have reported it to auditors and law enforcement.

If you have not read this article, you really must. It illustrates the corruption that has come to characterize leaders in Sovereign Grace. It is genuinely shocking – that is, egregious and scandalous! And as you read it, take note of their mantra. Never admit fault! You need not worry, there is no overemphasis on introspection and confession. SGM is about covering up.

And need I add that C.J. angrily left Covenant Life Church, abruptly relocated Sovereign Grace Ministries to Louisville because of offense, divided the denomination down the middle and cut off the vast majority of his closest and most esteemed friends because they disagreed with him. Nothing respectable, routine or common about it! And of course, C.J.’s covering up the sexual abuse of children in CLC and SGM by refusing to report suspected or known abusers to law enforcement. In the coming months, I will complete a book detailing the evidence. Moreover, a new lawsuit will be filed in the near future.

Therefore, given all that has transpired since your report in July 2011, do you still believe C.J. is fit for ministry and a model to be followed? Do you believe he meets the qualifications of Scripture?

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach.

Titus 1:6-7 An elder must be blameless...an overseer...must be blameless.

If the answer is no, I hope you will be open and honest with me, Kevin and Ray, Sovereign Grace Ministries, and evangelicals at large who trusted your assessment.

You should also know that Sovereign Grace Ministries still promotes your endorsement of C.J. on its website in "Findings from our Preliminary Panel."

See <http://www.sovereigngrace.com/sovereign-grace-blog/post/findings-from-our-preliminary-panel>.

Lastly, you should know that Sovereign Grace Ministries long ago removed C.J.'s confessions from their website. I wrote about it in [A Few Bible Thoughts about Online Confessions](#) (Nov 23, 2011). I also preserved his written confessions in [The Confessions of Saint C.J. \(Part 1\)](#) (Feb 4, 2012) and [The Confessions of Saint C.J. \(Part 2\)](#) (Feb 5, 2012).

Carl, I believe you are a man of integrity who is submitted to the authority Scripture. Therefore, I hope you will answer my questions, be open to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and reevaluate your position in light of Scripture.

Here are the main questions I have asked for your convenience. Most can be answered "yes" or "no." Only a few necessitate a brief explanation. Please feel free to call me at (704) 497-7986 if you'd prefer to share your answers in a conversation.

1. Were you given and did you evaluate all six of C.J.'s formal confessions?
2. Did you take seriously C.J.'s confession that he remained blinded by pride for over 10 years despite constant correction?
3. Did you ask C.J. about the "couple areas of sin" he perceived in June 2011?
4. Did you talk to others against whom C.J. confessed he sinned?
5. Did you talk to Bo Lotinsky?
6. Did you talk to Ken Roberts?
7. Did you talk to Larry Tomczak?
8. Did you talk to Ken Sande?
9. Why didn't you talk to me?

10. Did you tell C.J. it was decidedly unwise for him to take a leave of absence?
11. Did you tell C.J. none of his sins needed to be confessed in public?
12. Did you tell C.J. he overstated his sin and thereby confused people outside of Sovereign Grace?
13. Do you think the panel acted ethically in keeping with its narrow assignment?
14. What is your definition of “above reproach” in 1 Timothy 3:2 and “blameless” in Titus 1:6-7?
15. Do you still believe C.J. is a “model for others to follow”?

I write this for the good of the gospel and the well-being of Christ’s church. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Brent

##

It is now four to five months later and I never heard from any of these men. I sent them this follow-up letter today.

From: Brent Detwiler [mailto:abrentdetwiler@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, September 9, 2016 1:43 PM

To: Carl L. Trueman <ctrueman@wts.edu>; Kevin DeYoung <pastor@urcstaff.org>; jenny@urcstaff.org; Ray Ortlund office@immanuelnashville.com

Subject: Follow Up to 15 Questions Regarding Vindication of C.J.

Importance: High

Ray, Carl, and Kevin,

This past spring, I separately sent each of you 15 questions regarding your vindication of C.J. Mahaney in July 2011. I hoped those questions would cause you to search your hearts and result in an acknowledgement of wrong doing. They were primarily for your benefit. I knew the answer to most all of them.

Having received the questions, you refused to answer the questions. That is typical of those who have protected C.J. Any answers would have been incriminating. Instead, you hid behind a wall of silence like C.J. has done time after time instead of being open,

honest and accountable. That's because your "Findings from the Preliminary Panel" could not stand up to scrutiny.

Nothing about your examination of C.J.'s confessions was objective and nothing about your findings were just. You didn't even post or link C.J.'s confessions in your report so people could read them and then compare them to your conclusions. Of course, SGM has destroyed all his confessions because they are incriminating and contradict your findings.

Furthermore, any objective examination would have involved extensive interaction with me. Yet, you had absolutely no interest in contacting me. You remained in hiding while doing your work. I didn't even know your identity until Dave Harvey posted your findings. If I had, I would have contacted you and when I contacted you I would have asked for the opportunity to meet. When we met, I would have walked you through each of C.J.'s confessions in order to help you understand the true nature and full extent of his sins. Obviously, you were not interested in the truth and SGM was not interested in you meeting with me. It was all kept from me. Yet, all the while you were interacting with C.J. and others who were putting forth a false and favorable narrative. That is so corrupt.

Nor did you seek to interact with other keys leaders against whom C.J. had badly sinned (e.g. Bo Lotinsky, Pat Ennis, Bill Galbraith, Larry Tomczak, Ken Roberts, to mention a few). That is so wrong! C.J. confessed that he seriously sinned against many people over many years and you made little if any effort to contact them. That too is corrupt.

Most of all, I shudder when I contemplate the extent to which you were willing to violate the teaching of Scripture. You men are pastoral theologians. You know "above reproach" (Gr., ἀνεπιλημπτον) and blameless (Gr., ἀνέγκλητος) in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 mean unassailable and deservedly so because all the other virtues mentioned in the text are present in an overseer's life. That was not, and is not, true about C.J. Far from it!

And yet, contrary to your knowledge of Scripture, you intentionally watered down the meaning of these words in order to accommodate C.J. In your report, you declared C.J. "above reproach" because you found no "pattern of egregious sins." Egregious means atrocious, abhorrent, and outrageous. Brothers, you know that is not the standard of Scripture. It is much higher. You willfully distorted God's Word in order to keep C.J. in ministry. You did not operate under the axiom of *sola Scriptura*.

For example, C.J. repeatedly and emphatically confessed that his pride was "pronounced, pervasive and persistent." He first confessed it in August 2004. He was still confessing it up until your investigation in July 2011. By the way, that is egregious

in my book for an overseer. Pride was the first sin and it is the most serious sin. That didn't matter to you even though Titus 1:7 says, "For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant." C.J.'s pride was life dominating and that is what he confessed. It is also what so many people experienced. That pride was the root of many other disqualifying sins which he also confessed. This example alone, totally invalidates your findings.

In your report, you explicitly stated your assignment.

"Our responsibility, as we understand it, is to offer non-binding advice on the narrow question as to whether C.J. Mahaney is presently fit for ministry based on those sins to which he has already confessed."

You were supposed to righteously judge C.J. based on the sins he confessed. You were not supposed to talk him out of the sins he confessed! And yet that is exactly what you did! And you did this at the very time his best friends and fellow pastors (e.g., Joshua Harris, Robin Boisvert, Kenneth Maresco, Grant Layman, et al.) were helping him see his sins and were finally making progress or so it seemed. So too were Ken Sande and David Powlison, both close friends and esteemed counselors. All of us were confronting C.J. on some combination of his pride, abuse of authority, dishonesty, hypocrisy, deception and coercion. We knew C.J. You did not!

People at large would never have discovered your deceitful undertaking except for the fact that someone recorded C.J.'s comments to the SGM pastors and wives in a closed session at the Pastor Conference in November 2012.

During this time, C.J. told everyone that one of you told him his sins were respectable, routine and common. Nothing serious. Nothing disqualifying. Therefore, he should never have confessed to SGM or Covenant Life Church. Furthermore, this same person told him he did not need to make any public confessions in the future. I believe he was referring to you Kevin.

"One member of the first panel said this to me - quote: 'I respect, C.J., how seriously you take the respectable sins but you left the impression that you did something scandalous. But nothing you confessed reached the level of public scandal requiring a public confession. Your sins are routine and common.'" (C.J., Pastors Conference, Nov 9, 2011)

This counsel was ruinous to C.J. and destructive to SGM. The three of you began your panel work around July 14. Three weeks earlier, C.J. expressed his commitment to confess his sins to the SGM pastors and anticipated doing the same with the general public. This could have made a world of difference provided his confessions were sincere. Here's what C.J. was planning to do just before you men got involved.

“Thank you [Brent] for your affection and care. I trust you know I feel the same toward you. In answer to your question, yes, I am changing my mind in regard to your request to give a more thorough response to your documents. ... The men around [me] have challenged me to go back again and seek to dig deeper into the issues you’ve brought. ... I also plan to make a public confession to the Sovereign Grace pastors. My hope is to do this at our November conference although it’s possible this could take place at an earlier date. ... And once God has given me a clear understanding of my sin and its impact on others, I anticipate that it will be beneficial for me to make a wider confession to the general public about God’s correction and refinement in my life.” (C.J., Email to Brent, June 24, 2011)

And just one week before you started your supposed assessment of his confessions, C.J. told SGM the following. You talked him out of this in short order.

“And I am resolved to take responsibility for my sin and every way my leadership has been deficient, and this would include making any appropriate confessions, public or private.” (C.J., Confession 5 to SGM, July 6, 2011)

That was the plan. You blew it up with your uninformed and ungodly counsel which was not in keeping with your assignment. C.J.’s sins were serious. Very serious. And they effected thousands of people to whom he rightly needed to confess. But to you, his sins were no big deal. All respectable.

You men shipwrecked the work of God that appeared to be going on in C.J.’s heart. The duly authorized CLC pastors were finally confronting him and making apparent progress. So too Sande and Powlison. None of you remotely knew C.J. like we did having worked with him for two or three decades. You undermined everything we were doing and everything the Lord was doing in C.J.’s heart.

Kevin, you recently wrote,

“In short, the idea behind “above reproach” and “well thought of” is largely the same: the elder-pastor-overseer must live a life of Christlike character and virtue that is not easily refuted by those who know him best. The closer you look, the better the mature Christian appears.” (Kevin DeYoung, What Does It Mean for an Overseer to be “Above Reproach” and “Well Thought of by Outsiders?”, April 26, 2016)

Exactly! Those who knew C.J. best found it easy to refute the notion he was above reproach. The closer we looked, the more unChristlike his character appeared. For example, the CLC pastors were horrified by what they discovered about C.J.’s sins in

Concluding Remarks. C.J.'s lack of virtue was reproachable in so many different ways. In response to your post on The Gospel Coalition website, I left you this comment.

“Kevin, you know C.J. is not considered “above reproach” by the vast majority of his closest friends who worked with him for 2-3 decades but left Sovereign Grace Ministries as a matter of conscience when C.J. refused to repent of his pride, deceit and abusive leadership. You also know that over 100 pastors, 300 plus small group leaders, 40 churches including his home church (Covenant Life Church) and approx. 12,000 members from SGM churches left primarily because of his ungodly example. How do you know? I have sent you all the objective evidence demonstrating the veracity of these facts. Here is the truth, thousands and thousands of people, based upon their own experience and observations, know C.J. falls far short of the qualifications in 1 Tim 3 and Tit 1. Your implication that C.J. is like Jesus or Paul is a blatant and intentional assault on the truth. You absolutely know that he is not thought well of throughout the United States and parts of the world for very legitimate reasons. Well established reasons, rooted in facts, evidence and careful documentation (see <http://abrentdetwiler.squarespace.com/>). No one is more of a reproach in the Body of Christ today than C.J. Mahaney. But Kevin, you know all of that! Therefore, your post is a testimony to your own deceit by implying otherwise.”
(Brent Detwiler, April 28, 2016)

I also wrote [Kevin DeYoung's Lack of Integrity Obvious in Reproof of Todd Pruitt & Defense of C.J. Mahaney as Above Reproach Like Jesus & Paul](#) (May 1, 2016) in response to your post.

Kevin, you did not act with integrity on the Preliminary Panel, in writing the post above, or in the post you wrote with D.A. Carson and Tim Keller about the conspiracy to cover up child sexual abuse in CLC and SGM. In the latter case, you totally vindicated C.J. but never even read the allegations of fact against him in the Second Amended Complaint (i.e. lawsuit). You just believed whatever falsehoods C.J. and his surrogates told you. Read [Conclusive Evidence Don Carson, Kevin DeYoung, & Justin Taylor Never Read Sex Abuse Lawsuit against C.J. Mahaney](#) (October 29, 2014).

There is no question C.J. covered up child sexual abuse despite his audacious denial. By that I mean, he and his staff intentionally did not report known or suspected child abuse to law enforcement. That was their policy as stated by Robin Boisvert, Corby Megorden, and Joshua Harris. It was all handled internally and covered up. People in harm's way were not warned. As a result, abusers like convicted felon Nathaniel Morales went on to abuse and destroy many lives. C.J. should be in jail. Pray I finish up my book in the next few months.

Everyone came to the Pastors Conference in November 2011 fully expecting C.J. to make a humble confession given his public commitment to do so. Instead, he spent the entire time justifying himself and then ended his message admonishing the pastors to return home determined to church discipline “slanderers.” That is, those who were raising issues regarding C.J.’s character and the obvious corruption in SGM. The real C.J., not the pretend C.J., was on full display. Read [C.J.’s State of His Heart Message - Reflection on Personal Sins](#) (December 29, 2011).

C.J.’s refusal to humble himself at the Pastors Conference was one of the most grievous moments in the history of SGM. I have no doubt it aroused the anger of God. Quickly, the discipline and opposition of the Lord increased. Over the next three years, the majority of C.J.’s best friends left the movement as did 40 churches. Giving declined by 67% or 3.3 million per year. The budget dropped from 6.6 million to 2.8 million. Read [Financial Audit Ushers in No Happy New Year for Sovereign Grace Churches, Incorporated](#) (January 1, 2015). So too, a major lawsuit was brought by 11 plaintiffs alleging a conspiracy to commit and cover up the sexual abuse of children in CLC and SGM. Proverbs 11:1-3 applies.

[1] The Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him. [2] When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. [3] The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

C.J. also attributed this statement to another one of you on the Preliminary Panel during his remarks at the Pastors’ Conference.

“Another member of the panel said this: ‘I think you made a genuine effort to be humble. You overstate the level of offense and you confuse those outside of Sovereign Grace.’ I happen to think that is an accurate critique.” (C.J., Pastors’ Conference, November 9, 2011)

Ray, I believe C.J. is referring to you. Here is what you said a month before the Pastors Conference in a post on The Gospel Coalition website.

“I have grieved for C. J. Mahaney in recent months, as he has been openly spoken against. I have never in my life witnessed a campaign of slander on such a scale as that aimed at C.J. This behavior is clearly unbiblical and therefore self-discrediting. To those few criticisms which rightly struck home to C.J.’s conscience, he has responded humbly. He has taken those accusations before the Lord, in community with other responsible men, and has received them as he believes is right in the Lord’s sight, with repeated attempts to reconcile with his accusers. No one could reasonably ask for more. Personally, it appears to me that C. J. has even over-confessed to his critics.” (Ray Ortlund, “C.J. Mahaney,” October 14, 2011)

Nothing in this paragraph is true. First, it was biblically right and necessary to openly speak against C.J. as a matter of church discipline. Read *Eight Reasons Why Sending Out "The Documents" Was Not Slanderous but Necessary* (January 3, 2012).

See <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/970485/15864159/1325684317060/Part+8+-+Eight+Reasons+Why+Sending+Out+the+Documents+Was+Not+Slander+But+Necessary.pdf?token=5auCutS%2BNRQs5y4UiRgoOsHOMRA%3D>

For over a decade, we corrected C.J. in private but he never repented. He never changed. In fact, his sins grew progressively worse - especially his lying, deceit and hypocrisy. The first and second steps of Matthew 18:15-17 had been followed countless times with C.J. The pastors at large in SGM had to be told about his longstanding patterns of serious sin so they could also appeal for his repentance. C.J. didn't listen to them either. A hundred pastors left the movement.

Second, it is pure spin to say, "To those few criticisms which rightly struck home to C.J.'s conscience, he has responded humbly." Not true. In the end, C.J. didn't respond humbly to any of the charges against him and this was due in large part to your ungodly counsel. Instead of humbling himself, he exalted himself and turned against those correcting him. Moreover, he did a complete about face. As a result of your input, he told all the pastors and wives he never thought his sins were serious, never thought they were disqualifying in the least, never should have confessed them in public, and never should have taken a leave of absence. C.J.'s arrogance at the Pastors Conference played a major role in the demise and fracturing of SGM. He hardened his heart and the Lord did the same.

It is laughable that you, Ray and Carl wrote, "No one can question that C.J. Mahaney has specifically confessed his sins, both publicly and privately. Therefore this is not a Matthew 18 situation requiring formal discipline. The brother has been won over." C.J. was never won over to repentance and he never confessed to any of the crucial sins below.

January 21, 2011

C.J.,

Before we meet, I must understand far more clearly how you view my assessment. For instance, in what you've written [in Confession 3] you acknowledge [1] no lack of integrity, [2] no deceit or [3] hypocrisy, [4] no concealment or [5] cover-up, [6] no damage control, [7] spin or [8] manipulation, [9] no partiality or [10] favoritism, [11] no abuse of authority or [12] lording, [13] no need for a confession to the movement or the leaders, [14]

no wrong doing by others [i.e., C.J.'s surrogates], [15] no realization of how your sinful judgments negatively influenced many others, etc.

Brent

Furthermore, what C.J. did confess was due to worldly sorrow. C.J.'s sorrow never led him to repentance resulting in the transformation of his character because it was worldly sorrow, not godly sorrow. Read [C.J.'s Foxhole Conversion](#) (October 13, 2011). That was ever so apparent in how he left Covenant Life Church and in many other events and episodes that followed.

2 Corinthians 7:8-11 [8] Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it – I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while – [9] yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. [10] Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. [11] See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.

Third, you talk about grieving in “recent months.” I take that to mean the last three months. You began your panel work around July 14. That means you grieved about the “campaign of slander” from the time I sent out *The Documents* on July 6 or soon thereafter. The point is obvious. You had already dammed me and *The Documents* in your heart. There was never a chance you would do an objective evaluation of C.J. There was never a chance you would hear me out. I was *diabolos* to you.

A man of integrity would never have accepted the invitation from the SGM Board and then pretended to be a neutral party. Everyone on the panel should have been vetted in order to make sure none of you had any bias towards me or any favoritism towards C.J. Neutrality should have been a requirement. This is another example of C.J. stacking the deck in a corrupt manner. The same thing happened five months later during the Three Panel Review in December. It was horrible beyond description. Far worse than your Preliminary Panel. Read [Whitewashed Tombs](#) (January 28, 2012).

Fourth, C.J. didn't take the “accusations before the Lord, in community with other responsible men.” No, no, no. Absolutely not! C.J. was in community with Covenant Life Church. That was his home church since it began in 1978. After his meager confession before the church on July 10, 2011 concerning sins against me, Dave Harvey and Larry Tomczak; he abruptly and angrily fled CLC never to return. He never talked to any of the pastors-elders-overseers in the church about his underhanded plans to leave. No, he planned it and executed it behind their backs. It included fleeing to Mark Dever's church where he preached and was treated like royalty.

Dever allowed this to happen contrary to everything he has taught about the rule of elders and commitment in the local church. It was also contrary to everything C.J. has taught. People throughout SGM were stunned by his brazen hypocrisy. The CLC pastors wanted C.J. to stay. They knew his bitter departure would do great harm. It did. C.J. remains unreconciled to thousands of people who were members of CLC. After his vague and non-specific confession to CLC on July 10, 2011, Joshua Harris asked C.J. to return at the request of members so members could ask him questions regarding the charges in *The Documents*, etc. He refused. C.J. has never asked forgiveness of CLC for any of sins he committed against them.

Moreover, the responsible men were me, Joshua Harris, Kenneth Maresco, Robin Boisvert, Grant Layman, Ken Sande and David Powlison. Not Mark Dever. C.J. rejected our input and then cut us off as friends. We were the men speaking truth into his life.

Fifth, C.J. not only refused to reconcile with his church and his pastors, he also refused to reconcile with many other pastors in SGM, many former pastors in SGM, and many members from SGM churches he offended over the years. Ray, your defense of C.J. is ill-informed propaganda. In fact, C.J. was so angry at Covenant Life Church and its pastors, he even pulled SGM out of the CLC facility and moved its headquarters to Louisville under the false pretense of a lower cost of living. It was all a ruse. Read, [Sovereign Grace Ministries' Relocation Announcement](#) (April 21, 2012). The 17,000 square foot state of the art section of the building acquired by SGM remains empty to this day.

Sixth, C.J. never “over-confessed to his critics.” He always confessed as little as possible like Bill and Hillary Clinton until mounting evidence or impending consequences forced him to confess more. And when he did confess it was often in writing, not in person. This despite many appeals to talk in person. Those are the facts! Read [C.J.'s Foxhole Conversion](#) (October 13, 2011).

Ray, Kevin, and Carl, I assume you were in contact with Al Mohler and/or Ligon Duncan before accepting your assignment. Is that true? In any case, the three of you were well aware they condemned me and commended C.J. Their genuinely slanderous comments were widely dispersed and reported on leading up to your work on the Preliminary Panel. Everyone in the evangelical and Reformed world was warned. Mohler and Duncan had spoken. I can't imagine you ever disagreeing with these two powerful leaders. Your “findings” on July 27 simply echoed their “findings” on July 12.

“There is nothing disqualifying in terms of anything that is disclosed in [*The Documents*]. It's just evidence we knew all along, that C.J. is human but a deeply committed Christian and a visionary Christian leader. Detwiler has an

obvious vendetta against C.J.” (Al Moher, The Courier-Journal newspaper, July 12, 2012)

“It would have been very easy for the leadership of SGM to ignore and dismiss these charges [in *The Documents*], because so many of them are so evidently self-serving and spurious accusations.” (Ligon Duncan, Reformation 21 magazine, July 12, 2012)

Ray, you need to understand C.J. was spoken against but he was not slandered! You should not be grieving except for his sins. No, he was spoken against like the prophets spoke against Judah and Israel. Or like John the Baptist and Jesus spoke against Judaism. Or like Nathan spoke against David. Or like Paul spoke against Peter. C.J. has not been slandered but he has been spoken against by thousands of people who have observed and experienced the injurious effects of his leadership and sins. You were outsiders and you didn't seek to overcome your ignorance by interacting with those who were insiders to C.J.'s life and ministry and were willing to speak up rather than cover up.

You men were called to accept C.J.'s confessions of sin at face value. That alone was the basis for determining his fitness. In other words, it was not your place to determine whether C.J. over confessed or under confessed or should confess more. That was not your assignment! You were to accept C.J.'s confessions as true and accurate and then determine on that basis alone whether he was qualified for ministry. You strayed far from your assignment!

This should have been made clear in your report to the SGM Board which was made public on the SGM website. People were deceived by you. They had no idea you were talking C.J. out of his confessed sins rather than investigating his confessed sins in an objective manner. You should have been open and honest and said something like the following in your report.

“During our evaluation of C.J.'s confessed sins, we concluded 1) his sins were not serious though we didn't talk to key people he sinned against, 2) he should not have stepped down as Chairman of the Board and President of SGM, 3) he confused people inside and outside of SGM when he did by giving the impression he might not be above reproach, 4) he wrongly over confessed his sins, 5) he should not have confessed to SGM, 6) he should not have confessed to CLC, 7) he does not need to confess anything to anyone in public in the future, 8) we did not stick to our assignment, we went way beyond it, 9) in fact, we persuaded C.J. that all of these things were true, 10) as a result of our counsel, C.J. no longer thought his sins were serious or reproachable, 11) this was contrary to what he was hearing from Joshua Harris, Kenneth Maresco, Grant Layman, Robin Boisvert, Ken Sande, David Powlison and Brent, 12) as a

result of our counsel, C.J. reneged on his promise to confess his sins to the pastors and public, 13) we did not talk to Brent because we considered him a slanderer, 14) we did talk to C.J. at length to get his version of events, 15) we did our work in secret so Brent wouldn't know our identity and contact us, 16) we are being open and honest now because we do not want to deceive people into thinking we did what we were asked to do."

Carl, you recently referenced C.J., though not by name, on your Mortification of Spin podcast titled "Bully Pulpit: Abusive Pulpits" and said he was disqualified from being a church leader. Five years ago, you, Ray and Kevin said he was fit for ministry, above reproach and a model to be followed by the Body of Christ. What changed your mind? How did he go from qualified to disqualified? This is a question being asked around the country. You should answer it openly and honestly.

See <http://www.alliancenet.org/mos/podcast/39712>

For example, it came up on The Wartburg Watch blog. Your fellow podcaster and blogger, Todd Pruitt told everyone you did not owe them an answer. I think Todd is wrong. You have staunchly defended C.J. in the past. You featured his interview of you on your Westminster page for years. What convinced you to speak against him now? You know, "slander" him.

I wrote you in April before I wrote Ray and Kevin in May. That's because I thought you might answer my 15 questions. I was wrong. You too are unwilling to mortify spin. By the way, SGM continues to use your report to justify C.J. It remains on the Sovereign Grace website.

The report you men wrote in July 2011 was deceptive. You didn't tell the people inside or outside SGM what was really going on during your supposed examination of C.J.'s confessions. Nor did you follow the teaching of Scripture. No one can study C.J.'s confessions from August 2004 to July 2011 and conclude he met the qualifications of Scripture. It is exegetically and existentially impossible!

Never has no much corruption surrounded one man certainly since the advent of modern evangelicalism in the 1940's. You are a part of that sordid history. I sincerely hope and pray you recover your integrity between now and the Savior's return or your departure to be with him.

Please share all our correspondence with your elders. I would like to interact with them. Please convey that request to them. I'd also love to talk with each of you about the 15 questions and what I have written here. I hope you will finally contact me.

