

On the evening of Sunday, May 19th, 2024, Jonathan Wield read the below aloud to the following individuals:

HOUSE Denver Elders  
Brian and Grace Kim  
Don and Kathy Shooster  
Bradley and Savannah Eigenberg  
Troy Lee  
Corey Russell

Leadership Consulting Team (LCT)  
Peter Young, Senior Pastor of Bridgeway Church  
Mike Polhemus, Senior Pastor of The Rock Church  
JR Polhemus, Former Senior Pastor of The Rock Church

I want to start by acknowledging and repenting of my part personally in this. Though we have fought to keep our hearts pure and clean, I realize we have not been perfect in managing our hurt these past 9 months.

In addition, I feel it's necessary to take responsibility as I was leading the team that hired and appointed Brian as our lead pastor. I then publicly gave him my endorsement without properly vetting him or going back and asking questions of what happened at ACTS and that was a huge error. I made the assumption that Freeland had already thoroughly vetted him and have since discovered that there were people close to me that would have been willing to share the history they knew of Brian if I had just asked. I feel grief that I wasn't more diligent and it has led to pain.

I have also recognized some of the ways that my leadership in the first 8 years of UPPERROOM Denver caused pain to others and how I neglected people and didn't follow up or seek to understand their pain and why they left. Of course, within churches, some people will leave bitter and offended with very little justification, but that is not a get out of jail free card for us as leaders to neglect people and their feelings or recognize the red flags when people with history and trust leave the church.

In feeling the pain personally of the lack of curiosity and response from you all as elders who claimed to trust me and love us for many years prior, I have realized how I have done something similar at times. I have already reached out to some that have come to mind and repented to them and still have more I need to do. If anyone knows of others that I have caused pain from my actions or inaction, I would like the opportunity to make it right, so please tell me.

I also want to be really clear why all we are meeting and I think a great starting point is a passage from 1 John 1. Dana woke up with the phrase 'walk in the light' in the middle of the night Friday - the passage reads:

1 John 1:5-10

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

For the first 7 years of UPPERROOM Denver we had a high value for transparency and walking in the light.

Our hope today is that we will walk in the light. We are asking for what we used to refer to as a 'clear the decks' meeting. In 'clear the decks', we are honest and lay out all our cards on the table for everyone to see. The origin of today's meeting was the Lane's sending an email after stepping down and receiving very vague and unclear answers. So we'd like to revisit them. The Lane's challenges with Brian and the Elders started because Scott began asking questions about why Dana & I left House and saw discrepancies in what we said and what they had been told by Brian and Kathy. The Fernicola's had a similar experience in witnessing what they believed to be mishandling of people and dishonesty in the relaying of details. The Randall's (who are not able to attend as our mediators were not comfortable with adding them in) not only had backstory of Brian's damaging leadership from long before UR Denver, but first hand witnessed it continuing and seeing it as a pattern of behavior. They are not the only people I've talked to that have said: "we just hoped he had changed" when they heard he became a pastor in Denver.

In Hebrews 13:17, we are instructed to "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account" and I believe we all followed this for as long as was allowable for our conscience, but when it became an issue of sin and spiritual abuse, we could no longer submit ourselves to Brian's leadership. In fact, we tried to follow Matthew 18 that instructs us: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'" And in our case, he responded by bringing an accusation against Dana and I as unsafe, but without explanation. We tried to continue in what we believed to be the biblical process and ask Kathy Shooster to mediate and she actually stopped the biblical process and for 6 months we witnessed Brian & Grace neglect Mathew 5's instruction: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

We believe in this instance, the following 2 scriptures are relevant:

- Proverbs 27:5 "Better is an open rebuke than hidden love"
- Luke 17:3 "So watch yourselves. If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them."

We have all committed to the process of forgiving the Kims and the Elders, regardless of their response. And we believe true reconciliation is possible following true repentance.

By true repentance, I would like to submit to you the 3 steps of repentance provided by Adam Young, a Christian counselor.

- 1) Intellectual: Acknowledging your sin
- 2) Emotional: Feeling the remorse of your sin and those you've sinned against
- 3) Restitution: Being willing to confess and receive the consequences of your sin

Today is about us gaining clarity on why things have happened and been said and raising the alarm that there has been and still is spiritual abuse happening at House Denver and something needs to be done about it. I want to be clear that we are bringing a charge against the Kims and the remaining elders

because of a pattern of behavior that we have all witnessed and / or experienced. 1 Tim 5:19 says you shouldn't receive this except from 2-3 witnesses, which we have here today.

I think it's important that all of the House Elders should consider if their behavior the last 12-18 months has been that of a shepherd and if they are fit to continue on as pastor or Elders. Specifically with Brian, Kathy and Troy, we are bringing a charge that we believe they are currently unfit to be leaders in a church and should step down until they have truly repented and are restored.

The charge is based on a pattern we have witnessed and we now know has been a pattern for at least 10 years. The pattern is:

- Putting the vision / mission before the sheep
- Lying / deceiving from stage and in person
- Gaslighting & Manipulating
- Triangulation
- Bullying and demeaning people
- Creating false accountability and leadership
- Removing people from roles without communication
- Summed up in: Emotional, psychological and spiritual abuse

The pattern of what we have not seen is:

- not walking in the light
- Not having remorse when people are hurt
- Not repenting
- Not following up
- Not having curiosity
- Summed up in: not shepherding

Without true repentance (intellectual / emotional / restitution), we believe this disqualifies them from shepherding.

None of us want to have this conversation. But we believe it is essential to do because there are dozens of people from the last 10 years who are traumatized due to Brian's leadership, including some of us, and we have a responsibility to speak up.

My purpose in this is not 'to get an audience' as we've been accused, nor to 'throw stones' as we've also been accused. It is because too many people have already been hurt and I feel obligated to say something. You may conclude that this is actually a matter of 'bitterness and offense' as I've heard it already said. You have every right to come to a conclusion on our motives, but we are asking you to suspend your judgments for now and consider the importance of the health of the Body and the caring of the sheep. One of the most powerful moments in our week is on Sunday mornings praying the Anglican prayer of repentance asking for forgiveness for "what I have done... and what I have left undone." We would not be honoring this statement if we were to leave this undone.

I have come to realize we have been under the mindset that saying anything or asking questions of a leader is gossip / slander and a 'culture of honor' means we should protect our leaders, ignore their red flags or painful behaviors, even if it allows them to continue to propagate toxic cultures that hurt people. I have come to a different conclusion in the last 9 months and believe that

sometimes it is actually loving to ask the hard questions or say something. Unfortunately, we still carry much regret around our past participation in cultivating such dynamics.

I share all of this because I believe essential truths have been withheld throughout the process and I believe it's crucial to bring attention to the fact that something is seriously wrong. We, as believers, are accountable to God for many things, with the protection of the sheep being very high on that list. With a clear conscience, I am raising my hand to say: remaining silent is not an option.

Neglect and ignorance that causes harm is not ok. Silence can enable or even make us complicit. We must as followers of Christ, take ownership for our sin and the people we hurt.

In my experience, and his admission, Brian collects "data points" on people and I know he is aware of conflicts that we have had (the Williams, Michael and Sara, my parents, Stan... ). We have had conflicts in the past, but It's important to note that we have more repaired / restored relationships than ones we have lost (including all of those listed above, except one). Even with that said, it is possible we are what Romans 16 refers to as a person who 'causes divisions and offenses' or has come under a spirit that 'stirs up strife'. If you believe this to be the case, then it's good and right for you to avoid me and you are welcome to.

Please hear me, I do not see myself as the victim in this story nor the hero. I take responsibility for the part I played in creating, maintaining, or encouraging a culture like this. I had every opportunity to use my voice, and I didnt. This is not merely a matter of hurt feelings. Nor is it the disappointment of a short lived friendship with the Kim's. This is a matter of what ourselves and others have concluded as spiritual abuse and a toxic / damaging environment.