

Letter to Overseers

Jul 2

Thank you for your care and thoughtfulness. I'll make it as plain as I can from my perspective. I will also reply all as you suggested and I understand my email may be forwarded or seen outside of this group, including being posted in other forums. However, what I'm going to say is what I would say to any who ask so I feel I can be transparent to this small group of people.

Ray and Barry, the overseers they oversee, and the overseers in place after place, have actively condoned and facilitated child sexual assault and sexual assault by their actions. They have knowingly moved people or reintegrated people into close contact with other people in this fellowship when they had far more than sufficient evidence to understand the harm that had already occurred and would be almost certain or absolutely certain to occur again. The pleading of ignorance or of a lack of understanding by these men in letters and public proclamations of what child sexual assault and sexual assault is and how to address it is transparently false. It is a lie that borne of a heart that will not acknowledge what we have personally witnessed them knowing in the past. And further, surely, if the Spirit of Jesus would teach us anything, it would be not to have sex with children or to use the position of the ministry to gain access to children, women, and men to sexually assault them. Honestly, it does not take MinistrySafe training to teach us what the Spirit of Christ is already plainly teaching, let alone what even natural human care would teach us. There have been enough people already removed from the ministry explicitly for those reasons just in our current crisis, with allegations known to the overseers and many others dating back decades, that these continued assertions of ignorance are now completely and publicly without merit.

I am looking for true repentance. To me, this looks like a full and open confession of every single instance, including date, situation, and perpetrator, that they have ever dealt with, had direct knowledge of, or input into. In every case where the perpetrator is still living they would go to that perpetrator and remove them from the physical presence of fellowship and comply with all legal and ethical requirements for reporting. In all cases they would meet with and apologize directly to every reported survivor of each perpetrator, and continue to do so with every survivor who becomes known in the future. Further, if any part of this requirement means that they admit to legal culpability, they would be prepared to plead guilty and comply with any legal sentences imposed rather than mount a legal defense in every jurisdiction where this is applicable. These are the conditions they have imposed many times in the past on others in many situations. These are the marks of repentance that would also begin to reduce the harm that has been done and is being done.

In addition, these are the same marks I would expect every overseer internationally to demonstrate as well.

Harm is continuing. Every moment they do not do this is high risk for another person to become a victim and have to fight to become a survivor.

We cannot talk adequately about the future until the past is addressed. This is not negotiable. And anyone who is a survivor or has worked with or listened to survivors recognizes this is the only path forward. To date, in nearly every place where these overseers have dealt with this issue in this current crisis, they have not acted to stop harm or prevent further harm until backed into a corner by other people. This is not acceptable behavior in those we have trusted to demonstrate the life of Jesus.

It should not take lawsuits or other legal action to compel testimony under oath, or to have men participate in legal depositions under penalty of perjury, or to compel legal discovery of e-mail and text correspondence with one another, to simply have men to do what even the most base of men in this world have decided should be done when it becomes known that people in positions of trust are or have sexually abused other people, including children. It is lower than the minimum of what we would ever expect of any person who is being taught by the Spirit of Christ.

What was different about Jesus is that he is fully focused on the heart. Jesus said A. I have loved you as my Father has loved me and B. Love you one another as I have loved you. And further, that we would be known to be his because we live that love. People have focused on all the other parts of the Bible because they have no idea how to do that most important part. Because it seems impossible. Jesus could not literally have meant what he said, that we should actually or could actually love one another in that way. But we can. And we must. And if we don't, we are not his.

Jesus also plainly said that we would know them by their fruits. And that the same well cannot bring forth both bitter and sweet. It is one or the other. For years that was a key part of my cognitive dissonance. But no longer. We are not looking to reduce the bitter. Or put more of the sheep's wool onto the wolf's back. We are looking for sweet water, for fruit that loves as Jesus loves and as the Father loves the Son.

If we continue to try to legislate righteousness and put up barriers to prevent harm, we are not saving any souls, we are simply doing what the law is designed to do, which is to impose exterior control on people who are not internally guided to do no harm. It is not the saving of those people's souls that the law brings about. It is only a reduction of harm that they do to others. For them to be saved, they must become as little children. And the fruit of that is

unmistakable. We cannot legislate the fruit of the Father's work. But we definitely know it when we see and taste it.

So I encourage us all to only focus on the wolves to expel them from doing harm. And then to focus on people who seek what Jesus sought for his own. And realize that when we feel tired from pushing, it is only because we are trying to push out the wolf from doing more harm, not to save the wolf. The wolf can only be saved by a Father who can replace the heart of the wolf with the heart of the sheep, and that is nothing but a miracle. However, in this situation, around predator behavior...repentance means voluntarily removing themselves from any contact with sheep as the sheep still are likely to have a strong and expected fear response. And loving others truly from the heart would mean that the predator would begin to understand and feel things from the perspective of the prey, and would understand that they may not be able to both be loving AND in constant contact with most of the sheep, but only with the Shepherd. Fellowship with individual sheep would have to be on those sheep's terms and not initiated by the person who has been a predator. Much in the same way that a "shut-in" person would be. And we know how richly the Shepherd is able to pour out on people in those situations. So the predator who has a new heart, which is only a miracle, will not lose any good thing. They will have from the Father the same as all the rest of his children. Love...full and abundant. And the fruit of their new heart will be the same as Jesus...it will do no harm and it will be sweet.

Many of these people we see have spoken good words. And as Jesus said, we can do as they say. But we cannot do as they do. Because what they say may mimic the heart of God. But what they DO reveals what is in their OWN heart. And THAT is bitter and its effect is destructive and hurts people who are soft and have the heart of a child.

I am highly skeptical of listening tours when I see so many people not even hearing the cries of the victims and survivors in so many places. Thousands of victims. Hundreds of perpetrators and many of those in the work all over the world. Just reading the gut-wrenching, soul-sickening story after story on places such as WingsForTruth, which is run by all or nearly all people who are currently "professing" in this fellowship, leads us to know that repentance of all the harm we have made possible is the first step. And we have not seen evidence of that repentance yet. We have seen token words. But we have not seen the acts of repentance, as I describe at the beginning of this email. We know that there are still perpetrators with allegations who are actively in the work and participating in fellowship with people at risk for further harm.

Surely the marks of repentance are what must happen, and there must be mourning as we repent of what we have enabled in this fellowship, and especially in the ministry, year after year, decade after decade. Then we can show that indeed we DO esteem the least as greatest and we DO love one another as the Father loves his Son, and his Son loves us.

Best,

Bryan & Celia Hansen