

This is the complete conversation that occurred on Phil Johnson's Facebook page between April 14 and May 1, 2016. I've also included the "Edit History" for entries by Phil and me though the edits are typically for typos not substance. This also allows the reader to know the original time and date of the entry.

**Phil Johnson**

**April 14 at 5:58pm · Santa Clarita, CA ·**

Lots of people have been asking my opinion about having CJ Mahaney as a headliner at T4G. Here's a longish summary of my answer:

In July of 2011 I started reading the original 600-page Detwiler dump. Approximately 375 pages in, I gave up looking for anything substantial. Everything Brent Detwiler complained about was petty and personal: CJ Mahaney was too controlling; he wasn't transparent with his fellow leaders; he didn't submit to the same accountability he demanded of them; he was stubborn; he didn't listen to criticism; etc. I'm no defender of SGM's continuationist doctrine or their philosophy of ministry. In fact, the Detwiler documents left me with the impression that SGM is practically cultlike in the ways they have tried to achieve "accountability" and "transparency." (The accountability structures seem even worse than the Roman Catholic confessional system.) But it deeply annoyed me and offended me to read hundreds of pages of private emails in the Detwiler papers without seeing any evidence of the kind of gross, deliberate wrongdoing that might justify that style of public attack on a Christian leader's character and reputation.

Let's suppose all the things Detwiler complained about were true. None of it was as bad as Detwiler's decision to trample the whole point of 1 Timothy 5:19 in order to litigate his personal grievances against his boss on the Internet. His airing of personal complaints against CJ to a worldwide audience predictably unleashed a flood of gossip and speculation among people who had no righteous involvement in any of the conflicts Detwiler described. (See Proverbs 26:17.) It was a strategy whose main aim seemed to be to destroy CJ's reputation.

Sometime much later (seems like it was almost 2 years later), accusations began to surface that CJ Mahaney had actively participated in a cover-up of several child-abuse incidents within SGM. Given my frustration with the Detwiler documents, my inclination was to be highly skeptical of these new accusations. The charges don't fit what I know of CJ Mahaney, and (again, in opposition to 1 Timothy 5:19) the notion that Mahaney engineered a cover-up conspiracy wasn't backed up with any real evidence. I still haven't seen any damning emails or smoking guns implicating CJ himself. The only "proof" seems to consist entirely of several people who say they are pretty sure it's impossible that such things could occur in SGM without CJ's knowledge and approval. Even if it's totally true that CJ's leadership style would lend credibility to the charge, we are expressly forbidden to admit the charge without actual evidence. Speculation and

suspicions from someone who can't possibly know what actually happened behind the scenes is not evidence--no matter how many voices join in and echo the accusations.

So in short, I emphatically refuse to assume the worst of CJ. And I'm disappointed in Janet Mefferd for aligning herself with some of the "survivor blogs" where CJ's guilt is simply assumed and dogmatically declared as if it were already a settled issue. To pretend to be calling for "justice" while committing such a gross injustice is the very height of hypocrisy. The best-known survivor blogs tend to be places where disgruntled former church members mingle with people who are overtly hostile to biblical authority--and a handful of people who are true victims of spiritual abuse. Then they all stoke one another's resentment and give as much publicity as possible to every accusation that surfaces claiming this or that Christian leader has abused his authority. This is no less unjust than the abuse they complain of. And it is grossly unhealthy to the participants' spiritual well-being. Mrs. Mefferd of all people ought to have more discernment than that.

On the other hand, I also disagree with the decision to include CJ among the speakers at T4G2016. I was happy to see CJ in attendance but not speaking at T4G2014. I don't see the wisdom in putting him on the platform two years later when, if anything, the controversy that surrounds him is more fierce than ever. Turning the T4G spotlight on CJ while such a scandal is raging certainly doesn't help him, and it unnecessarily clouds the message of T4G. I share all of [Todd Pruitt's](#) concerns about that.

I'm considering this from a practical and personal perspective. If it turned out that two or three of my employees committed criminal child-abuse offenses in the course of their work under my oversight, even if I was totally ignorant of what was happening and personally innocent of any wrongdoing, I would nevertheless decline any outside speaking engagements until all questions about the matter were truly and sufficiently resolved. It would not be right to attach the scandal and reproach of a brewing conflict like that to any other organization. Passing up an opportunity to be a headliner at a big conference would especially seem an important way of countering the charges that a person lacks humility.

In CJ's case, as I understand it, some of the questions floating around are still being litigated in the courts. I just don't see any good reason to rush him back into such an important position of high visibility. That's my perspective.

Still, I would not suggest that there are no difficulties with the course of action I would have taken, either. At some point you have to refuse to cater to the concerns of people who insist on accusing a man when they can't possibly meet the simple biblical standard of evidence. So I do sympathize with those who had to make the decision for this year's T4G, and the fact that I would have chosen a different course of action does not in any way diminish my respect for them.

## Comments



[Frank Turk](#) This is why Phil Johnson is Phil Johnson.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [64](#) · [April 14 at 6:08pm](#)



[Peter Danger Sammons](#) Couldn't have said it better than that  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 14 at 6:17pm](#)



[Dan Phillips](#) ...and why, if there weren't a Phil Johnson, we'd just have to try to invent one.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [10](#) · [April 14 at 7:05pm](#)



[Carlo Rose](#) I agree Phil, ah, darn it, I mean, Dan. ☺  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 9:41pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) What a bunch of ungodly hero worship. Good grief, no concern for victims here.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 12:14am](#)



[Charlie Haddon](#) Julie Anne Smith How could anyone read what Phil wrote and label it "ungodly hero worship?"  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 8:34am](#)



[Chris Nelson](#) Charlie Haddon I think she is referring to Turk, Peter and Dan slobbering over him.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 9:34am](#)



[Hohn Cho](#) You see slobbering and ungodly hero worship, I see friends (in the case of Frank, Dan, and Phil, at least) who love each other, who have demonstrated great discernment in their own right and happen to agree independently with Phil's statements, heeding the command in Scripture to encourage one another. Can you

see how uncharitable characterizations like these might lead one to believe that you might be just a wee bit biased and lacking in objectivity?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 1:26pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) Hohn Cho, Even if you remove the SGM sexual abuse lawsuit fiasco, Phil acknowledges above that SGM was run almost "cultlike." Brent Detwiler has collected the following data:

"40 churches, 100 pastors, hundreds of small group leaders, and around 12,000 people have left SGM because of C.J.'s abusive leadership and the culture he created. Even Joshua Harris and C.J.'s own church, Covenant Life, left SGM in 2013. So did the vast majority of C.J.'s closest friends who were also longstanding fellow leaders."

Does this sound like a godly pastor to you - one who should be speaking to and teaching the masses? Come on. The Bible holds pastors/elders to high standards. He is unfit for the pastorate and he is unfit to speak at T4G on just the above information, without even mentioning any sex abuse cases. 100 pastors is far more than 2 witnesses, no?

Phil is absolutely wreckless by defending this man. There is cruel and systemic blindness that allows men like Mahaney to maintain his position of leadership and respectability within the church.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 1:59pm](#)



[James H Russell](#) Thank you: biblical perspective; balanced and fair

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [10](#) · [April 14 at 6:10pm](#)



[Abraham Armenta](#) Gracias Phil! [See Translation](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 14 at 6:11pm](#)



[Riaan Boer](#) I wish can do more than just 'like' this. Thank you, Phil. This is very helpful.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 14 at 6:15pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Jeff Maples](#) You can, there is a "love" button now, among others. grin emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 14 at 7:56pm](#)

[Frank Martens](#) "At some point you have to refuse to cater to the concerns of people who insist on accusing a man when they can't possibly meet the simple biblical standard of evidence."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [11](#) · [April 14 at 6:18pm](#)



[Chris DeLuna](#) Thank you, [Phil](#).

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 6:19pm](#)



[Andrew Lawson](#) I am glad that we agree that CJM should not have been on that platform. The cavalier attitude seen in his introduction also grieved me.

Like you pointed out, we have no hard evidence yet that CJM was a part of the actual cover-up - but I have to think that our standard for T4G speakers ought to be higher than that.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [8](#) · [April 14 at 6:40pm](#)



[Rebecca Donahue Bach Joseph Gowaty](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 6:56pm](#)



[Paul Edwards](#) Thank you for this, [Phil](#). Much discernment and wisdom is evident in your observations and conclusions.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 7:00pm](#)



[Robert Turner](#) Brother Phil - this is extremely well written and thought through. Thank you for sharing your wisdom with us.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 14 at 7:05pm](#)



[Caleb Andrea Kolstad](#) I am grateful for this as one who did not have time to read 600 pages worth of emails... I respect Todd Pruitt and MOS.

Some have suggested if you oppose or question the wisdom of having CJ speak at T4G that by default you also must believe that he is unqualified to be a pastor. You have

demonstrated that there is a position that embraces all of the public facts w.o condemning Mahaney. Thanks for this post.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [6](#) · [April 14 at 7:07pm](#)



[Mike Bronson](#) You nailed it. Thank you!

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[Tom Hawkins](#) Thought-out, gracious and balanced read...how do you do that?? smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 7:30pm](#)



[Stephen Norton](#) Wish you would have given mark Driscoll the same benefit of the doubt you seem eager to give CJ.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 7:38pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Actually, I did.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [21](#) · [April 14 at 7:43pm](#)



[Scott Holmes](#) Driscoll just started his new "church" here in Scottsdale on Easter Sunday. Apparently he thinks he can restore himself to the ministry.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 3:37pm](#)



[Colleen Gendy](#) I fell into the rabbit hole that is Brent Detwiller's website and some of his correspondence reads like Delores Umbridge wrote it. Happy to see this balanced and wise take on SGM and Mahaney.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 7:58pm](#)



[Tim Wasielewski](#) This has been really bothering me too! You have articulated it perfectly Phil - thank you for that. A difficult situation at best.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 8:35pm](#)



[Mary-Anne Ramer](#) Very well said.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 8:53pm](#)



[Robert Reece](#) Amen.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 8:54pm](#)



[Alfred Randall](#) 375 pages? Wow. That is a lot of gossip and slander to read. Not being critical of you if you had a job to do, but I hope it didn't bring you down too much. Not sure reading that much of it is worthwhile. I hope you can walk away and let it all be sanitized out.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 9:17pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Jeff Brown](#) Phil, the 600 pages of emails has nothing to do with the matter at hand. Please read the Second Amended Complaint and decide 1) how likely it is that the complainants are making this up, and 2) how likely it is that Mr. Mahaney knew nothing of what was going on. Several pastors at CLC have admitted that their policy was not to notify the police. Nevertheless, one of the abusers is in prison - because others reported him - and another was charged with abuse a mere few weeks ago. It is an ongoing problem.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [12](#) · [April 14 at 9:21pm](#)



[Jeff Brown](#) Sorry, here is the link to the 2nd Amended Complaint:  
<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/.../second+amended+sgm...>  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 14 at 9:28pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) I did read it. I see no actual testimony or evidence against Mahaney. He is named and accused, but there's no evidence offered to show that he was engaged in the cover-up. Why no firsthand testimony from anyone who says they actually gave him the facts of what was going on? Why no copy of any letter confronting him with the facts? Are we just supposed to assume he was involved because that's the way SGM was run? I don't care how many make that assumption, it doesn't seem a righteous judgment to make. It's certainly not the measure with which I want to be judged. Do we really think evangelical lynch mobs are going to quell the epidemic of scandal among evangelical leaders?  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [6](#) · [April 15 at 3:47am](#)





[Phil Johnson](#) BTW, just to make my point, the only substantive comment about Mahaney in the amended complaint (the one place where you have something more than a bare accusation) is paragraph 138, which says, "discovery will show [that] Mahaney...conspired." Fine. Acquire that evidence and THEN get back to me. If it proves Mahaney conspired in the coverup, I'll be the first to call for his prosecution. Barring real evidence, though, what Scripture demands of us is absolutely clear.

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[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) When did you read the 2nd Amended Complaint? Was it recently?

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[Phil Johnson](#) Yes. Did you read this thread? I followed the link Jeff Brown posted above and read it there on April 14. Several had INSISTED the complaint contained real evidence (not merely allegations) implicating Mahaney, proving that he was personally aware of the crimes being committed and directly involved in the coverup. Though the crimes are horrific, I see evidence in the complaint proving Mahaney was personally involved.

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[Brent Detwiler](#) So you did not read it until after Jeff posted it on April 14. Correct?

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[Phil Johnson](#) [Brent Detwiler](#): As far as I can remember, that's correct.

(I MAY have also read the Amended Complaint months ago, when I spent a considerable amount of time looking for the substance behind all the calls for CJ Mahaney's head on a platter. But I don't recall for sure which specific documents I read. One of the troubling problems in this whole matter is that no mere observer on the Internet should be expected to have to read through 600+ pages of private emails, reams of legal opinions, and dozens of potentially slanderous blogposts in order to find actual evidence to support charges of this magnitude against a prominent pastor. To a very large degree, that is a problem YOU more than anyone helped create, Brent.)



But to give credit where credit is due, I read this amended complaint last week at the behest of Mrs. Mefferd--specifically to see whether it provides actual evidence of the charges against Mahaney. She seemed to be indicating that this is the document that would change my mind on the question of whether there was sufficient evidence to show that Mahaney was involved in a coverup. I'm left with precisely the same perspective I had after my first attempts to find actual evidence: promises keep being made that the damning evidence is forthcoming. So far all those promises have gone unfulfilled.

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[Brent Detwiler](#) Phi, if you read the Second Amended Complaint (lawsuit) "months ago" you would remember. No one could possibly forget the horror of reading 46 pages about the abuse of 11 plaintiffs who were children. There is every reason to conclude you read the lawsuit last week for the first time. That is the height of neglect. The lawsuit has been widely reported on by major media outlets and publications for the last 3 1/2 years and yet you never read it. It has been the number one on-going story in evangelical circles. Other stories have come and gone. This story remains. Here is what I find deeply troubling. If you only read ONE thing, it should have been the lawsuit and yet you chose to ignore it. That demonstrates your unwillingness to read the most fundamental and important evidence against C.J. as it pertains to child sex abuse. That is blatant partiality and favoritism of the highest order. Why didn't you read it? There is no justification.

And let me ask, when did John MacArthur read the lawsuit if ever? I've sent him each version of the lawsuit and tons of additional evidence over the years. Did he forward it to you? I've pleaded with him to read it and study it. And only now, his executive pastor, has gotten around to reading the lawsuit with all the horrific evidence it contains concerning a conspiracy to commit and cover up child sex abuse under C.J.'s leadership by the likes of John Loftness, former Chairman of the Board, and Gary Ricucci, C.J.'s brother in law, etc. At this point, I could insert hundreds of additional pages of evidence found in my writings. How about reading just two posts. "The Conspiracy Surrounding Plaintiff Grace Goe at Covenant Life Church" and "Gary Ricucci & the Conspiracy Surrounding Convicted Felon, David Adams." Both are on my blog under Past Posts.

Phil, the lawsuit has been out for years. It is utterly unacceptable that you are now just reading it given the longstanding support and promotion of C.J. at the Shepherds' Conferences, Resolved Conferences, and Together for the Gospel conferences. And I find it extremely hypocritically for you to now be criticizing C.J.

when he has been held up to Grace Community Church as a shining example of Christian character.

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[Hohn Cho](#) That you're taking a legal complaint as the complete, unvarnished, and unquestionable TRVTH is further proof that you are biased and lack objectivity. Prov. 18:13, 17. A filed civil complaint is an advocacy document, and merely one side of a dispute. As someone who knows the legal process and has read and kept up with this sad situation for years, the allegations are indeed terrible and tragic, and in all honesty I believe abuse occurred in numerous cases. But even so, there is nothing in even the amended complaint that establishes Mahaney knew, much less affirmatively covered it up. Note, that doesn't mean such evidence doesn't exist, or that such a link will ultimately fail to be established... just that we haven't seen it yet.

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[Ethan Smith](#) Phil, I appreciate your approach and respect you wanting to not jump to conclusions without any evidence against Mahaney. However, this is not just about Brent Detweiler, but about the countless number of people who were victimized by SGM leadership, under which Mahaney was the "head." Everything happened under his watch. Mahaney is disqualified from the office of elder. He is not "above reproach," nor is he "well thought of by outsiders." That is obvious even without the 600 pages that Detweiler published.

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[Jeff Brown](#) Phil, I didn't mean to imply that you think the plaintiffs made up their stories. I was only making a point about their credibility.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 9:39pm](#)



[Carla Rolfe](#) I didn't follow \*any\* of this when it was being announced all over the internet so I really appreciate you sort of summing it all up.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 9:48pm](#)



[Mark Ammerman](#) Granted, Brent Detwiler's stuff is hard to wade through. The material lacks cohesion and clarity at times, and is often repetitive (and thus may sometimes sound "petty".) Brent really needs a good editor. But his work is substantive and

accurately sourced. I have been acquainted with the ministries of both Brent and CJ (and Larry Tomczak as well) for several decades. And having personally observed (and experienced) life inside SGM, I can not so easily dismiss the tangled body of Brent's work--nor can I say (as Jeff Brown writes above) that the 600 pages of emails have nothing to do with the matter at hand (the allegations and testimonies of child abuse and the subsequent failure of church leadership to biblically deal with the situations); they are of the same root. This thing is a big, terrible, choking cloud of events, but there is real fire beneath all this smoke--and it has been burning for a long time.

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[Jeff Brown](#) Since Detwiler's emails have to do with Mahaney's character, yes, they do have some relation to the sexual abuse cover-up. I just wanted to make it clear that they say nothing explicitly about it.

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[Jennifer Long](#) disagree with ya! the evidence is the opposite of blurry... it's damning. was also instrumental in me stepping away from associated ministries 2 years ago. i fear you may be underestimating its far-reaching impact.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 14 at 10:26pm](#)



[Wesley Griffin](#) I really don't understand why in the fellowship of believers, it seems we always want to wade into the "grey area" and go forward until we hit the "definitive, that was horrible, shouldn't have done that line" before we decide someone should face some consequences, self imposed or otherwise. I would want the wisdom and counsel of any leader that steps back and errs on the side of caution, and removes themselves over someone so seeking the bright lights and adulation of the young pastors, sadly wanting to be just like them. I will follow the former through hell with a water pistol and I have no need for latter. I'll take a recovered drug addict or alcoholic that has been through the fire and almost didn't make it who is grateful to God for all he has done and does not need the praise of others,

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[Kimberly Stiles Vick](#) What would biblical evidence needed to prove a pastor covered up abuse? In the case you mention above, what would that look like?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 14 at 10:54pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) How about a copy of a letter written to make sure he was aware, or an email from him proving he knew? Did NONE of the victims write CJ to make their case? Where are those letters? The fact that we KNOW high-level church leaders were trying to keep the whole thing quiet seems to lend credence to the possibility that CJ was purposely kept in the dark. If the only case against him is a bunch of people insisting that he MUST have known, because he was the top guy and he was a hands-on leader, that's mere speculation, not evidence--no matter how many people harbor that suspicion.

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[Phil Johnson](#) How about a copy of a letter written to make sure he was aware, or an email from him proving he knew? Did NONE of the victims write CJ to make their case? Where are those letters? The fact that we KNOW high-level church leaders were trying to keep the whole thing quiet seems to lend credence to the possibility that CJ was purposely kept in the dark. If the only case against him is a bunch of people insisting that he MUST have known, because he was the top guy, that's mere speculation, not evidence--no matter how many people harbor that suspicion.

April 15 at 4:55am



[Neal Marchuk](#) Dear Phil Johnson

You do realize how successful liars and manipulators operate, don't you? Unlike Nixon (whom you referred to below), they're not stupid enough to leave a paper trail or anything else that leads back to them. If there were any such letters or e-mails as you suggest, Mahaney probably got rid of them long ago.

And I've no doubt at all that he is a manipulator. His hyper-affected gestures and speech patterns, his gooey flattery... not to mention that he cut his teeth in a "shepherding" cult. I'm pretty sure he's just using you.

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[Terri Ammerman](#) [Phil Johnson](#), have you spoken to any of the victims firsthand? Have you read the court documents? Please go to the sources before you speculate about things.

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[Hohn Cho](#) Mr. Marchuk, you do realize that putting aside the patterns and past practices of third party liars and manipulators, it is nevertheless still speculation at this moment to assume these things of Mr. Mahaney?

And Ms. Ammerman, with great respect for you and everyone involved, I do not believe it is reasonable to expect (much less require) people to seek personal interviews before speaking on a public matter.

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[Kimberly Stiles Vick](#) How is anyone supposed to speak to Cj directly when he like alot of other big wigs is unreachable? Besides, if there was criminal investigations, the parties involved would not be allow to speak. I do believe questions from many different victum or victumes advocates have been asked of cj, and he remains silent. Mr. Johnson, you mention you have a relationship with cj, why don't you ask him? Yes, there is a lot of connecting the dots speculation about what cj knew. Didn't one of his staff admit under oath that he advised a family not to call police, if so as cj employee, cj to a degree is responsible. I think why people are still angry, and why there is still a push to stop cj from making money off of the church of Jesus christ. Is that he has not personally addressed the issues at all. I do believe that it's the perception of a lot of people that cj believes he is above having to answer to the general public, and that his other pastor buddies are and will protect him. Point is he knows now what was going on in his church, and still as not addressed that it happened or the pain it cause.

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[Neal Marchuk](#) Dear Hohn Cho

Here's one thing that's not speculation: Mahaney has not the smallest shred of sympathy for those who were raped and molested under his care. If he did, he wouldn't have taken the stage with those protesters right on their doorstep. And the same goes for all those who invited him and let him preach. Especially Mohler, who introduced him with a disgusting joke at the expense of the sex abuse victims.

And if Mahaney is as manipulative as I take him to be, then the "smoking gun" that Johnson is asking for likely isn't there.

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[Phil Johnson](#) [Terri Ammerman](#) : I have corresponded with some of the victims via email. I'm deeply sympathetic to their plight and pain, but I'm also quite sure that a million voices angrily echoing accusations without real evidence are not going to ease that pain; they only make the situation worse.

And yes, I HAVE read the court documents. The "evidence" I was assured I would

find there wasn't there, and none of the victims who have spoken to me have offered any proof that Mahaney actively participated in the coverup.

Here's my concern, once more: as far as the "survivor" community is concerned, it's not enough for someone to say, as I did, that I don't think Mahaney should have been given a platform at T4G; they also demand that I declare him guilty without appropriate evidence.

Why is that, if the real concern is "justice"? Someone needs to answer that question candidly.

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[Phil Johnson](#) [Terri Ammerman](#) : I have corresponded with some of the victims via email. I'm deeply sympathetic to their plight and pain, but I'm also quite sure that a million voices echoing accusations without real evidence are not going to ease that pain; they only make the situation worse. And yes, I HAVE read the court documents. The "evidence" I was assured I would find there wasn't there, and none of the victims who have spoken to me have offered any proof that Mahaney actively participated in the coverup. It's not enough for the "survivor" community to say, as I did, that I don't think Mahaney should have been given a platform at T4G; they also demand that I declare him guilty without appropriate evidence. Why is that, if the real concern is "justice"? Someone needs to answer that question candidly.

April 21 at 3:23pm



[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) By "court documents" are you referring to the Second Amended Complaint (i.e. lawsuit) or something else?

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[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) By "courts documents" are you referring to the Second Amended Complaint (i.e. lawsuit) or something else?

April 22 at 1:37pm



[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) I'm glad you have corresponded with some of the victims. Is that a new development; as in the last week or so? Thanks.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 1:42pm](#)



[Jeff Gray](#) Phil Johnson Doesn't logic dictate that those who would have those emails and letters would also be implicating themselves in the coverup? Who is going to admit that they covered up sexual abuse in their church? If one is found guilty then they are all guilty!

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[Phil Johnson](#) [Jeff Gray](#) Not at all. I'd be happy to see a letter or email FROM someone challenging or objecting to the policy of hiding rather than reporting cases of abuse. It would seem far MORE "logical" to expect that someone who knew the facts and objected to the policy (starting with the parents of the victims themselves) ought to have written an appeal or a rebuke--or a plea of some kind--to CJ, informing him what was going on and begging him to intervene. Above all: If Brent Detwiler really did have a running debate with CJ over the coverup policy, why (despite all the private emails between him and CJ that have been made public on the Internet) is there not a single memo or email confronting CJ about his part in the coverup conspiracy?

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[Jeff Gray](#) Phil, don't mean for this to sound snarky or rude, but you have no idea how SGM operated at that time. Brent was a pastor at another church, so he would not have been in the loop of any emails/discussions pertaining to any child abuse coverups. Everything was very compartmentalized and you dealt with your small group leader or associate pastor assigned to oversee your small group. You did not go directly to the head pastor - your overseers would pass it all along to the pastor. If you jumped the ladder, you were accused of "not believing the best" or "causing your pastor aggravation". I was in 4 different SGM churches and they ALL operated in exactly the same manner. Where do you think the model came from?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 3:49pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) I actually DO have Brent's own testimony about how SGM operated at that time, and according to him, what you are claiming here is wrong. In the statement he posted below, Brent says, "I directly oversaw 23 churches in SGM. I have always directed pastors in my sphere to immediately report the suspicion of sex abuse to law enforcement. C.J. did the exact opposite. . . . I was the #2 leader in SGM for many years." Plus, Brent was a Board Member. It would NOT have been "jump[ing] the ladder" for him to challenge CJ on this issue.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 22 at 3:50pm](#)





[Jeff Gray](#) But Brent didn't oversee C.J.'s church as far as I know. Even if he did, C.J.'s pattern of unaccountability would indicate that he wouldn't share something as career-ending as sexual predator coverup with Brent. I am not defending Brent, I am just saying what I know to be true as far as the secrecy and control in SGM. I am waiting along with you for Brent to answer that question. Brent was instrumental in creating the monster that is SGM.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 3:59pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) Would you please answer my question above? When did you begin to "correspond with some of the victims"? And a follow up, you say "victims" in the plural. How many victims from the lawsuit have your corresponded with?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 6:02pm](#)



[Hohn Cho](#) But Mr. Gray, even if we assume the existence of a problematic culture and structure, that STILL does not equal Mahaney automatically being guilty of a "sexual predator coverup" without additional evidence.

Brent has testified below, "I have always directed pastors in my sphere to immediately report the suspicion of sex abuse to law enforcement. C.J. did the exact opposite." That is a rather extraordinary claim, which should be supported by extraordinary evidence.

As Phil asked, are there any documents to this effect? If not, has sworn testimony been offered with an opportunity for cross-examination? And if the answer is "not yet" then why are some demanding an assumption of guilt RIGHT NOW based solely on such claims alone, especially when denials of those claims also exist?

Phil is absolutely right to say we should be careful before calling for torches and pitchforks. Because until better evidence surfaces, all that the public has seen are bold assertions and speculation.

I remain astonished how a critique of Mahaney's appearance at T4G and the culture of SGM, along with a common sense call not to rush to judgment, has somehow morphed into a scurrilous insinuation that Phil is not supportive of abuse victims.

Political correctness is not just for the secular left, apparently.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 6:08pm](#)



[Brent Detwiler Phil Johnson](#) Please quote me in entirety when required by the context in order to preserve the full meaning of my words and thereby not mislead people. Quote: "I directly oversaw 23 churches in SGM. I have always directed pastors in my sphere to immediately report the suspicion of sex abuse to law enforcement. C.J. did the exact opposite. That is a matter of fact. That is one reason, he concealed the sexual abuse of children from me even though I was the #2 leader in SGM for many years. I should have been told because I had a spiritual, legal and fiduciary responsibility for the well-being of SGM as a Board of Director. I hope to testify against C.J. in a court of law. I would never have allowed sexual predators to go unreported. And in each case brought to my attention by the pastors I directly oversaw, they were reported, tried and sentenced. They remain in jail. By the way, what I just shared, I have repeatedly shared on my blog since the original lawsuit came out in Oct 2012. It was amended in Jan 2013 and May 2013 in order to add plaintiffs/victims. Everyone should read it."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 6:10pm](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History

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April 22 at 6:10pm



[Hohn Cho](#) Mr. Detwiler, while you're waiting, perhaps you could also answer Phil's outstanding follow-up question, "If you knew CJ was aiding and abetting child abusers, why were the allegations about his faulty style of leadership the whole focus for two years before those more serious charges became the issue?"

By the way, there is nothing misleading about Phil's paraphrase of your longer quote.

You definitely act like more words are always better, but Prov. 10:19 says, "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent." Respectfully, I believe you would present yourself better and be more effective if you summarized more and wall o' texted (much) less.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 6:28pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) Once again, I am staggered by your ignorance. I had no knowledge of the cover up until I began to investigate AFTER the lawsuit came out in Oct 2012. That investigation will be covered in a 300 page book I am writing. There was no running debate with C.J. over our sex abuse policy. I assumed he was following the law. He was not. Nor was his staff. They were all covering up and that has been acknowledged by Grant Layman in court, Joshua Harris in the Washington Post, the church administrator in a closed meeting, etc. C.J. and his staff had a policy of not reporting to law enforcement and that was due in large measure to their unreasonable fear of lawsuits. That is also a matter of record. Phil, I didn't know about any of this or I would have confronted it. C.J. hid it from me. That is part of the conspiracy. That is part of his long term pattern of deceit. Again, I am shocked by the extent to which you are uniformed and ill-informed. Everyone knows these things who has taken any time to read even the most basic coverage. I wish you would remain silent because you are leading a lot of people astray by your ignorance. If you don't want to read the 40 or 50 posts I have written on the subject, that is fine. If you don't want to read the media coverage from the past 3 1/2 years, that is fine. If you don't want to read and study the court documents from the Morales trials, that is fine. Just don't pretend to know what you are talking about because you absolute do not!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 22 at 6:44pm](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) Now an appeal to all readers on this blog. Please read the "600 pages" that Phil has repeatedly disparaged. They are kindly and carefully written appeals to C.J. regarding longstanding and serious patterns of sin of that are of a disqualifying nature. C.J. should not be in ministry. They are not "disgruntled-employee-style ramblings." That is a slanderous caricature. But here's the thing. You don't have to believe me and you don't have to believe Phil. You can read and think about the contents and then form an opinion for yourself. No one should trust Phil's assessment and you don't have to believe mine either. You just need to read the evidence and decide if C.J. is above reproach. They can all be read at <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/.../Brent%27s+Documents...>

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[Hohn Cho](#) Your rhetoric alone has amply and clearly demonstrated that you, too, might be just a wee bit biased and lacking in objectivity. Still waiting for anything resembling clear evidence that Mahaney directly knew about the tragic and deplorable abuse, much less covered it up.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 8:27pm](#)



[Don MCG](#) Agree w Neal Marchuk ...dah...how about verbal communication, from the abused to a pastor.....then how about that pastor reporting up to the head verbally ..... If the pastor who testified under oath new About the abuse.....the head new, if any of the other pastors new or were told the leader new...pretty simple .....how naive can people be....I guess it's hard for those whom were not a member at CLC like many of us that were to understand the organizational control.....from the head Down to each member.....care or home group leaders, heard issues from those in their groups whom were required to meet weekly (a membership requirement) ...they reported to their group pastors, group pastors to lead pastors, and finally lead pastors to leader.....do any of you non members really believe the pastors whom were told directly of the abuse from victims parents and they kept that information to themselves and was not discussed or strategized how to handle or to report or not to reporting the police? How about this question if all were true, what would be the motive not to make such abuse public or go to the police? Not judging, but how about not losing members due to an internal scandal? How loss of members would mean loss of members, followed by loss of tithe income and purchase of their books and worship tapes and CDs.....not a rocket scientist....but pretty simple to me....lastly the head left after turning the reins over to, his young inexperienced puppet....and left after confrontation from pastors and elders....looks like, smells like, walks like a duck.....thus, it's a duck....pride comes before the fall .....will be a long hard one....and thank God for a man like Brent D. whom had the courage to not be yet another Yes man....and stand up for what is right...there is nothing petty about this at all...I personally know several of the abused...and I believe them more than the ex leader of the CLC flock...say a few prayers for the abused ....think of them ....and thank Brent....

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 9:31pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Brent Detwiler Phil Johnson](#) I've asked this before but how many is "some of the victims" and when did you correspondent with them. I assume in the past week if you did. Is that correct? By the way, you say victims, not families of the victims. And you say "some," not a couple of victims. Have you really communicated with "some" of the 11 victims in the lawsuit? I find your claim implausible for various reasons including the fact that the victims have been instructed by lawyers and law enforcement not to interact with others like yourself. Have you inflated your claim?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 10:42pm](#) · [Edited](#)

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[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) How many is "some of the victims"? I like to check with them.

April 22 at 10:19pm



[Jefanda Ward](#) [Steve-Christine Bauer](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 11:04pm](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) Phil, don't stop with my 375 pages of petty complaints. Read some more like this one on my blog, "Hush Fund Set Up by Top SGM Leaders to Meet Demands of a SGM Pastor Whose Son Was Sexual Abused" by a senior pastor's son in the same church in 2013 when C.J. was president of SGM.

<http://abrentdetwiler.squarespace.com/.../hush-fund-set...>

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April 14 at 11:14pm



[Christine Coffaro Bonilla](#) Wow! Awful. This Pastor was allowed to move to a new church with his pedophile son and unsuspecting parents would trust their children to his care. This is evil!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 2:08am](#) · [Edited](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) [Christine Coffaro Bonilla](#) I agree that's evil. But I still want to see proof CJ was fully aware of what was going on. Even Nixon couldn't be brought down in the Watergate scandal until his own recordings proved he knew about the cover-up. It's not "justice" if you bypass due process, and people whose main concern is ostensibly to see justice done OUGHT to acknowledge that.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 5:12am](#)



[Aaron Britton](#) Phil, with respect, your reference to 1 Timothy 5:19 is irrelevant in BD's documents because those documents are filled with witnesses that came forward, were dismissed/not listened too, left the network, now have other jobs, etc.. For how long do the 2 or 3 witnesses have to come forward? Agree with you and Todd Pruitt on his not being on the platform yet.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 10:09am](#)



[Christine Coffaro Bonilla](#) If Mahaney is saying he never had knowledge of the sexual abuse documented in mutiple complaints, and never knew several abusers were allowed access to children while remaining on staff or in attendance, then the courts/jury will have to sort out the evidence. I pray to the Lord the truth is revealed. I am saddened for the mutiple children's lives that have been trampled and souls devastated by these men put over them. It seems the leaders of today's churches are more concerned with their company's name than the sheep who are the church!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 11:42am](#)



[Don Mcg](#) Phil, please stop defending CJ .....he knew ....evidence is his leadership style and control .... Not much of anything was hidden by the pastors from him.....I need to stop reading your words and I will admit knowing some of the victims and their families playing sports with them when they became men.....has me getting angry reading your words tearing down Brent and protecting CJ....enough ....you are clueless and your opinions have zero foundation or basis

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 22 at 9:51pm](#)



[Cassie Bayack](#) Thank you for speaking your defense of a man you feel is not guilty of gross charges. Some folks just let the pastors be road kill.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 14 at 11:16pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) Typical. Zero concern for molested children or their families. Nothing but the utmost concern for the reputations of Mahaney and his gospelly buddies.

Grant Layman knew, and did nothing. Josh Harris knew, and did nothing. If Mahaney didn't know, than his ignorance is culpable. If he did, then his inaction is damnable. He doesn't belong anywhere near a pulpit or stage.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [8](#) · [April 14 at 11:19pm](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) You may also want to listen to the audio or read the transcripts of the Nathaniel Morales trials. FYI. He's in jail for 40 yrs. now. C.J. knew he was a predator and did not stop him or report him to the police. He abused boys in five states for over 20 years as a result. But don't take my word for it. Here are the words of Assistant State's Attorney Jessica Hall in her opening statement at the first trial. C.J. was the sr. pastor at Covenant Life Church during the time frame she is covering. "The church covered it up. The church protected Mr. Morales. ... The church would cover up for Mr. Morales. ... The church would protect a man who molested children. ... The church did nothing. ... They [the pastors] ignored the fact that heinous crimes had been committed."

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#### Edit History

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April 14 at 11:30pm



[Phil Johnson](#) My questions for Brent: 1) if you knew about the sexual abuse and/or the coverup, why didn't you lead with that in 2011, instead of 600 pages of trivial personal conflicts and complaints about CJ's leadership style? 2) if you were unaware of the abuse and coverup, how can you possibly be so certain that CJ was fully aware?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [11](#) · [April 15 at 11:02am](#)



[Aaron Britton](#) Good Questions Phil, but BD's concerns get to the heart of 1 Timothy and Titus 1, and are not "trivial" (perhaps in how they were presented, at times). Teachability, above reproach, upright, etc. . .are all addressed in those documents.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 12:44am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) [Aaron Britton](#) ..and those are all vital questions \*\*within the context of the local church.\*\* They are not, however, issues that should be adjudicated on the



World Wide Web. Compared to an act of overt rebellion against a clear, unqualified commandment from Scripture, or (more to the point) compared to an act of child sexual abuse, they are indeed issues too trivial to justify leaking to the widest possible public 600 pages of private emails with one's pastor.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 12:53am](#)



[Aaron Britton](#) Fair enough Phil. . . A reminder to you that Brent did not leak them at first, and this was after the "local church" had spoken of them for years. I'm not a fan of "wiki leaks" like exposure either, but Matthew 18 was followed in this case, and those issues do get to the heart of proper spiritual leadership. Agreed that they would pale in comparison to a sex abuse cover up.

I just think that power corruption in the local church has been swept under the rug for far too long, and now those who bring it out are called malcontents and whiners. With the Driscoll issue the same things were bandied about for a long time before he was put under discipline.

Many of those emails were between Brent, BK, GL, CJ, etc. .the whole team. . and not, by definition, "private" between CJ and Brent.

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[Phil Johnson](#) Matthew 18 was NOT followed. SOMEONE dropped the ball around step 3. Also, I don't buy the argument that Bret is exonerated because someone besides him leaked the emails. he leaked them to whoever that was, and he is the one still peddling them on his web page.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 1:00am](#)



[Aaron Britton](#) Well i dont have a dog in this fight. . but don't the documents and cj"s own comments show that Matt. 18 was followed?. . . perhaps i misread something

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:08am](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) Last one. Here's another silly complaint against C.J. It is his documented blackmail of Larry Tomczak found in "Concluding Remarks" starting on page 131. See <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/.../Part-3-Concluding...>

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Edit History

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April 14 at 11:36pm



[Brent Detwiler](#) Phil, this is not just about me and C.J. 40 churches, 100 pastors, hundreds of small group leaders, and around 12,000 people have left SGM because of C.J.'s abusive leadership and the culture he created. Even Joshua Harris and C.J.'s own church, Covenant Life, left SGM in 2013. So did the vast majority of C.J.'s closest friends who were also longstanding fellow leaders. I say this matter of factly, not angrily, you don't know what you are talking about and no one should accept your assessment. They need to study the evidence. And as someone has already recommended above, everyone should read the Second Amended Complaint (i.e. lawsuit) and keep in mind another lawsuit will be filed in the coming months.

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/.../second+amended+sgm...>

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 14 at 11:51pm](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) Your accusations against Janet Mefferd are all wrong. In fact they are all slander. She hasn't commented on C.J. Mahaney, SGM, or the sex abuse scandal on her blog or radio program since the lawsuit was dismissed on technicalities and she certainly hasn't been "aligning herself with some of the "survivor blogs." You hurl these accusations but you give no evidence. And guess what, you have no evidence because it doesn't exist. Why do you attack her? She has done the cause of conservative Christianity a great service.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [6](#) · [April 15 at 12:46am](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History

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April 15 at 12:05am



[Mandie Oliver](#) I need to fact check myself, but I am pretty sure I just read on her Facebook page a few days ago about Mahaney speaking at the T4G conference.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 10:10am](#)



[Mandie Oliver](#)



[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 10:12am](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) Almost done. John MacArthur, Rick Holland (your predecessor) and Grace to You have been singing C.J.'s praise for many years. He received grandiose introductions from both men when he preached at the Shepherds' Conference and Resolved Conference over the years. John and Rick have put C.J. forth as a hero and exemplar of the faith. In fact, John and C.J. have been close friends for many years. What [Why] are your dissing C.J. when your boss has fully supported C.J. and promoted C.J.? Is there a plan in the works to now distance yourselves from C.J. since he is damaged goods?

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Edit History

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April 15 at 12:11am



[Julie Anne Smith](#) Shoot, Brent, remove the SGM incident and MacArthur still has a very big reason to never be on the same platform with CJ Mahaney. Mahaney is a Reformed charismatic and MacArthur is strongly against anything remotely charismatic (Strange Fire). But, I agree with you, SGM incidents should be enough.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 12:32am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Rick Holland is not my predecessor, and Grace to You has NEVER sung Mahaney's praise or been involved with Mahaney in any capacity. Ask anyone who knows our ministry. (Grace to You never had any role in the Resolved Conferences. We did the Strange Fire Conference, and Mahaney probably had a fairly low opinion of that.) Those are the kind of shoot-from-the-hip comments that call into question your ability to verify what's factual and what's sheer half-cocked accusatory filler.

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[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) Rick was "a" predecessor but not "your" predecessor. Grace to You didn't sing C.J.'s praise but the head of Grace to You, John MacArthur, did sing his praise! Wow, please forgive me for such grievous sins! Phil, you "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel." Not only was C.J. a friend to John and Rick, he was a confidant to both men. They talked about personal matters and ministerial matters of great importance. Phil [Todd], I could easily write a 5,000-word response correcting all the "camel" errors in your post about me and The Documents but your response above gives me no encouragement that effort would benefit you.

Therefore, I leave you with one correction. For over ten years, starting in 2000, I worked with other leaders in trying to help C.J. see long term patterns of serious sin in his life. The effort failed. In July 2011, I had no choice but to send The Documents to the pastors in SGM when C.J. continued to lie and deceive. From there, someone posted them on the internet. During that decade long effort, we followed the first and second steps of Matthew 18:15-17 countless times. C.J. remained unrepentant and his sins worsened. It finally became necessary to "tell it to the church" and in C.J.'s case that was SGM which he headed.

C.J. should not be a part of T4G, but more, he should not be in ministry if the qualifications of 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1 mean anything. You often reference, 1 Tim 5:19 about the need for "two or three witnesses" before accepting an accusation against an elder. In C.J.'s case, there are literally two or three thousand witnesses and that is not hyperbole. You can't image the devastation he has wrought. I'd be glad to talk you in person. Just drop me a line and we can set it up. You can read about our early efforts to confront C.J. in "Response Regarding Friendship & Doctrine." Start on page one. <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/.../Part-1-Response...>

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April 15 at 8:53am



[Todd Pruitt](#) Calm down Brent. I don’t recall even mentioning you or anything you have written. I would also admonish you to please listen to the voices of your critics. Your tone and the fever pitch of your efforts suggest to some that you are driven by more than noble motives.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [6](#) · [April 15 at 9:06am](#)



[Todd Pruitt](#) Keep in mind Brent that many of us do not have first or even second hand knowlege of CJ’s guilt or innocence. We have certainly heard a lot of troubling

reports (thus my series of blog posts). But I trust you will understand why some of us will not publically call CJ guilty until that is proven.

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[Brent Detwiler](#) Todd, I meant to refer to Phil above. I made the edit. I am on the way to do a hospital visitation but I will get back to you later. I'm glad you chimed in. It gives me an opportunity to address your "neutrality."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 9:52am](#)



[Todd Pruitt](#) "excellent."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 10:20am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Brent, Rick Holland was not even "A\_ predecessor" of mine. He was on the pastoral staff at Grace Church, starting in the late 80s (or early 90s; I don't remember exactly) through the 2000s. I've been on the Grace to You staff (different organization) since 1983. Also, you cite an incident that must have occurred a few years ago when John MacArthur introduced CJ as a speaker and said nice things about him. For you, that becomes "Grace to You have been singing C.J.'s praise for many years"--a total misrepresentation of the facts. Even when corrected, you didn't take time to get it straight before repeating the accusation. That's what I mean. If you intend "to address [Todd Pruitt](#)'s neutrality," take it to your own FB page.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 10:50am](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History

[Phil Johnson](#) Brent, Rick Holland was not even "a predecessor" of mine. He was on the pastoral staff at Grace Church, starting in the late 80s (or early 90s; I don't remember exactly) through the 2000s. I've been on the Grace to You staff (different organization) since 1883. Also, you cite an incident that must have occurred a few years ago when John MacArthur introduced CJ as a speaker and said nice things about him. For you, that becomes "Grace to You have been singing C.J.'s praise for many years." Even when corrected, you didn't take time to find the facts before repeating the accusation. That's what I mean. If you intend "to address [Todd Pruitt](#)'s neutrality," take it to your own FB page.

April 15 at 10:34am



[Scott Frady](#) Hey Brent, Did you know about sexual abuse in SGM? Were you part of the cover up? Or were you unaware?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 10:50am](#)



[Hohn Cho](#) And may I submit that in answering Mr. Frady's and Phil's simple but excellent foundational questions on this topic, five or fifty words might be far more helpful and illuminating than 5,000? To ignore these key questions while continuing to raise additional comments and questions of your own elsewhere in this discussion could be seen as a bit telling.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 1:21pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Nope.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:04pm](#)



[Roy Mizener](#) Scott Frady - Did Brent ever answer this direct question?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:06pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Scott Frady](#) Not that I can see here.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 2:51pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) Phil, this is not about the [Brent Detwiler](#) "dump," [Janet Mefferd](#), or survivor blogs ([Spiritual Sounding Board](#), [The Wartburg Watch](#), [Watchkeep](#), etc). This is about the victims who know that their head pastor of SGM, CJ Mahaney, failed to do due diligence to protect innocent sheep. Did you show even the smallest amount of concern for the victims in your post? I don't see it. Your primary concern was defending Mahaney whose job was to be a godly shepherd.

Is it any wonder that so many have their faith shipwrecked? Now you, another spiritual leader, have slapped them in the face and ignored them. How can they ever trust any spiritual leaders when so few show any concern for them. Jesus would have defended the harmed children first. You are showing your true colors.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [9](#) · [April 15 at 12:13am](#)



[Lowell Van Ness](#) Pretty sure Jesus also would've made sure that everyone who was charged had actually done what they were charged with.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 12:20am](#) · [Edited](#)





[Julie Anne Smith](#) Lowell Van Ness Pretty sure there's been enough witnesses who say CJ knew. How many do you require? Bible requires 2.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 12:29am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) But they're supposed to be witnesses, not merely accusers. I.e., people who can offer some sort of evidence.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 7:57pm](#)



[Savvy Wolfson](#) What would you propose as evidence? It is unlikely that he wrote down what days he discussed this issue in meetings when SGM tried so hard to stay out of legal trouble? Does the Bible say, "We need hard physical copies in addition to a witness' testimony," or might you be inserting that into the text?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 9:46pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Julie Anne Smith So, I would like your comment on this Julie: we are to believe that a molestation took place at an SGM church and the elders met with the family, but CJ was NEVER told/notified. Thoughts?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 7:19am](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) Paul M. Dohse Sr. No way, no how. If you read the personal accounts from people, CJ had to know everything going on. Even in their small groups, group leaders reported group members' sins to CJ.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 12:39pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) So we get yet another second-hand speculation without evidence! Again: what's required BIBLICALLY are witnesses, not merely accusers. Let the person who actually reported these things to CJ make a sworn affidavit about that conversation. That's the sort of thing that constitutes evidence, not a "guess" from a woman who runs a blog where any and all accusations against church leaders are welcomed and repeated ad infinitum. You don't fulfill the "two or three witnesses" requirement by getting big crowds to echo a juicy bit of gossip.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 16 at 12:51pm](#) · [Edited](#)

Edit History

[Close](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Yet another second-hand speculation without evidence. Again, what's required are witnesses, not merely accusers. Let the person who actually reported these things to CJ make a sworn affidavit about that conversation. That's the sort of thing that constitutes evidence, not a "guess" from a woman who runs a blog where any and all accusations against church leaders are welcomed and repeated ad infinitum. You don't fulfill the "two or three witnesses" requirement by getting big crowds to echo a juicy bit of gossip.  
April 16 at 12:50pm



[Phil Johnson](#) To repeat a comment I wrote elsewhere in this thread: The ONLY substantive comment about Mahaney in the amended complaint (the one place in the court records where you have something more than a bare accusation) is paragraph 138, which says, "discovery will show [that] Mahaney...conspired." Fine. Acquire that evidence and THEN get back to me. If it proves Mahaney conspired in the coverup, I'll be the first to call for his prosecution. Barring real evidence, though, what Scripture demands of us is absolutely clear. And some of you are compounding your own sin by repeating bare accusations while demonstrating your own inability to produce any ACTUAL evidence.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 16 at 1:00pm](#) · [Edited](#)

Edit History

[Phil Johnson](#) To repeat a comment I wrote elsewhere in this thread: The ONLY substantive comment about Mahaney in the amended complaint (the one place in the court records where you have something more than a bare accusation) is paragraph 138, which says, "discovery will show [that] Mahaney...conspired." Fine. Acquire that evidence and THEN get back to me. If it proves Mahaney conspired in the coverup, I'll be the first to call for his prosecution. Barring real evidence, though, what Scripture demands of us is absolutely clear.

April 16 at 12:58pm



[Phil Johnson](#) And to be clear: actual evidence MAY exist somewhere. If so, I hope it will very soon be released and get its day in court. My point is that the evidence has not been produced here or anywhere else I've been pointed to online. The sheer amount of accusations sans evidence is a shameful reproach on the "survivor" community.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:03pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) [Phil Johnson](#) Phil, I answered the question "are we to believe." When you read scores and scores of personal accounts all saying the same thing, it

establishes a pattern. It would be extremely out of the known established pattern for CJ not to have known. Paul wasn't asking if I had evidence.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:06pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) Dear Savvy Wolfson

I know, right? If Johnson insists on being “biblical” about this, why does he seem to be insisting on some sort of physical evidence? In biblical times, what evidence would victims have had when abused and oppressed by evil elders? They didn't have e-mail or photos. And how likely would it have been for those elders to do their bullying in writing?

I'm reminded of the case of Darrell Gilyard, the notorious Baptist minister who sexually abused female congregants. In the face of accusations from 25 women, Paige Patterson refused to discipline or even remove him. Why? Because he wanted “demonstrable evidence” such as “photographs, videotapes or laboratory tests.”

Seriously, how much smoke does Johnson need before he picks up a fire extinguisher -- or at least starts running for his own safety?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:06pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) [Julie Anne Smith](#) You're arguing in favor of a process that is EXACTLY backward from what 1 Tim. 5:19-20 teaches. That's what is wrong with your entire approach.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:08pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Neal Marchuk : a sworn affidavit is NOT “physical evidence.” Nowhere have I called for that. I'm saying multiple accusations--even millions of them—don't constitute real evidence. The “smoke” of popular gossip doesn't meet the biblical standard for evidence. If you can't grasp that, I can't help you.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:11pm](#) · [Edited](#)

Edit History

[Phil Johnson](#) [Neal Marchuk](#) : a sworn affidavit is NOT “physical evidence.” Nowhere have I called for that. I'm saying multiple accusations--even millions of them—don't constitute real evidence. If you can't grasp that, I can't help you.  
April 16 at 1:10pm



[Julie Anne Smith](#) [Phil Johnson](#) Also, Phil, it's important to note that CJ et al had the case dismissed on a technicality (statute of limitations). Now, when we think of this case as Christians, it seems that godly leaders would be forthcoming with any and all information. They have not as we know that one pastor denied having information and then, when on the court stand, said he knew.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:10pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) [Phil Johnson](#) Sometimes that approach is thwarted. In my personal case with Chuck O'Neal, he got word that Don Miller was gathering 2-3 witnesses, but instead fired him. In SGM, when you have corrupt leaders beneath CJ who are yes men who only protect and defend him, tell me how 1 Tim 5 is going to work? Those leaders won't allow it to happen. Not meaning to be snarky, but you've been in leadership position for a loooooong time. I'm not sure you have any idea of what it is like to try to do things the Biblical way when leaders are corrupt.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 16 at 1:15pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) You, of all people, know better than that about me. But it is dangerous folly to conclude that if a biblical approach to the pursuit of justice doesn't seem to be "working," then it's OK to take vengeance into our own hands. That is my central objection to the campaign you have devoted your life to. Did it not occur to you that the argument you are making here is the very same sinful argument that was employed by the church leaders who decided to ignore 1 Corinthians 6:7 and sue you?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:24pm](#) · [Edited](#)

Edit History



[Phil Johnson](#) You, of all people, know better than that about me. But it is dangerous folly to conclude that if a biblical approach to the pursuit of justice doesn't seem to be "working," then it's OK to take vengeance into our own hands. That is my central objection to the campaign you have devoted your life to. Did it not occur to you that the argument you are making here the very same argument that was employed by the church leaders who decided to ignore 1 Corinthians 6:7 and sue you?

April 16 at 1:22pm



[Neal Marchuk](#) You're not calling for physical evidence? In another comment, you seemed to wonder why no one had produced a letter or e-mail to Mahaney.

So, in biblical times, what would have constituted evidence upon which godly elders could have acted? How was John justified in calling out Diotrephes, for example? I'm assuming that "sworn affidavits" didn't exist back then, after all...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:22pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) No, I'm not calling for "physical evidence." Go and learn what that means.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:25pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) [Phil Johnson](#) You think you understand what I do. You don't. The public part of the blog is only a fraction. The life I have devoted myself to is to listening, supporting, encouraging people who have been harmed by church leaders, some who have shipwrecked faith. I encourage them by identifying wolves so that they can find godly shepherds who truly care for their souls. Just today, I spoke with someone who hasn't been to church since Tullian Tchividjian gave this person the shaft. Spiritual abuse affects people for years. I'm saying CJ, Tullian, Driscoll have no place in ministry after the harm they have caused hundreds if not thousands of people.

The Bible talks about knowing about and exposing wolves. The Bible talks about comforting those with the comfort you have received. If you and others in your position would do your job and strongly speak out against bully pastors, maybe there would be no need for blogs like mine.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 16 at 1:33pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) "Go and learn what that means." Why be rude? Just tell him what you mean. Good grief, Phil.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:35pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) That's a quote from Matthew 9:13. Good grief, Julie Anne.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:36pm](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History



[Phil Johnson](#) That's a quote from Scripture. Good grief, Julie Anne.

April 16 at 1:35pm



[Julie Anne Smith](#) You quote the words physical evidence, but don't quote "go and learn what that means?"

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:37pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) [Julie Anne Smith](#): Here's why I don't regard you as a champion of justice and a legitimate advocate for the oppressed: You find "spiritual abuse" where it doesn't exist. You're too quick to accuse, and much too quick to condemn. You're doing the very kind of harm you claim to abhor.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:40pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) [Phil Johnson](#) I hope you're going to back that up.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 16 at 1:40pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) Yeah, that has me scratching my head too, JA. At first, I thought he was just flipping me off. Now, I'm thinking, "What does Matt 9:13 have to do with my question?"

And yes, it seems that he is utterly clueless about the kind of work you do, and what you're all about. All he sees is the sheep getting' uppity on your blog, and he can't stand it.

Anyhoo, it's past my bedtime here. Anything else, I'll check out in the morning.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:43pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) Neal Marchuk Goodnight, Neal smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:44pm](#)



[Mary Shepherd](#) "can't possibly meet the biblical standard of evidence" I don't know what Bible you are reading from to make such an outlandish statement. CJ has been confronted by more than two (Matthew 18) and by your standards Ananias & Sapphira would have enjoyed the money they kept back & died of old age. And you would scold Paul for slandering Alexander the Coppersmith (2 Timothy 4:14). What proof do we have that he did Paul much harm? There's two sides to every story. It's a case of "He said, He said." Shame on Paul, right? And how dare John slander Diotrephes accusing him of wanting to put himself first & not welcoming them. We have no way of knowing what really happened between Diotrephes & John because we weren't there. Were you there? Do you know? (3 John 1:9) There's way more evidence against CJ than these offenders in

the Bible. Thank you Janet Mefferd, Brent & Survivor Bloggers for shining light in the darkness! To the SGM survivors, I believe you. You matter & I stand with you!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [7](#) · [April 15 at 8:47am](#) · [Edited](#)



[Neeva Walters](#) I find it sad you chose not to express even a shade of concern over the actual victims in this case: the children who were abused under CJ's watch.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [8](#) · [April 15 at 2:06am](#)



[Mandie Oliver](#) Not true.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 10:17am](#)



[Brian Darby](#) "At some point you have to refuse to cater to the concerns of people who insist on accusing a man when they can't possibly meet the simple biblical standard of evidence."

I am assuming you mean Deuteronomy 19:15 as one of the standards of "Biblical Evidence". I am sure you realize such crimes as child abuse do not usually take place in the sight of several witnesses. If I am reading many of the testimonies concerning those hurt by the SMG "ministry" do meet that standard taken in totality. I am interested why those abused did not seem to take the forefront of the discussion in your post? It seems to me, Mr. Mahaney's "charismatic" leanings or his "Roman Catholic" confession are not even issues when compared to those of children that have been abused and, in my opinion, the mishandling of the abuse. Several of the perpetrators have already confessed to various crimes so that adds validity to the perspective of those that feel Mr. Mahaney should not be in ministry.

If Mr. Mahaney was a member of Biologos, became a member of the RCC or EO you and Pastor Macarthur would have taken a more public stance concerning Mr. Mahaney. I find that rather interesting and rather sad. I do hope you have a nice weekend.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 3:05am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) So the claim now is that CJ Mahaney himself is guilty of child abuse? Plus: you're implying that I've denied that child abuse took place \*anywhere\* in SGM? Where did any of THAT come from? Thanks for giving us such a vivid example of why the survivor-blog culture is so unwholesome. Crazy accusations like that help no one. You're proving my whole point.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 3:33am](#)





[Brian Darby](#) Phil Johnson You are quite mistaken maybe its my wording. No where do I accuse Mr. Mahaney of child abuse but I do think he handled the issues terribly. Nowhere do I say you deny it you merely mention the need for biblical evidence I asked if you referring to having witnesses so I mentioned such crimes usually do not have witnesses let alone two or three. As for witnesses concerning the mishandling of the abuse and reporting along with how Mr. Mahaney dealt with people under his care as a pastor are well spelled out in the many links provided. Also if Mr. Mahaney did become a RCC or EO etc your response would be much stronger, which is like I said rather sad. I am trying to understand your point, I would hope you would please just try to understand what these folks who are posting here are trying to say. Again I hope you have a nice evening.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 3:47am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Brian Darby To review: I pointed out that people are making accusations against Mahaney without meeting the biblical standard of evidence. You replied that there usually are no witnesses to child molestation. It sure seems like you are suggesting he is guilty of that, as well as implying that I have refused to acknowledge that any abuse even happened. In reality I have emphatically condemned the abuse that took place and urged a full investigation to resolve all remaining questions about it. For the record AGAIN: those who committed the crimes, as well as those who conspired to cover them up, should be punished to the full extent allowed by law. But I'm not going to join the lynch mob that's so eager to extract a pound of flesh from Mahaney without bothering FIRST to produce actual proof that he knew about or participated in the cover-up.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 4:04am](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History

[Phil Johnson](#) [Brian Darby](#) To review: I pointed out that people are making accusations against Mahaney without meeting the biblical standard of evidence. You replied that there usually are no witnesses to child molestation. It sure seems like you are suggesting he is guilty of that, as well as implying that I have refused to acknowledge that any abuse took place. In reality I have emphatically condemned the abuse that took place and urged a full investigation to resolve all remaining questions about it. For the record AGAIN: those who committed the crimes, as well as those who conspired to cover them up, should be punished to the full extent allowed by law. But I'm not going to join the lynch mob that's so eager to extract a pound of flesh from Mahaney without bothering FIRST to produce actual proof that he knew about or participated in the cover-up.

April 15 at 4:02am



[Brian Darby](#) Ok Mr. Johnson I am looking at my poor use of words and I apologize if for a second I am saying you condone such abuse. I will strive to be more careful let me try again. When you mentioned the biblical evidence I was thinking you were referring to the actual abuse, my mistake, that was my point about there is rarely direct witnesses to such abuse. I also state that you have publically stated such abuse should be investigated. I am not looking to lynch anyone either but I personally think the victims have gotten the short end of the stick in all this. Mr. Johnson you and Pastor MacArthur carry far more weight in this community than myself or any others posting here ever will. Just a statement that said that churches should have adequate protection and reporting requirements with in the bylaws of the organization would have a great deal of positive effect in my opinion. That is my one hope here, and the restoration of those deeply injured. I do hope you have a nice day.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 4:13am](#)



[Diane Marie Kamer](#) Amen!!! Doubt these Calvinistas would have cut Cardinal Law this much slack. Or any, for that matter. But it's different when the Calvinista ox gets gored, right? [#DoubleStandard](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 23 at 1:18pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) [Diane Marie Kamer](#): Thanks for yet another example of why I am unmoved by the online hysterics surrounding this issue. No one who knows anything about me would try to portray me as a sycophantic follower of CJ Mahaney. All I have asked for is real evidence, and Mahaney's critics respond with pejorative slurs like "Calvinista!" The only people who might be persuaded by that kind of "argumentation" are people totally lacking in discernment and/or commitment to the authority of Scripture. When shrieking calls for repentance keep coming from people who openly thumb their noses at the clear instructions of God's Word, it's not particularly compelling. Please give that kind of rhetoric a rest.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 23 at 1:42pm](#)



[Kofi Adu-Boahen](#) Thankful, as ever, for your balanced perspective.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 3:58am](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) It's only balanced for celebrity pastors. What about the victims?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 11:15am](#)



[Sharon Devol](#) What, exactly, is “spiritual abuse?” Teaching bad doctrine? A Bible study with an inexperienced teacher? Getting food poisoning at a church potluck?  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 12:15pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) Sharon Devol Here is a quote of a definition I like:

“Spiritual abuse is a spiritual role-reversal where a shepherd, instead of clinging to and emulating the Great Shepherd by shepherding God’s people (Acts 20; 1 Peter 5; 1 Timothy 3; Ephesians 4), subtly demands that members exist to meet the shepherd’s needs (James 4:1-4). Rather than relating as a servant leader, the pastor “pulls rank” and “lords it over others” (Matthew 20:20-28; 1 Peter 5:1-6), not for the benefit of the flock, but for the benefit of the pastor. Rather than speaking the truth in love and rather than ministering grace and truth (Ephesians 4:11-16, 29; Colossians 4:3-6; Titus 2:10-12), the spiritually abusive pastor intimidates, judges, condemns, shames, and blames the sheep without regard for the spiritual wellbeing of the sheep (Jeremiah 23:1-4; Matthew 23:1-39).” Definition from Bob Kelleman, Executive Director of the Biblical Counseling Coalition

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:47pm](#)



[Ryan Simpson](#) Hey Julie when are you going to repent for slandering RC Sproul Jr and his deceased wife on your survivor blog? Or for bragging about being the “Christian” mom who took joy in forcing kids to order phallic donuts?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 19 at 9:37am](#)



[Kofi Adu-Boahen](#) I gave myself some pause before answering so I could re-read Pastor Johnson’s post. Not sure how his post provided cover or excused sin or slighted the victims.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 19 at 10:23am](#)



[Benjámín Mc Intyre](#) [Brian Cahill](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 6:06am](#)



[Bob Whitney](#) My wife and I attended Covenant Life Church for awhile in I think 1985 and was then a member of a People of Destiny church for 5 years so I am not totally unfamiliar with CJ and Brent and the movement. We left with some real concerns not

directly related to this mess. I've read about this some but it was clear there was no need to. Individuals save yourself. I don't think this is really a church matter, it bears no resemblance to Christ's body or the Bride. Seems to be strictly a legal matter now. (maybe I am out of line about this because I am so far removed BUT maybe I am not so far off BECAUSE I am so far removed)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 7:43am](#)



[Don Mcg](#) To say there is no evidence that CJ didnt know the abuse was going on, and that his "yes" men didnt report to him on a weekly if not daily basis tells me you have no idea of the control that was going on at CLC....the pastors, many family members or married through spouses were a close knit unit, many building the church side by side, they walkded the same, talked the same, dressed the same, same CJ quotes and manerisms....for you to say or imply CJ was innocent in all this is just flat out unbelievable, he was in charge, he is accountable and its very clear "money" is the root cause, the book selling, the conferences, all money makers...and its very clear, at least to me, that conference attendees, book buyers, music worship CDs, being sold are all money makers, why do you think CJ mentored and turned the reigns over to a kid (J. Harris) to run a mega church, as he controlled and molded him as a puppet, just like the other pastors, CJ new Josh was a gifted writer, speaker especially to the young generation and simply he was a "cash cow".... and its very clear as an ex member for many years, CJ new everything that was going on and demanded it as part of his leadership style. I applaude Mr. Brent D. for standing up and doing something about it ...the Yes men, and cash cow depositors wont do it....have a great day smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 9:26am](#)



[Nathan Machel](#) Thank you for writing this and being willing to face the inevitable mob. It shouldn't be that hard to understand that people can simultaneously (1) condemn the abuse and sympathize with the victims, (2) condemn those who covered it up, and (3) refuse to condemn someone for the cover-up without a shred of actual evidence that he knew/participated. Those shouldn't be mutually exclusive positions, and no, the mere assertion that "he must have known" is not evidence that he did.

There's also a lesson about crying wolf here. It wasn't until very recently that I found out about this second, actually substantive scandal at SGM. I dare say I'm not alone in this. When the initial "scandal" broke in 2011, the "survivors" were so utterly obnoxious, so persistent in slander, so hysterical about trivialities, I began actively ignoring everything they said. Any comment or story about Mahaney/SGM was immediately passed by. So when a real scandal involving actual heinous sin broke, how many, like me, didn't bother to read it, assuming it was more of the same slanderous garbage from the same bloodthirsty lynch mob?

Sorry that, now that there's something worth saying (though you still push far beyond that), you're being so broadly ignored. But understand that the ignoring was earned.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 9:43am](#)



[Sharon Devol](#) What, exactly, is "spiritual abuse?" Teaching bad doctrine? A Bible study with an inexperienced teacher? Getting food poisoning at a church potluck?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 12:17pm](#)



[Jyoti P. Chakravartty](#) thanks for this post, sometihng I was struggling here in India as I was watching the live webcast

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 11:17am](#)



[Mark Ammerman](#) Survivors, "obnoxious" or not, have not cried wolf except to point to what they clearly believe is a wolf.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 9:25pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Dan McGhee](#) I would have liked to go to T4G16 this year, but refused to do so because CJ Mahaney was a key-note speaker. I'm very, very, very disappointed in the "circle the wagons" response of men I do respect. Carl Trueman's article below this post regarding "Big Eva" experiencing a Trump moment? I'm already there.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [6](#) · [April 15 at 11:21am](#)



[Dave Davis](#) With surviving a celebrity pastor clone after I was vilified for standing up to the under celebrity pastor who followed blindly this gets my CPTSD [#celebpastorsyndrome](#) flaired up

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 11:32am](#) · [Edited](#)



[Raffi Kay Phil Johnson](#) what specifically do you disagree with SGM's philosophy of ministry? I'm not trying to argue, just trying to learn.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 11:36am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) For instance, they had a notion that “accountability” entailed a system of intense, relentless mutual interrogation and confession of picayune sins to one another--like a Catholic confessional booth on steroids. Obviously, the more egregious sins were being systematically covered up, but the pastors and leaders in SGM expected one another to be constantly making all their small private sins public, and they were piqued at CJ because he himself seemed to shy away from the interrogation and confession.

In other words, what Detwiler’s documents reflect is a seriously sick and dysfunctional--yes, \*cultlike\*--religious culture. A lot of that, I think, stemmed from the notion (reflected even in CJ’s preaching style) that the expression of emotional intensity is the true barometer of one’s spiritual fervor. The goal therefore was to be as expressively “fervent” as possible, and as effusive as possible in the “confession” of one’s private peccadillos.

In my judgment, this whole defective system is the fruit of SGM’s charismatic doctrine. And the poisonous nature of it is seen in the fact that virtually all the people calling for CJ’s head on a platter see it as a betrayal for anyone to withhold judgment against CJ until there is some actual proof that he was actively or knowingly in collusion with the conspiracy to cover these crimes. They think it’s OK to make a judgment based on feelings rather than facts--which is why instead of citing actual facts, they think it’s sufficient to point out that there were victims who were hurt. Yes, there were, and I want real justice for them--not the artificial “justice” of the Internet lynch mob.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [11](#) · [April 15 at 2:55pm](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History

[Phil Johnson](#) For instance, they had a notion that “accountability” entailed a system of intense, relentless mutual interrogation and confession of picayune sins to one another--like a Catholic confessional booth on steroids. Obviously, the more egregious sins werebeing systematically covered up, but the pastors and leaders in SGM expected one another to be constantly making all their small private sins public, and they were piqued at CJ because he himself seemed to shy away from the interrogation and confession.

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April 15 at 12:18pm



[Raffi Kay](#) Thanks [Phil Johnson](#) for taking the time to respond.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 12:58pm](#)



[Darlene Dufton Griffith](#) Actually SGM's confessional practices of straining out every sin have little to nothing to do with "charismatic doctrine" as you say, Phil Johnson, and far more to do with an environment of control and abuse of authority. This kind of spiritual abuse can exist in churches of all kinds: Independent Fundamental Baptist, Reformed/Calvinist, Arminian, Baptist of every stripe, Methodist, Mennonite, Assemblies of God, etc. Abuse of this nature is especially likely to thrive where church discipline is over emphasized and stressed on a regular basis.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 6:23pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) I agree with you, Darlene Dufton Griffith.

When you are a big-name Reformed pastor, it's much easier to blame an "off" doctrine than to admit the fact that in this case there were pastors who were using their position of authority who harmed innocent sheep. It doesn't look when your Reformed friends fail simply because of their own sin, especially when there are so many places where they are in agreement: Reformed doctrine, complementarian, strong church authority structure, etc. If a pastor fails in their camp, they seem to believe that it sabotages their pet doctrines if they speak out.

The reality is if they want their doctrine to remain pure, they should want to send a clear and strong message to those who are causing harm. The Bible is very clear on the role of shepherds in protecting sheep. Sadly, victims remain an afterthought. The justification for not getting involved is often that Pastor So-&-So is not under my authority or in my particular church group.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 7:41pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) [Phil Johnson](#) "For instance, they had a notion that "accountability" entailed a system of intense, relentless mutual interrogation and confession of picayune sins to one another--like a Catholic confessional booth on steroids." No it didn't. This is



an absurd description. Why the ridiculous hype? You do this a lot. No one would agree with your accounting. No one had the "notion" you describe. Read "Why Small Groups" for our approach. This is another example where you arrogantly assert something about which you know little or nothing. It renders you untrustworthy.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 22 at 9:43pm](#)



[Phil Johnson Brent Detwiler](#) : Oh, come on, Brent. The opening section of your document-dump is fairly teeming with complaints about CJ's failure to confess his sins to "the apostolic team." You quote a document saying: "I didn't think CJ was offering a sufficient example (at least over the past few years) of confessing sin or pursuing evaluation with the A. Team, nor had he been deliberate in updating team members on areas being brought to him by others."

The complaint is not only about personal sins he had committed against the people who constitute the "A. Team"; you guys wanted him to tell you about sins that occurred between him and his wife, and apparently other kinds of private iniquities as well. You go on to quote Josh, who notes that CJ doesn't confess (to others in leadership, apparently) "specific sin especially related to marriage... [CJs] Confessions are more on the level of schedule... Maybe C.J. doesn't sin as much as we do."

This hankering to hear about one another's private transgressions is what I was referring to, and your documents are brimming with that kind of prying curiosity. Of course, I realize YOU wouldn't characterize it in the same words I did, but it DOES come across \*\*\*in your own written complaints\*\*\* as cultlike and unhealthy.

CJ himself undoubtedly helped (or personally engineered) the belief that this sort of confession was a normal, healthy part of discipleship, and he therefore is responsible for raising these noisome expectations from the "A. Team," but regardless of how many people have congratulated SGM for their approach to discipleship and the sharing of private sins, it's analogous to the Catholic confessional (one of the main things the Reformers objected to about the Roman Catholic system)--and it's wrong for all the same reasons.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 22 at 11:53pm](#)



[Dave Davis](#) Where's trueman's article

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 11:38am](#)



[Dan McGhee](#) <http://www.mortificationofspin.org/.../could-big-eva-face...>



[Could Big Eva Face a Trump Moment?](#)

ALLIANCENET.ORG

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 11:57am](#)



[Lyndon Unger](#) [Phil Johnson](#) writes a balanced and nuanced article suggesting how multiple parties have neither a balanced nor nuanced attitude toward a complex situation.

Then, said parties show up and play their one-string banjo in a highly unbalanced and non-nuanced way, oblivious to the fact that they're providing a live illustration and verification of the points in the article.

Even if the irony smacked them in the face to the point that they were toothless, they would apparently not get it.

Prov. 29:9.

Good work Phil.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [21](#) · [April 15 at 11:54am](#) · [Edited](#)



[Terri Ammerman](#) Phil Johnson can't write a balanced and nuanced article about a situation he doesn't not fully know about. Please be careful. No one is showing up and playing a one-string banjo. Please let our remarks be loving and kind and Christlike.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 12:37pm](#)



[Nick Sherid Carter](#) I suffered under spiritual abuse that destroyed my walk with the Lord at the time. Spiritual abuse blogs & the support of other Christians is what pushed me back on a path where I could embrace church and spiritual authority again. Up until 5 mins ago i respected g2y & Phil Johnson but his unnecessary & ignorant comment has alienated our family completely from anything 2 do with gty.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 16 at 5:29am](#)



[Mandie Oliver](#) Nick Sherid Carter as someone who has experienced abuse, may I kindly remind you that the only thing that ever “destroys our walk with God” is our own sinful hearts and idolatrous ways.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 10:30am](#)



[Sharon Devol](#) Nick, you seem to be obsessed with your “spiritual abuse” to the point you’ve posted this reply three times (so far). So I ask again. What, exactly, is “spiritual abuse?” Teaching bad doctrine? A Bible study with an inexperienced teacher? Getting food poisoning at a church potluck?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 12:20pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) Sharon Devol, here’s one definition: Spiritual abuse takes place when leaders to whom people look for guidance and spiritual nurture use their positions of authority to manipulate, control, and dominate.

You can find more here: <http://www.churchexiters.com/spiritual-abuse/>...[See More](#)



[Spiritual Abuse | Church Exiters](#)

Spiritual Abuse What is Spiritual Abuse? First, let’s look at how some authors define spiritual...

CHURCHEXITERS.COM

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 12:53pm](#)



[Terri Ammerman](#) Sir, I feel like you are wading into waters that you don’t know much about. You don’t like [Brent Detwiler](#) wordiness, you don’t like the “hysteria” of the SGM Survivors Blog, etc, and you seem more concerned with the words and attitude of those who are crying out to be heard than with their plea itself. There is a ton of stuff in this whole terrible mess, and if you were really going to swim, not wade, into the waters, you should contact some of the victims and go right to the source. But be per-warned, to swim rather than wade, takes a lot of time, prayer and great wisdom. It is hard for people have been swimming in these water, for even a short amount of time, let alone a long,

long, time, not to be very passionate about this whole subject. Frankly, it is hard for me not to feel that you are being careless with your words and thoughts, when you should be very careful and clear headed. I hope that is helpful, and not offensive to you. Please consider reading the court documents that Brent has posted, and contact [Brent Detwiler](#), personal and hear his heart, not just the printed word. Above all, lets remember that we as frail, sinful, human beings, who fall short everyday in countless ways to accurately reflect our Lord Jesus Christ. We want Him to be honored and glorified and represented in everything we do and say! What breaks GOD'S heart in all of this? God help us, THAT, is what should be breaking our hearts too!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 12:57pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Lori Bridgwood](#) Phil, while I'm sure you've got tons of PM's, would you please take a moment and read the one I sent? Thank you.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 12:27pm](#)



[Dave Davis](#) Here was a local pastor full of bravado and braggadocio who fell off the spotlight wagon. So sad. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/.../darrin-patrick...>

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 12:35pm](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) Todd Pruitt. I will be at the hospital all day. I hope to respond to you tomorrow. Briefly, did you read my three main documents, "Response Regarding Friendship & Doctrine" (Mar 2010), "A Final Appeal" (Oct 2010) and "Concluding Remarks" (Jun 2011). If so, when did you read them?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 12:52pm](#) · [Edited](#)

Edit History

[Brent Detwiler](#) Todd Pruitt. I will be at the hospital all day. I hope to respond to you tomorrow. Briefly, did you read my three main documents, "Response Regarding Friendship & Doctrine" (Mar 2010), "A Final Appeal" (Oct 2010) and "Concluding Remarks" (Jun 2011). If so, when did you read them..

April 15 at 12:48pm



[Brent Detwiler](#) Next, did you read the Second Amended Complaint (lawsuit) (May 2013)? If so, when? Did you read my piece on the hush fund (Mar 2015)? If so when?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 12:54pm](#) · [Edited](#)

Edit History

[Brent Detwiler](#) Next, did you read the Second Amended Complaint (lawsuit)? if so, when? Did you read my piece on the hush fund? If so when?  
April 15 at 12:51pm



[Hohn Cho](#) I find it fascinating how the most partisan commenters appear to have completely missed or ignored the fact that Phil, Todd Pruitt, and Carl Trueman are among the very few who have had the courage to speak out publicly about this issue from the perspective that Mahaney either shouldn't have been invited to speak at T4G, or should have declined the invitation even when extended. I'm sure their positions win them no favors or love with "Big Eva."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 1:20pm](#)



[Chris Nelson](#) Does Mahaney push the sola scriptura denying poison of fallible prophecy as Grudem, Piper do and if so why have anything to do with someone like that in the first place?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 1:31pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Well, here's the thing: I have no personal connection with CJ. If you gathered up and counted all the words he and I have ever exchanged in personal dialogue, it wouldn't fill 90 seconds. He and I are at opposite ends of the spectrum on several doctrinal questions, starting with cessationism/continuationism. So no one can write me off as a sycophantic follower. I have several major differences with him, and I have not been silent on those matters. But if the suggestion is that we have no duty to obey 1 Tim. 5:19 "because he followeth not us," I strongly disagree.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 15 at 2:30pm](#)



[Chris Nelson](#) I agree, but the fallible prophecy cabal is really vile, what fallible prophecy does to the faith is horrific, it rejects the authority of scripture and makes true Biblical discipline virtually impossible concerning its leaders. I pray that Piper, Grudem and others repent of this evil, it is the most pernicious doctrine sweeping evangelicalism.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 2:36pm](#)



[Chris Nelson](#) Strange Fire was great, but the men who peddle this need to really be dealt with.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 2:36pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Brent, Once more: if you're going to start a new thread analyzing [Todd Pruitt](#)'s objectivity, please do it on your own FB page. If you're going to stick around here, please reply to these questions that have been asked of you:



[Phil Johnson](#) My questions for Brent: 1) if you knew about the sexual abuse and/or the coverup, why didn't you lead with that in 2011, instead of 600 pages of trivial personal conflicts and complaints about CJ's leadership style? 2) if you were unaware of the abuse and coverup, how can you possibly be so certain that CJ was fully aware?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [11](#) · [April 15 at 11:02am](#)



[Scott Frady](#) Hey Brent, Did you know about sexual abuse in SGM? Were you part of the cover up? Or were you unaware?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 10:50am](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [9](#) · [April 15 at 1:31pm](#)



[Caleb Andrea Kolstad](#) one better consult a lawyer before answering those questions- these are important questions

[Like](#) · [April 15 at 2:18pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Caleb Andrea Kolstad](#) [Phil Johnson](#) - Your commentary pieces are so helpful to so many people. I believe the comment sections on blogs and facebook are what cause good and godly men way too much grief. I am not in any position to counsel you on what you should do. I just hope that you won't allow various (time consuming) criticisms to discourage your heart or impact your health. I have made that mistake myself and have modified how I use internet platforms. In other words, keep writing if you can- don't feel pressured into responding to everyone's comments, questions, and accusations. We need your voice of reason. Just my 2 cents.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [8](#) · [April 15 at 1:36pm](#)



[John L Bulger](#) Preach it Caleb!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 2:15pm](#)



[John L Bulger](#) Precisely why I am loathe to 'blog' on Facebook as others do...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 2:16pm](#)



[Caleb Andrea Kolstad](#) [John L Bulger](#) It is great when Phil writes a long FB post- since he retired from blogging; we'll take whatever we can get from him now. smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 3:01pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) You have basically the same pattern of swarming resentment in the blogosphere. I'm more or less accustomed to it.

It's no different in the real world, either: Stand in front of a lynch mob and try to reason with them and invariably the wrath of the mob will be poured out on you. I learned that with my very first blog post, more than a decade ago. I'm OK with it. I'm not deterred or discouraged by such rhetoric. Bring it.

The problem with this particular swarm of rancor monsters is that there are lots of people who self-identify as victims of "abuse" when in reality they just despise all authority, starting with the authority of Scripture. They profess to hate bullying, but their actions betray an eagerness to berate, accuse, and impute the worst possible motives to anyone who fails to affirm their omni-directional resentment. It is a potent flavor of spiritual abuse all its own, and it is as sick as any other form of spiritual abuse.

My heart goes out to \_real\_ victims, but the survivor-blog community is heavily populated with people who are the Bruce Jenners of spiritual abuse. I'm not inclined to legitimize their resentment, any more than I'm inclined to lend Bruce the artificial "dignity" of calling him a "she."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [8](#) · [April 15 at 3:40pm](#)



[Caleb Andrea Kolstad](#) [Phil Johnson](#) well said brother. You provide a helpful example for us younger pastors. We want to grow thicker skin but never at the expense of a soft heart. Some men have thick skin but pretty callous hearts. Keep fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12)! We truly are together for the gospel.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 3:45pm](#)





[Werner Peters](#) And he challenges us older pastors too from time to time. Hello [Phil Johnson](#). Never met you in person, but have interacted occasionally with you since the early days of the Internet.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 3:49pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) “My heart goes out to \_real\_ victims” Publicly? Because I see far more ranting about people like me than a modicum of support for real victims. BTW, please respond to [Lori Bridgwood](#)’s pm. She’s close to the SGM situation.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 4:54pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) “people like me” Well, yes, I do think it’s a sin to be a busybody, but I also think you would have a pretty hard time demonstrating that I’ve ever “ranted” about you. But I’ll tell you what: count the snarky comments you have hosted about me at your blog and measure it against anything negative I have ever said about you, and I think you’ll find I have held my peace pretty well, Julie Anne. If you do such a survey and discover that my word-count is even as high as 40% of yours, I’ll make a formal public apology.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 5:03pm](#)



[Wesley Griffin](#) “Busybody” Well, you may be right. So when Karen Hinkley found out her husband was a pedophile and she went to TVC leaders for help and they put her under discipline, were Amy Smith and Dee Parsons being “busybodies” when they gave her a voice? What about James McDonald told people to stay away from some fellow elders for daring to disagree through elder Steve Huston said in a videotaped statement, “We warn the people of Harvest Bible Chapel to separate themselves from these false messengers. Please avoid these former Harvest elders at all costs lest you incur great detriment to your own soul.” Both organizations have unconditionally apologized. I’ve been involved in the upper levels of the mega-church world and I have seen it to be quite ruthless so forgive me if I don’t swallow all that is fed. The original question was, “should CJ speak at T4G?” In my opinion, no. The person I would want to hear from (and not from that stage), if he truly knew nothing, would be the one who when he found out what happened, led the charge to right the wrong, left no stone unturned, did not hide behind lawyers or privacy because helping those hurt was the most important thing. The one that would empower the victims to want to come forward and not hide in shame and guilt. He would refuse to speak at such elevated forums because he would say, “I was at the helm when a terrible thing happened and I will work as long as it takes to make it right.” He could still be used in a very powerful way by God and may be, but this

looks like he is clinging to the title and not the work of a great servant. Very hard to do because power and influence is an aphrodisiac that is very hard to turn away from.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 16 at 12:10am](#) · [Edited](#)



[Ron Harvey](#) 👍👤

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 15 at 3:49pm](#)



[Brian Darby](#) Again I am not out to lynch anyone, I thought our dialog had some value, it helped me see your pov a bit, in your response to me you said you abhor abuse and wish to see an investigation to the fullest extent of the law (not a direct quote). That starts with such abuses coming to light and one key element in that is mandated reporting. Along with full cooperation with law enforcement agencies, again I am NOT saying you are against this (reporting) or in any way hide anything, just to be clear. Like the stand you and Pastor MacArthur take on a variety of doctrinal or social issues. I mean Pastor MacArthur writes books on many of these issues, you could publically address the need for mandated reporting, church protection background checks and a safe place for victims to come forward within the faith community and supported when going to the authorities, who are best equipped to handle such issues. Like said you and Pastor MacArthur carry far more weight in this community than any of us. Just imagine if the situation in SGM was handled in a clear consistent manner? Again have a nice day.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 15 at 4:00pm](#)



[James Brown](#) Is C.J. Mahaney okay with sexual abuse of children? Is that what his critics believe?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 5:14pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Guess you missed the part where CJ clearly attempted to blackmail Larry Tomczak with private counseling information about his son. Sorry, that speaks clearly to his integrity. And SGM is a control cult? LOL! JMac doesn't rule GCC with an iron fist? People who ask questions in SS are not escorted out by the Temple Guard? Phil, you are a special kind of hypocrite who propagates the false gospel of progressive justification to boot.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 15 at 6:36pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Dohse, Sr.: You never fail to amaze and appall me with your stupendous wrong-headedness. Everything you said after the word "And" is demonstrably wrong. Normally I delete comments that are filled with so much carnal fulmination, but I've decided to leave yours as a textbook example of precisely the kind of gossipy false accusations I'm suggesting have poisoned the entire Internet conversation surrounding the SGM scandal.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [8](#) · [April 15 at 7:49pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) And of course, this is so because you say it is. This is because God preordained you before the foundation of the earth to "save his people from ignorance." feel better?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 8:08pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Here is my suggestion. Susan and I just finished watching the movie, "Spotlight" based on actual events. Watch that movie, and then think about T4G's support of CJ Mahaney. It's a truly sobering contemplation.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 15 at 10:40pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Seen it. Great movie. But it says NOTHING that proves or even points to CJ's personal guilt in the matter. On the contrary, it illustrates how vital it is to get actual FACTS before making such charges.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 15 at 10:51pm](#)



[Susan Raborn](#) If a woman goes to the elders and says her daughter is being sexually abused by her father--a gifted pastor at the church, and the elders do nothing, blame mom, disregard her complaints because of the stature of the abuser/pastor, is that a coverup because they did not believe woman? If elders say we don't believe you but advise her to report to authorities then are elders off the hook? Many times women/moms are ignored.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 16 at 4:09am](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) The point here is an association with anything or anyone who is remotely tainted by such a scandal in any way, shape, or form. Sorry you missed the point. And since you are so knowledgeable about the situation Phil, please point me to any statement by CJ where he states unequivocally, "I DIDN'T KNOW...PERIOD!" Also, sounds like you are totally up with CJ blackmailing Larry Tomczak Phil; obviously, MacArthur is as well. Or did Larry's wife manufacture the phone

transcript? Tell me, Phil, how does this qualify as “beyond reproach”? Also, point me to where CJ at least asked forgiveness for blackmailing Larry. That would be helpful.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 4:28am](#)



[Sharon Devol](#) Paul M. Dohse Sr. Wait . . . how did John MacArthur enter into this conversation? Do you know something first-hand that we don't?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 12:25pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) [Sharon Devol](#): Mr. Dohse Sr. is an all-purpose accuser. He hates the church and hates the gospel and for years has been posting his ruminations at a blog called “Paul’s Passing Thoughts.” (Look it up if you’re interested. I’m not going to link to it.) His writings are their own self-refutation, and his accusations against various church leaders are so numerous and far-fetched that some of them are actually amusing. His “religion” is a pelagian stew of his own devising. He is a one-man denomination, best ignored. In short “Paul’s Passing Thoughts” consists mainly of musings that OUGHT to have been allowed to pass. It’s a shame he keeps writing them down.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 16 at 12:34pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Sharon Devol](#) Duly noted. Been there, read those types. You're right: "best ignored."

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 12:35pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) ...though I hope he answers your question. I’m kind of wondering why he thought it appropriate to throw John MacArthur's name into this conversation. On the other hand, it’s not surprising. This is the one sacrament in his “religion”: Throw a bunch of garbage at the wall and see what sticks.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 12:37pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Sharon Devol Good girl Sharon. Phil Johnson saith, let it be written, let it be done.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 3:24pm](#)



[Sharon Devol](#) Thanks for reminding me of Proverbs 26:4. Have a nice weekend!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 3:34pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Phil Johnson Why don't we get together and do a podcast. I will just simply read sections of the Calvin Institutes and you tell me what Calvin was saying. If you agree, I might even be willing to fly out and meet you in your office. What could it hurt? You love me don't you?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 3:35pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Dohse: in absolute candor, I think Romans 16:17 is the most fitting instruction regarding how any faithful believer should respond to the likes of you.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 5:04pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Phil Johnson I hate to break it to you Phil, but Paul wasn't referring to everyone who disagrees with you and Pope John. Fact of the matter is, discernment blogs are your best friend because they focus on the symptoms of progressive justification and not the very simple theological math. Justification is not by the law; who keeps it is irrelevant, there is only one seed.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 5:55pm](#)



[Joel Griffith](#) Good gravy grief! Phil, I thought our critics in the Emergent Church nonsense were "out there, but this takes the cake.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 6:33pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Joel Griffith Here is a simple fact for you: I know what the gospel is; you don't. All you really know is what men tell you to know.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 7:53pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Phil Johnson So I hate the gospel? I hate all those who attend the institutional church? What I write shouldn't be on the internet and such is a "shame"? Well, here is your big chance to rid the internet of me. Let's have a public discussion on progressive justification and the Reformation. Why not take the opportunity to shame me publically and put an end to my foolishness? If you are too high and mighty to lower yourself for such, send a respected teacher from GCC or your buddy Tom Chantry. You accuse me publically on FB of hating the gospel--will you do it to my face you stinking coward?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 18 at 1:26pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Paul M. Dohse Sr.:



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[Joel Griffith](#) I don't know what the Gospel is? Hmm. It's defined in 1 Cor 15, if that helps any.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 18 at 4:30pm](#)



[Joel Griffith](#) □

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 18 at 7:48pm](#)



[Nick Sherid Carter](#) Phil Johnson. Your comment is one of the most immature & hypocritical statements I hv read of a leader I respected up until 5 minutes ago. You had a decision to either be quiet yet you have chosen to make comments that are aggressive, hurtful towards people who have suffered abuse within churches.

Ur comment reeks of someone who has clearly never personally suffered under spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse destroys people & often their walk with the Lord. Your comments that are ugly towards people who have gone to survivor blogs (like recovering grace) to heal & have brothers & sisters in Christ support them back into a healthy mindest of church & therefore the ability to be able to submit again under godly authority...through healing in Jesus' name.

You should be ashamed that you hypocritically do not even put yourself under 1 timothy 5:19 & publically are ugly towards 2 named people in ur comment.

You have not personally spoken to people on these blogs who hv suffered...you attack &

are ugly in ur comments yet Jesus Himself spoke in the most strongest strongest language against those who bring down those weak & immature in the faith.

I am shocked John Macarthur has not dropped you after your immature & ugly comment. If you were in my ministry you would be sacked! Where is your fruit of the Spirit? None.

If you do not publically apologise for your immaturity & lack of understanding in attacking millions of people worldwide who hv clawed their way back to a fruitful life after serious spiritual abuse thru the love & support of strangers.

U hv done nothing but hurt & mocked so many people who hv been thru terrible spiritual abuse by flatlining everyone into one category.

I pray John Macarthur sacks you otherwise i publically call upon everyone who supports g2you to stop supporting them & therefore you.

Once the pride kicks in doesn't take long until you become an enemy of the Lord.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 16 at 5:15am](#)



[Dan McGhee](#) It's very early in the morning here right now. Most people aren't even up yet. If I were you, I would delete both the comments you just wrote. Brother, and I say this in love, Phil hasn't attacked anyone. To extrapolate from his post that he has now attacked survivors all across the globe because he chose to respond to questions regarding one specific situation is just silly. To wish that he would be sacked? Utterly ridiculous. Seriously, delete these comments for your own sake. Please consider what I'm saying.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 5:45am](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) [Dan McGhee](#) I'm glad he didn't delete it, because it's such a vivid example of precisely what I'm saying. He genuinely believes that I'm sanctioning abuse just because I argue that judgment should be withheld in the absence of appropriate evidence.

I haven't threatened or wished evil on anyone, and I haven't minimized the evil that was done in the SGM abuse cases. BUT I don't want to join the mob demands for Mahaney's head on a platter. In Mr. Carter's mind, my refusal to take every aggrieved person's complaints at face value justifies every conceivable invective he can think of to aim at me, and he doesn't see THAT as abusive, or bullying, or a violation of Leviticus 19:18 or Matthew 5:44.



All of that is common fare on the most heavily-trafficked survivor blogs, and there's an unwritten rule in those districts that if someone claiming to have been hurt by a spiritual abuser spews vengeful words or even false doctrine, the self-identified victim is not to be corrected. Here you see the fruit of that.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [5](#) · [April 16 at 12:44pm](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History

[Phil Johnson](#) [Dan McGhee](#) I'm glad he didn't delete it, because it's such a vivid example of precisely what I'm saying. He genuinely believes that I'm sanctioning abuse just because I argue that judgment should be withheld in the absence of appropriate evidence.

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April 16 at 12:20pm



[Sharon Devol](#) Nick obviously has GTY and Phil in his cross-hairs.. No amount of reasoning will change that. Sad that so much hatred for a godly, biblical ministry has to be aired by one unhappy soul.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 12:29pm](#)



[Karl Heitman](#) [Phil](#), "I pray John MacArthur sacks you..." These kinds of comments show how the "survivor" camps do not help bring healing. Rather, they sow seeds of bitterness, anger, and resentment producing stone cold, hardened hearts. What a tragedy.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 5:28pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Terri Ammerman](#) Please, all of you who call yourselves Christians, please step back and look at the way you are treating each other. Is this the body of Christ?! I think

our Lord would be sad to claim anyone's statements here. For those who support Phil, all I say is your words are unkind and unhelpful to those who have been harmed. Karl, the tragedy is that there is no support of hurting and harmed brothers and sisters in the Lord. Phil, you have said over and over that you need "proof" and again I would say speak to the victims before you pass judgement, listen to the stories, hear it all. The Biblical steps have been taken by many and you wouldn't even know that if you haven't spoken to people directly. Be quick to listen and slow to speak...is anyone doing this?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [May 11 at 9:30am](#)



[Nick Sherid Carter](#) I used Charismatic Chaos as one of the key texts in helping me come out of a spiritually abusive Pentecostal Church. If it wasn't for Christians on factnet (survivor blog) I would never be in a church again today.

You have alienated many many people worldwide who previously read & respected g2y products.

If this is the unkindness...lack of understanding & lack of love that reeks of pride that is stereotypical in g2y then we will be chucking every single gty product & sermon. Get yourself off the throne & put Jesus back on.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 5:25am](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Nick, if you know anything about the foundational ideology of the Reformation; ie., the Heidelberg Disputation, etc, spiritual growth only comes through suffering. One thing can be said about the former SGM leadership; they understood the original tenets of the Reformation. Hence, it would be impossible for any of these guys to not have a skewed perception of this kind of suffering. In the very least, suffering of any kind is seen as an epistemological necessity.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 7:40am](#)



[John Hester](#) Nick, I have read Phil's statements. I cannot see the "unkindness...lack of understanding & lack of love" to which you refer. It seems plain though that because he disagrees with you that you have therefore judged him as such.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 5:44pm](#)



[Elizabeth Herron](#) So refreshing....gotta love facebook, the place where everybody in the whole wide world can come and see "Christians" ripping each other to shreds. (They certainly don't see Christ!) Now, I think I'll go watch the morning news. Maybe

something cheerful happened there...nah, more Bible reading instead...MUCH more cheerful there!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 8:19am](#)



[Tom Chantry](#) Phil,

I want to thank you for posting this, and to encourage you also. It is unlikely that any of your critics will even so much as understand what you are saying, given the emotionally-charged soup in which they are swimming, but your willingness to endure and even participate in this assault on your character demonstrates two important realities, both of which are useful to those of us who have been observing.

1) Our culture's confusion of feelings with justice has very much infiltrated the church. Your contention is that if evidence is discovered that CJ (or anyone) is guilty of cover-up, he should be prosecuted and removed from ministry, but that absent that evidence, while discretion might suggest a less visible ministry for a time, it is wrong to participate in the destruction of a man's reputation. The main answer advanced by most has been some version of, "But what about the feelings of the people who've been abused?" The argument is that if a group of people claim mistreatment (legitimately or not - it doesn't really matter), every target of their rage should be destroyed until their feelings have been assuaged. That is abominably post-modern, and has no place within the body of Christ.

2) This mess demonstrates another reason why criminal investigation should be handled by the authorities. Boz Tchividjian has done heroic work in making this very point for the protection of alleged victims: only the civil authorities have the means and the sanction to investigate and prosecute crime, and too often the church protects perpetrators by imagining it has "settled" matters internally. But appeal to the magistrate also protects the accused. Police and prosecutors are not allowed to proceed on the basis of how anyone feels. A case adjudicated in the court of public opinion is certain to destroy everyone involved. I write this as someone who once did need to report a case of alleged abuse to the civil authorities. In that discussion, I actually said, "If you ask my opinion, I don't actually have any idea whether or not he did anything, but I realize that is a question for you, not for me." The proper authorities probed, investigated, and eventually contacted me to say, "There's no 'there' there; we're dropping this." All well and good. Imagine, though, if I had shared the allegation around publicly. Would we have needed to crucify the guy for the sake of all the hurt feelings of people who never met him but who were upset by the stories they heard about him?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [23](#) · [April 16 at 8:28am](#)



[Neeva Walters](#) I agree with your second point, but unfortunately the courts aren't perfect either. The authorities couldn't proceed because it happened too long ago. That is not exactly justice either--for CJ in clearing him if he's innocent or for the victims if he's not.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 16 at 10:36am](#)



[Elizabeth Herron](#) Neeva Walters You and Tom Chantry are both right. I've struggled with the "but the courts aren't perfect either" on many occasions, but I also know from Scripture that God does not honor any statute of limitations. His judgment is perfect, final, and eternal. Whatever any of us "get away with" here will not be overlooked by God--either in the loss of rewards for Christians or in the casting into the eternal flames of the non-Christians.

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[Neal Marchuk](#) I've never called for Mahaney's "destruction". All I've wanted is for him to stop preaching and touring, quit hiding behind his lawyers and the 1st Amendment, and come clean about everything he knew and all his wrongs.

Instead, what does he do? He gets up on stage, basks in the applause, and says not a word about those who suffered unspeakably while under his care. That says to me that he cares nothing for them, and neither does Mohler, who even included a heartless and callous joke about the charges against Mahaney in his intro.

In my eyes, the whole bunch of them have proven themselves unworthy of being called "shepherds".

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 1:37pm](#)



[Mandie Oliver](#) Neal Marchuk your last paragraph in particular is a foolish, feelings-oriented statement.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:57pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Actually Tom, I don't care to talk much about the symptoms. I prefer to talk about things Calvin believed, viz, his second class of elect that are temporarily elected/illuminated and how double imputation is justification under law. You guys are more than happy for the distraction of this kind of stuff lest folks start figuring out the simple theological math of progressive justification.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 3:58pm](#)



[Tom Chantry](#) Amazing. I can recognize Paul's Passing Syntax anywhere.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 4:19pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Tom Chantry Anytime you want to have a discussion on progressive justification in a public forum just let me know Tom. What a wonderful opportunity for you to shame me and put an end to my foolishness.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 6:04pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) Dear Mandie,

"Feelings-oriented"? What exactly is that supposed to mean? Do you seriously expect me to feel nothing when I see self-appointed "shepherds" and "apostles" ignoring and insulting wounded sheep? How are such men qualified to teach us anything about Jesus? They show no care or compassion to those who are dearest to Him.

Yes, I'm angry, and when I read the warnings He made through Ezekiel, I'm pretty sure that God is, too. I'm angry, and I won't apologize for it. Not to you, not to Johnson, and most certainly not to the likes of Chuckles Mahaney.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 17 at 10:55am](#)



[Terri Ammerman](#) Paul M. Dohse Sr. This is not the place for your theological thoughts. This is not about theology it is about Christian character.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [May 11 at 9:39am](#)



[Todd Pruitt](#) Phil - Ditto to what Tom wrote. I have seldom seen such ugly and vile accusations come from professing Christians as those which have been directed toward you in this single thread. It seems that nothing short of a full throated agreement with every single charge and rumor floating throughout the blogosphere will satisfy these folks.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [13](#) · [April 16 at 8:55am](#) · [Edited](#)



[Matthew Tompkins](#) Well, full agreement AND now Phil needs to be sacked.

So I'm not even sure full agreement will suffice anymore.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 16 at 1:31pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Jim De Arras](#) doesn't CJ refer to himself as a Apostle? frown emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 16 at 1:27pm](#)



[Julie Anne Smith](#) Yes

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 16 at 1:49pm](#)



[Paul M. Dohse Sr.](#) Julie Anne Smith ...and nobody blinks.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 16 at 6:06pm](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) Pressing demands have keep me from further posting here. I want to do so and should be able to in a thoughtful manner the next day or two. The question asked me about how I could not have known about or not been part of the conspiracy to cover up the sexual abuse of children in SGM is very legitimate and very important. I look forward to answer it.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [April 16 at 8:52pm](#)



[Scott Frady](#) Still hoping to hear your response to these questions soon.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 19 at 1:53pm](#)



[Raffi Kay](#) Brent Detwiler I really don't understand what you are trying to accomplish by airing to the whole world all your grievances about SGM or CJ. What do you hope to accomplish? It's definitely not to build CJ up or restore him (which should be your goal) if he has sinned by going to him and the other leaders in private. Instead, you are using the wrong channels to try to destroy SGM and CJ's character. By doing this all you're bringing about is putting to open shame the name of Christ in the way your handling these grievances, causing greater confusion and division within the body of Christ, giving ammunition to the enemies of the Gospel and being a huge stumbling block to many Christians. You have been blinded by your hate for SGM and CJ and are not able to see or think as a spiritually mature Christian should. Please pray and reconsider your approach so that Christ can bring healing and grace to all parties in this sad and unfortunate situation and His name still be praised and glorified even in this.

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[Neal Marchuk](#) Blah, blah, blah. We've heard all of this before, from just about everyone in the Neo-Calvinist camp. From what I can see, there's nothing in Mahaney worth restoring. If he can't muster enough compassion to listen to hurting people (on his doorstep, no less), and enough humility to get off the stage, then he has no business calling himself a pastor.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 17 at 12:45pm](#) · [Edited](#)



[Raffi Kay](#) Neal Marchuk if you read the Bible, you must be reading it upside down. From your comments you seem to be totally ignorant of true Christian charity or you lack the maturity to know how Christians are called to deal with each other. "There's nothing in Mahaney worth restoring"??? Wow!!! I don't know which is worse your ignorance or your sinful demonic attitude.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 17 at 6:26pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) Now I'm "demonic"? That's so completely over the top, it's almost adorable.

Just to be clear: I have no doubt that Mahaney can be restored as a believer (assuming that he is one, and not just a manipulative user). As long as he repents and takes responsibility for his deeds, he'll be forgiven.

But as a pastor (or in his case, a self-styled "apostle")? No. Not with the callous attitude he has displayed, especially during this conference. If he doesn't care for the sheep, he shouldn't be a shepherd. And the organizers of the T4G circus? No better, in my opinion.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 17 at 10:40pm](#)



[Raffi Kay](#) Neal Marchuk do you always take people's words out of context? I said the source of your sinful ATTITUDE toward CJ is demonic.

You have missed the whole point of what Phil posted, until there is actual valid evidence that CJ is guilty we need to hold our tongue, not assume and condemn him.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 17 at 11:16pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) I'm not assuming anything. We have evidence of Mahaney's callousness towards victims of sexual abuse. His presence on stage and in the



spotlight at T4G is an insult to them, and a mockery of their suffering. And a real shepherd doesn't insult wounded sheep, or add to their heartache.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 18 at 11:13am](#)



[Raffi Kay](#) His presence on stage at T4G is not evidence of his callousness. This is your opinion and feeling on the subject.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 18 at 12:09pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) And what about the opinions of those who suffered sexual abuse under his leadership? Do their thoughts count for nothing in your eyes?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 18 at 11:38pm](#)



[Raffi Kay](#) We can't live our lives based on other people's opinions but according to God's will and His leading.

This is my last word on this subject with you Neal.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 18 at 11:52pm](#)



[Neal Marchuk](#) Oh, so you're saying Mahaney had a "leading" to soak up all that flattery and applause, on the stage and under the bright lights. And Mohler had a "leading" to introduce him with a disgusting, heartless joke at the expense of people who were sexually abused.

Well, if that's so, then I refuse to believe that their leading came from God, because I see nothing Christlike in their behaviour. Can't say for sure where the leading came from, but definitely not from God.

As for my last word, allow me to share with you the latest nonsense to come from the mouth of Chuckles Mahaney:

<https://baptistnews.com/.../c-j-mahaney-says-churches.../>

Seriously? He's demanding that church members protect their pastors, no matter what? Worst kind of nonsense... Since when are sheep supposed to protect a shepherd!?

[C.J. Mahaney says churches should defend their pastors](#)

BAPTISTNEWS.COM

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[T Josiah Richardson Ben Mordecai](#)  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 17 at 11:50am](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) A major situation has come up requiring my full time and attention.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 20 at 8:49am](#)



[Scott Frady](#) That is fine. I hope the situation is blessed and that you are able to get through it well, whatever it may be. I wish you the best. I would suggest, when this current issue is resolved, that you address the legitimate and important questions that have been raised here on your website.  
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 20 at 10:13am](#)



[Tom Chantry](#) I'm sorry, but I call "foul" on you, Brent. It's been six days since Scott asked you directly, "Did you know about the sexual abuse at SGM? Were you part of the coverup?" And unless I've missed something, you did not have the time to definitively state, "I have never taken part in any coverup of criminal action at SGM." I just timed myself typing that sentence; it took me 14 seconds, and I had a typo along the way I had to back up and correct. If I had said things which led someone - anyone - to credibly suspect that I was participating in the cover-up of sexual abuse, I cannot imagine any other situation - any! - too important for me to issue a firm and clear denial.

I suspect that to type that sentence and an outline of why your situation was so dramatically different from CJ's could not take more than five minutes, even if the outline had to end with a statement such as, "To explain this more fully would take more time than I currently have to spend on social media."

So why is there no answer? Is it that you think the questions are insignificant? No, because the next day you took the time to write, "Pressing demands have keep me from further posting here. I want to do so and should be able to in a thoughtful manner the next day or two. The question asked me about how I could not have known about or not been part of the conspiracy to cover up the sexual abuse of children in SGM is very legitimate and very important. I look forward to answer it." I can't imagine how that statement did not include, "I have never taken part in any coverup of any criminal activity at SGM," but it didn't. You do think it's an important question, but didn't take five minutes to outline an explanation.

Your stated reason is, "A major situation has come up requiring my full time and attention," yet since the questions were asked you've had time to come on Facebook and post five separate articles about this situation on your own page - together with your own observations on each and your own participation in the comment section on two of those posts. You've had time for social media, but not to state, "I have not participated in any coverup."

I can think of three reasonable explanations for this silence. I have no idea if any is true, but each is more reasonable than the answer you gave. One is that you can't actually come up with an answer to Phil's two questions - did you know, and if not how are you sure CJ knew - and you would rather not admit it. A second is that what you intend to do is to write thousands upon thousands of words in response in the hope that your critics will mistake volume for substance. That would be consistent with your actions so far. And the third was already brought up by either Caleb or Andrea Kolstad, who warned you to talk to a lawyer before answering. It could be that you fear that answering might expose you to legal ramifications. I don't even mean to imply that you are guilty, merely that if you think someone might make a credible accusation of your involvement in a coverup, no lawyer would want you talking on social media.

Maybe it's none of the above, but it certainly isn't lack of time; your own Facebook page demonstrates this. Perhaps it's none of my business, but you touched a nerve. I can't remember anyone who ever said, "That's an important question which I wish to answer, but I'm too busy just now," ever actually coming back and giving an answer. If you do, you'll be the first.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [10](#) · [April 21 at 6:30am](#)



[Tom Chantry](#) Make that SIX separate articles on your Facebook. And counting...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [April 22 at 12:00pm](#)



[Darlene Parsons](#) Brent's wife is seriously ill with cancer.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 23 at 10:50am](#)



[Michael John Beasley](#) Brent - I echo the query about whether or not you had prior knowledge of sexual abuse at SGM, but with this qualification: the question is an appeal for you to account for yourself and no one else. In other words, I am assuming from the question itself that this is not an invitation for you to wax eloquent on the circumstantial failings or shortcomings of others and therefore it is not an invitation to stoke the fires of unconfirmed accusations against others (Proverbs 26:20-21, Deut 19:15-20). I say this, not

because I can claim to know what you are planning to write; instead, I issue this qualification based upon your past actions. In the end, the question is significant and will prove to be helpful, but only if you address it directly, plainly, and personally.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [6](#) · [April 21 at 9:50am](#)



[Scott Frady](#) He was not able and/or willing to do what you requested and that is disappointing.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 23 at 8:53am](#)



[Brent Detwiler](#) A loved one had a major medical procedure last week that required extended hospitalization. After they were released this week, they developed severe complications that almost became life threatening. This is the first day with stabilized conditions. The care has been 24/7. Many other obligations and responsibilities have also been set aside. I wanted to present a thorough response to a number of issues including what I knew or did not know about sexual abuse in Sovereign Grace Ministries (SGM). At this point, I am happy to provide a succinct statement. I directly oversaw 23 churches in SGM. I have always directed pastors in my sphere to immediately report the suspicion of sex abuse to law enforcement. C.J. did the exact opposite. That is a matter of fact. That is one reason, he concealed the sexual abuse of children from me even though I was the #2 leader in SGM for many years. I should have been told because I had a spiritual, legal and fiduciary responsibility for the well-being of SGM as a Board of Director. I hope to testify against C.J. in a court of law. I would never have allowed sexual predators to go unreported. And in each case brought to my attention by the pastors I directly oversaw, they were reported, tried and sentenced. They remain in jail. By the way, what I just shared, I have repeatedly shared on my blog since the original lawsuit came out in Oct 2012. It was amended in Jan 2013 and May 2013 in order to add plaintiffs/victims. Everyone should read it.

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/.../second+amended+sgm...> There will be more news about the conspiracy to cover up child sex abuse when a new lawsuit is filed in Virginia. That's all I can say at this time.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 22 at 12:58pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) Brent: 1) If all of that is true, I do hope the proof comes out when you get your day in court.

2) I think you severely undermined your whole case by allowing 600 pages of private emails full of disgruntled-employee-style ramblings to become public, wherein (as far as I can tell) there is not a single mention of any dispute between you and CJ over incidents of child abuse and coverups involving such crimes. If you knew CJ was aiding and

abetting child abusers, why were the allegations about his faulty style of leadership the whole focus for two years before those more serious charges became the issue?

3) My sympathies DO lie with the children and families who were the victims of a dysfunctional culture of faulty “discipleship” that seems to have attracted and cultivated a high number of pedophiles and other abusive types.

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Edited History

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3) My sympathies DO lie with the children and families who were the victims of a dysfunctional culture of faulty “discipleship” that seems to have attracted and cultivated a high number of pedophiles and other abusive types.

April 22 at 1:50pm



[Brent Detwiler](#) I already answered #2 but here it is again. “Once again, I am staggered by your ignorance. I had no knowledge of the cover up until I began to investigate AFTER the lawsuit came out in Oct 2012. That investigation will be covered in a 300 page book I am writing. There was no running debate with C.J. over our sex abuse policy. I assumed he was following the law. He was not. Nor was his staff. They were all covering up and that has been acknowledged by Grant Layman in court, Joshua Harris in the Washington Post, the church administrator in a closed meeting, etc. C.J. and his staff had a policy of not reporting to law enforcement and that was due in large measure to their unreasonable fear of lawsuits. That is also a matter of record. Phil, I didn’t know about any of this or I would have confronted it. C.J. hid it from me. That is part of the conspiracy. That is part of his long term pattern of deceit. Again, I am shocked by the extent to which you are uniformed and ill-informed. Everyone knows these things who has taken any time to read even the most basic coverage. I wish you would remain silent because you are leading a lot of people astray by your ignorance. If you don’t want to read the 40 or 50 posts I have written on the subject, that is fine. If you don’t want to read the media coverage from the past 3½ years, that is fine. If you don’t want to read and

study the court documents from the Morales trials, that is fine. Just don't pretend to know what you are talking about because you absolute do not!"

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 22 at 8:59pm](#) · [Edited](#)

#### Edit History

[Brent Detwiler](#) I already answered #2 but here is is again. "Once again, I am staggered by your ignorance. I had no knowledge of the cover up until I began to investigate AFTER the lawsuit came out in Oct 2012. That investigation will be covered in a 300 page book I am writing. There was no running debate with C.J. over our sex abuse policy. I assumed he was following the law. He was not. Nor was his staff. They were all covering up and that has been acknowledged by Grant Layman in court, Joshua Harris in the Washington Post, the church administrator in a closed meeting, etc. C.J. and his staff had a policy of not reporting to law enforcement and that was due in large measure to their unreasonable fear of lawsuits. That is also a matter of record. Phil, I didn't know about any of this or I would have confronted it. C.J. hid it from me. That is part of the conspiracy. That is part of his long term pattern of deceit. Again, I am shocked by the extent to which you are uniformed and ill-informed. Everyone knows these things who has taken any time to read even the most basic coverage. I wish you would remain silent because you are leading a lot of people astray by your ignorance. If you don't want to read the 40 or 50 posts I have written on the subject, that is fine. If you don't want to read the media coverage from the past 3 1/2 years, that is fine. If you don't want to read and study the court documents from the Morales trials, that is fine. Just don't pretend to know what you are talking about because you absolute do not!"

April 22 at 8:57pm



[Brent Detwiler](#) I've already answered #3 but here it is again. "John MacArthur has commended, defended and promoted C.J. for years. So have his 10 other friends at T4G. You have railed against C.J. (but only in the past week) but your boss has rallied around C.J. for years. That continues. Furthermore, Al Mohler, Mark Dever, Ligon Duncan, R.C. Sproul, John Piper, Thabiti Anyabwile, David Platt, Matt Chandler, Kevin DeYoung and many others have extolled and promoted C.J.'s "philosophy of ministry" which you have called "cult-like." They have repeatedly encouraged followers to imitate with zeal the life, ministry, and practice of C.J. Mahaney and Sovereign Grace Churches. In fact, one could argue that Together for the Gospel 2016 was Together for Sovereign Grace 2016. C.J. was featured throughout, Bob Kauflin lead worship throughout, Mark Prater, the executive director, did a breakout session so he could recruit pastors to SGC, etc. No ministry or organization received as much promotion or commendation. SGM remains the gold standard according to these men. Why? Because they refuse to hear and/or act upon the mountains of evidence against C.J. That includes John MacArthur. He too has

contributed to the idolization of C.J. since he first preached at the Shepherds' Conference and thereafter became a close friend and confidante.

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[Phil Johnson](#) The fact that you would characterize John MacArthur as “a close friend and confidante” of CJ’s shows how grossly inaccurate your perception is.

The fact that you seem to assume all the men you named had a duty to read a complaint mailed to them from a man who had already inappropriately allowed 600+ pages of private accusatory material to be posted online shows how little commitment you have to the biblical process.

The fact that you would accuse all those men of willful complicity in a coverup of sexual abuse shows how uncharitable your attitude is and how unreasonable your mind is.

The fact that you would characterize anything I have said as “railing” against CJ Mahaney (when what I’ve actually done here is ask his accusers to abstain from that very thing) is a barometer of how untrustworthy you are with facts.

I don’t know how you vomited so many wordy posts and fresh accusations onto my FB page while I was out with my wife for dinner, but you have posted your last entry here. Anything (other than an apology) you post in this thread hereafter will be summarily deleted.

Take your accusatory zeal elsewhere until AFTER you have come forward with proof of whatever true accusations you have already made, AND apologized for the slanderous charges you have made against men whose only “injury” against you was their refusal to take all your accusations at face value.

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Edit History

[Phil Johnson](#) The fact that you would characterize John MacArthur as “a close friend and confidante” of CJ’s shows how grossly inaccurate your perception is.

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April 23 at 12:22am



[Jenn Grover Phil Johnson](#) - thanks for throwing those of us who were in SGM under the bus, yet, again. It’s what we’ve come to expect from the neo-reformed elite. The blackmail is very well documented and Mark Prater, the current SGM director, sat at my dining room table and all but said it was justified due to Larry Tomzcak’s behavior. This ought to be grounds, alone, for his disqualification, but to know that the blackmail was related to concealing a sexual abuse was unconscionable. I personally know that the Ambassadors of Reconciliation report was rigged from the onset. The gentleman co-leading the told me and my brother, separately, that they believed that the men around CJ were afraid to speak truth (fear of man) and that he had been accommodated in his abusive leadership by them. None of the concerns this man expressed in his report. When the report was issued, he would not respond to contact him for clarification. Instead, the report vilified those who had to participate in the investigation. So, thanks, thanks for spitting in out faces. It’s nice to know that men who to be pastors are more with protecting their peers than serving the flock.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [April 22 at 9:14pm](#)



[Phil Johnson](#) For the record: I have routinely deleted posts and blocked people who try to use my FB page as a venue for spewing venom against my loved ones or long-time friends who have earned abiding respect. \*\*Especially\*\* if you feel you have a valid complaint against a pastor, deal with it biblically. Read 1 Timothy 5:19. That’s the verse I cited on which my entire plea in the above post is based. I’m not going to hand over my FB page as a megaphone for those who want to make a career out of flouting that

command--especially when they deliberately try to target people whom I love and respect. This was the rule on my blog, and it's the rule here, too:

KEEP MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY OUT OF IT. Certain kinds of deliberately-intrusive criticism targeting my loved ones or others whom you know I deeply respect will be deemed grounds for an instant, automatic, and permanent ban. Say whatever you like about me (as long as you keep your language clean), and I'll probably let you post it. Take a cheap shot at one of my friends, my wife, my children, my grandchildren, my church, or my place of employment, and you risk being permanently banned without further consideration or appeal.

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[Darlene Parsons](#) I really wish that you had addressed your love and concern for those victims of child sex abuse I only wish that you had addressed your love and concern for those victims of child sex abuse within the body of your post As you know there have been some cases that have been tried in court and the perpetrator was sent to jail.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 23 at 10:55am](#)



[Darlene Dufton Griffith](#) Up thread someone asked what is spiritual abuse? Teaching bad doctrine? A bible study with an inexperienced teacher? Getting food poisoning at a church potluck?

If only it were so simple and concise. With so many books written on the subject at this point, I am still puzzled that there is a large portion within the church who have no idea just what spiritual abuse is. Rather than quote any outside sources, I will speak from my own experiences. It will not be exhaustive because that would be so verbose as to take up far too much room in a Facebook comment. Here, I will only be speaking in a Christian context, and not a wider one which would include spiritual abuse in non-Christian cults and environments.

Spiritual abuse at its core is when those in leadership within the church use their position to lord it over those parishioners under their care. It is very much like the parable of the of the servant, when knowing his master is delayed, beats the men servants and maid servants. It is when the leadership breeds an environment to silence anyone who may have questions about immoral behavior especially among those who have influential positions. An environment of paranoia exists in which members' sins are picked apart and often where they are humiliated in a public setting, merely for having questions. It becomes a toxic environment where the ones who go along with the status quo of the inept leadership - knowing full well that it is inept - are rewarded, and those who do not go along - even in subtle ways - are verbally mocked, ridiculed, blackmailed, humiliated, and shunned. An Us v. Them mindset prevails not only within the confines of that group

- very much like an entrenched ghetto - but also an Us v. Them mindset regarding those outside their group. Hence, leaving the group is Verboten - it is selling out on your high calling to serve Jesus, compromising on your commitment to the Truth, and in many cases abandoning your faith altogether. And this is why members remain within these churches that abuse for so long. Their trust in the leadership is manipulated and used against them to such an extent that departing from the institutionalized group think tank is considered diabolical. When they do muster up the courage to leave, they often believe the worst about themselves thinking they are wicked, backslidden Christians who are cut off from God.

And this folks, is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to spiritual abuse. I personally know of horror story upon horror story of members who were treated so cruelly under corrupt leadership that they were on the verge of a mental breakdown, and some were at the brink of suicide.

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[Rachael Denhollander](#) As an attorney, I respectfully disagree with the assertion that there is no real evidence that Mahaney knew, for the following reasons:

1 - At least one family [Bridgwood] has come forward saying Mahaney was involved in counseling to attempt to deal with the mishandling of one case at Fairfax. They claim they have emails from them to Mahaney, and Mahaney to them, discussing the mishandling by the pastors, and Mahaney also oversaw an alleged “reconciliation” meeting with the pastors that was supposed to be mediated by a neutral third party [Jim Pappadeas] whom this family later learned had been paid several thousand dollars for his presence as a “neutral” mediator.

2 - Mahaney’s brother-in-law, Grant Layman, testified under oath that at least he knew of the abuse by Nathaniel Morales, and that the pastors did not, in fact, report.

3 - A second pastor [Joshua Harris] under Mahaney reported the same thing to reporters.

4 - The \*official\* policy of SGM and CLC when it came to handling abuse cases stated that the very first thing that must be done with an allegation of abuse is to notify the entire elder board. More than one pastor has repeatedly asserted in closed member meetings with CLC (of which there are audio recordings) that this policy WAS followed in all the cases at issue. Unless these pastors are simply fabricating this, Mahaney, as not only “an” elder, but the head elder was, by their own statements, notified. This is a written policy requiring that all elders be notified, and pastors have confirmed this policy was followed.

5 – Three of Mahaney’s family members (two brothers-in-law [Gary Ricucci], and a son-in-law [Brian Chesemore], were directly involved in these cases, including paying for a pedophile’s attorney using CLC funds and writing letters on behalf of some of the pedophiles on church letterhead. These letters are court records that are public. CLC and SGM policy was absolute that monies not be dispensed without head approval.

There is rarely a “smoking gun” when it comes to the men in the primary leadership position, but there is *\*ample\** reason both logically and legally to be asking some very hard questions about how indeed, complete, utter and total ignorance was possible. I am far from the only attorney to say the evidence in this case is some of the most disturbing, and yet most consistent and persuasive seen. These victims ought to have others willing to ask the hard questions, particularly given the substantial body of evidence that does exist and which makes complete ignorance untenable at best.

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[Renee Blackman Stanton](#) Thank you!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [April 26 at 11:13am](#)



[Rachael Denhollander](#) I’d also wish to add that I appreciate the position you’ve stated in regards to the involvement with T4G.

One other aspect that I would plead with you to consider however, is that, were it *\*somehow\** possible that Mahaney could be the senior pastor in a hierarchal structure like SGM and somehow be *\*entirely\** unaware, despite church policy and his own family members being involved, that there was a rampant problem with pedophilia in his congregation (perpetrated in almost every case by a ministry leader or worker in his church), two very serious problems remain:

1 – The foundation for why this abuse was handled this way, is theological. SGM’s view of authority, grace, forgiveness, reconciliation and repentance is directly at the heart of *\*why\** this happened. It drove the decision-making. Mahaney, as the founder of the church and ministry and purveyor of these teachings, absolutely bears responsibility for their fruit.

2 – Where is the questioning for *\*how\** qualified someone is if, as a senior pastor they unknowingly presided over the widespread cover-up of sexual abuse for several decades, in his own church? Remember, these were often ministry leaders or homegroup workers who were continually placed *\*back\** in positions of authority over children even after the

abuse was known and the perpetrators convicted. In more than one case this lead to repeated assaults and new victims.

Should not a man of God, seeing what has been wrought under his leadership and in the flock he was to protect and shelter, look at these wounded children and weep "My God! What have I done??"

Even if somehow, somehow, \*somehow\* it is possible he remained entirely ignorant for over 30 years, where is the horror that he WAS ignorant of such horrific abuse in his own church, mishandled so terribly by his own family and leadership team? Moreover, where is the repentance towards these victims that his teachings were misused? That his pastoral team so wrongfully understood what to do? That his own church policy did not require reporting? And WHY has he taken two of these men who \*were\* directly involved and placed them back in positions of leadership as pastors in his new church, if he realizes how horrific these situations are and how dreadfully unbiblical the handling of this abuse was?

There is exceptional evidence to question the claim he was truly entirely unaware, but even if he was, does that fact, and his response to it, not speak volumes?

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[Renee Blackman Stanton](#) It is so sad to me to see little concern for the victims. frown emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [April 26 at 11:16am](#)



[Bob Meredith](#) Phil, I followed a similar path. But I actually read every page of the Detwiler documents, and am on his mailing list and have read all of the continuing documents. I met with John Piper in May of 2013 in his living room and asked him about CJ and how he could support him knowing all the controversy. His answer was instructive and helpful, considering that at that time, CJ's knowledge of the supposed cover up was just conjecture. It is still conjecture. I have read the Wartburg Watch and the SGM Survivors websites and commented many times, honestly, and they have been fair to me, at least the website owners have. My conclusion at this point is that it was unwise for T4G to headline him, and even more for them to ignore the protests outside. I think it would have shown humility and wisdom and faith in God to address the protestors from the stage, at least to acknowledge them, and not for Al Mohler to joke about googling CJ's name. That was uncalled for, and certainly not what a gentle man who is filled with the Spirit would say.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [4](#) · [May 1 at 8:40am](#)

##

Posted by not allowed.



**Brent Detwiler** Almost done. Phil, there is SO MUCH more I would like to correct in what you have written for the benefit of your readers but I have other priorities and responsibilities I must attend to including the care of a loved one, completion of the book, assisting law enforcement, and caring for victims of sexual abuse in SGM. I'd encourage you to subscribed to my blog at <http://abrentdetwiler.squarespace.com/>. That way you can stay current. The abuses and scandals in Sovereign Grace, and surrounding Sovereign Grace, are unending. Yet, many of the most powerful leaders in the US continue to commend C.J and cover-up for C.J. They have brought great reproach upon the gospel and the Reformed faith. My writings have not brought the reproach; my writings have exposed the reproach. No one should be supporting C.J. or Sovereign Grace Ministries. The top leaders in SGM have all proven themselves to be corrupt. That is not slander. There is a longstanding and proven pattern of deceit that the Body of Christ must know about. Not once, not twice, but countless times this deceit has played out. You would know that if you studied the evidence. For example, how in the world can anyone allow Mark Prater promote SGM at T4G after reading "Hush Fund Set Up by Top SGM Leaders to Meet the Demands of a SGM Pastor Whose Son Was Sexually Abused" by a senior pastor's son. This is typical. And lest you wonder, I have repeatedly brought this 2013 illustration of profound corruption to the attention of all ten men representing T4G including John. It is mind boggling no one has taken action. To be honest, the evidence does not matter to these men. If it did, C.J. would have been removed from ministry and he would never be a hyped speaker at T4G. See <http://abrentdetwiler.squarespace.com/.../hush-fund-set...>